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Hugh Blair: A Study of His Rhetorical Theory

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HUGH BLAIR: A STUDY
OF HIS RHETORICAL THEORY

by

Edward P. J. Corbett

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

June
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Edward Patrick Joseph Corbett was born in Jamestown, North Dakota, October 29, 1919.

He was graduated from Marquette University High School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, June, 1938, and from the University of Chicago, June, 1948, with the degree of Master of Arts.

From 1948 to 1950 the author was an Instructor of English at Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska. He began his graduate studies for the doctorate at Loyola University in September, 1950. From 1950 to 1952 he served as a part-time Lecturer in English at Loyola University. During the academic year 1952-1953 he was a full-time Instructor of English at Loyola University. In September, 1953, he rejoined the faculty at Creighton University. He is now an Assistant Professor of English and the Chairman of the Freshman English Program at Creighton.
I had originally hoped to trace conclusively the sources of Hugh Blair's rhetorical doctrines. As I went on with the study, however, I saw the futility of such a project; mere similarity of doctrine, I found, was not always a decisive argument in proving a debt. Accordingly, I decided on a less ambitious excursion into genetic scholarship. I have indicated the source of Blair's ideas wherever he has made an explicit acknowledgment of a debt or wherever the debt is unmistakable. The survey of rhetoric texts in the first chapter should make it possible for the reader to determine for himself the general source of the doctrines which have been left untraced.

The only liberty I took with Blair's text was to change the punctuation wherever I saw that the interests of clarity would be served.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to my adviser, Dr. George Engelhardt, for his expert guidance and advice. His own profound knowledge of rhetoric has preserved me, time and again, from making rash or untenable generalizations. Whatever dubious generalizations still remain must be charged solely to me.

It would be unforgivable in me not to acknowledge my thanks to my patient wife, who if she had done nothing more than keep the children's fingers out of the typewriter keys would have done a great deal toward bringing this dissertation to completion.
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BIBLIOGRAPHY
 CHAPTER I

A SURVEY OF RHETORIC TEXTBOOKS

USED IN ENGLISH SCHOOLS

FROM 1500 TO 1780

Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783) was almost the last of the unusually popular rhetoric textbooks. Archbishop Whately's *Elements of Rhetoric* (1828) was perhaps the only rhetoric book after Blair's that enjoyed wide prestige and an international sale. Alexander Bain's *English Composition and Rhetoric* (1879) and John F. Genung's *The Practical Elements of Rhetoric* (1902) sold well in the beginning, but their success was short-lived. By the time these books appeared, academic interest in rhetoric had reached the low-water mark. The study of rhetoric proper is as rare in our schools today as is the study of Greek. The Freshman Composition course that students take in college today can be called rhetoric only by grace of the most generous tolerance.

There was a time, however, when English and American schools subjected the student to a rigorous discipline in the arts of speaking and writing. The discipline was as formal and as exacting as a Japanese tea ceremony. The principles laid down for elegant English composition were often as old as the Greek and Latin classics. In many instances the English rhetoricians adapted the classical precepts to fit the exigencies of a non-inflected language, but even
with all this willingness to alter and adapt, the English rhetoricians still regarded the teaching of skills in discourse as very serious business. Because the ability to write and speak with finesse was the surest (if not the only) avenue to public preferment, the student too regarded his rhetoric class with a seriousness that would astound a modern teacher of composition. The student's rhetoric book became a well-thumbed vade mecum.

This chapter will look at some of the rhetoric textbooks used in the English schools from 1500 to the time just before the appearance of Blair's Lectures. The range and depth of this survey have had to be severely limited. Otherwise, this preliminary chapter would have ballooned to a size way out of proportion to the chief subject of the dissertation and would have involved the writer in a review of (almost literally) the whole of western culture. This survey, now covering some sixty rhetoricians and at least twice that number of rhetoric texts, originally ran to twice its present length. This historical chapter has assumed manageable proportions only because the exposition of the various rhetoric texts has been held to a minimum. Some exposition of the texts, some identification of lesser known rhetoricians, some indication of the use and popularity of the texts was deemed necessary; otherwise, this survey might have become a mere catalogue of authors and texts. This chapter should be regarded, then, not as providing an adequate treatment of rhetoric texts within the specified period (that in itself is a subject for a dissertation), but rather as setting the context for Hugh Blair's Lectures.

Judging from the number of rhetoric textbooks produced, the Tudor Age
was the period when the study of rhetoric was most active in England. Why this was so cannot be adequately answered in a sentence or even a paragraph. Certainly, no one cause can be assigned for the flourishing of rhetoric during the English Renaissance. Printing was introduced into England about this time; interest in the Greek and Latin classics revived at Oxford and Cambridge; skill inatory was the key to preferment in the Tudor courts; theological debate assumed a prominent position during the English schism from Rome; and many litigations over the confiscation of monastic properties occupied the attention of the courts—these are historical facts which literary historians commonly seize upon as lying close to the heart of the explanation. But an exploration of the causes for the renaissance of rhetoric during this period will not be a concern of this section. The concern of this first section of the chapter will be simply to review the more prominent rhetoric texts used in the English schools during the sixteenth century.

Under the influence of the second-century Sophistic, rhetoric in the Middle Ages ceased to be pursued primarily as a practical art and became rather a scholastic exercise guided by the compendia of such medieval rhetoricians as

Cassiodorus, Capella, and Isidore. Logic held the decidedly superior position in the curriculum. The province of rhetoric narrowed to a study of the devices for achieving an elaborate, ornate style, to the art of letter writing (ars dictaminis), and to the artes praedicandi. When the study of rhetoric found a place in the English schools of the sixteenth century, it continued to be very much a scholastic exercise but with the difference that once again, as in the days of Greece and Rome, rhetoric came to be studied primarily as a practical art. The study of grammar and rhetoric superseded the study of logic in the trivium. Instead of the exclusive concentration on style (elocutio), attention was once again directed to two other of the five traditional branches of rhetoric—investigation (inventio) and arrangement (dispositio). Letter-writing continued to command attention in the Tudor schools, but it now had to share the curriculum with the declamatio and with the three classical kinds of orations, the judicial, the deliberative, and the demonstrative. "A thorough training in the arts of language was the fundamental aim of the grammar schools of Tudor England," says Sister Miriam Joseph. Imaginative literature, which during the Middle Ages had been generally neglected in the schools, was now promoted to a place in the curriculum by such prominent schoolmasters as Elyot and Ascham.

The controversy about Ciceronianism raged, with varying degrees of violence, throughout the century. Allied with the problem of Ciceronianism was the problem of imitation. Such terms as wit and decorum were continually dis-


discussed, defined, and extolled. Late in the century the Ramists divided the rhetorical province into two parts. There was much concern about the proper basis for classifying the various figures and tropes, and a great deal of multiplying or subtracting of the number of figures and tropes to be studied.

Running parallel with this renewed interest in rhetoric was a lively concern for the vernacular. The English language was coming of age and was rather self-consciously anxious about its pedigree and purity. Debates about the relative merits of Latin and of the vernacular as media of communication divided Commons rooms into hostile factions. "Inkhorn terms" became a fighting word. To the ardent lover of language it is gratifying to learn that men once became as excited about a point of rhetoric or grammar as people today about the league standing of their favorite baseball team.

The number of rhetoric texts produced in this age will astound the reader. There was not only the re-issue of the classical rhetoric treatises but the production of rhetorics in the vernacular as well. Although much was begged, borrowed, or stolen--with or without acknowledgment--the important fact is that very early in the era of Modern English, schoolmasters were attempting to adapt the classical rules of eloquence to the capacities of our flexible un-inflected language.

"He who wishes to understand the principles upon which the sixteenth-century grammar school was founded in England would be unwise to begin anywhere else than with Erasmus," says Professor Baldwin. During the five years (1509-1514) that Erasmus spent in England, his friend John Colet was preoccupied with

4 Baldwin, Small Latine, I, 77.
founding St. Paul's school. Among other things, Dean Colet needed teachers and textbooks. He made an appeal to Erasmus. Although Erasmus did not succumb to Colet's invitation to teach at St. Paul's, he did prepare for publication two works which influenced the curricula not only at St. Paul's but at the other Tudor grammar schools—De Ratione Studii and De Duplici Copia Verborum ac Rerum.

De Ratione Studii (1511) is more important as a treatise on pedagogy than as a handbook of rhetoric, but the incidental observations on writing practices are of interest because they reveal the rhetorical matters that were to occupy the schoolmasters of the period. After making the traditional res-verba distinction, Erasmus reveals his dissatisfaction with the medieval preoccupation with dialectic by voicing a plea for a renewal of concern for elegant expression. Since "ideas are only intelligible to us by means of the words which describe them," students must cultivate the arts of expression assiduously, for although cognitio rerum is first in order of importance, cognitio verborum is first in order of time. Erasmus insists strongly that the rules of grammar and syntax should be kept to a minimum. The student should learn the basic rules,

5 Professor Baldwin says (Small Latine, I, 79): "When around 1530 we get definite information on the chief schools, we find their curricula organised in accordance with the principles of Erasmus and employing the texts in which Erasmus had from time to time embodied his principles."


7 Translation from Woodward, Erasmus on Education, 162.
but he should not be subjected to endless drilling in them. Erasmus says very pointedly,

For it is not by learning rules that we acquire the power of speaking a language, but by daily intercourse with those accustomed to express themselves with exactness and refinement, and by the copious reading of the best authors.\(^8\)

The secret of a good style lies in discriminating reading and in the exercise of the pen. The student must "write, write, and again write."\(^9\) Erasmus goes on to give advice on the practice of keeping a commonplace book; on the practice of paraphrasing poetry into prose, and vice versa; on the practice of rendering the same subject in two or more styles; on the practice of proving a proposition along several different lines of argument; and on the practice of construing from Latin into Greek.

At least eighty-eight editions of *De Ratione Studii* were published; but none of these editions was printed in England.\(^10\) England must have absorbed a good share of these eighty-eight editions, however, for, as we know, the English grammar schools were organised on the principles set forth in the *De Ratione Studii*.

Although Erasmus was working on his *De Copia* as early as 1500, he did not publish this work until 1511, when Nicholas Brylingerus printed it for him in Basle, with a dedication to Dean Colet. The book was used in England from the time of its original publication, but it did not have a printing in England.

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\(^8\) Ibid., 164.

\(^9\) Ibid., 165.

until Veltkirchius prepared an elaborately annotated edition in 1536.

The De Copia was designed to assist grammar school students in acquiring elegance and variety of expression in Latin composition. The First Book shows the student how to use the schemes and tropes (elocutio) for the purpose of variation; the Second Book instructs the student in the use of topics (inventio) for the same purpose. In looking at the copies of the De Copia in the British Museum, Professor Baldwin found that the First Book showed more signs of use than the Second—a fact which may point to the area of concentration in the English schools.

The De Copia was a widely used textbook of rhetoric. Foster Watson tells us that it became one of the most important textbooks in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and Professor Baldwin says that the De Copia was "the standard general text on varying up to Shakespeare's day." The alleged importance of this book is corroborated by the number of printings. There were 139 editions of the book in all, six of these editions being published in England.

The De Copia was prescribed in the statutes of the following grammar schools: St. Paul's (1518); Canterbury (1541); Worcester (1544); Bury St. Edmund's (1550); East Retford Grammar School (1552); Tideswell (1560); Norwich (1566); Rivington (1586); Merchant Taylors' (1572); Harrow (1590).

11 The Encyclopaedia and Dictionary of Education, ed. Foster Watson, 4 vols., London, 1922, III, 1422. The article on "Rhetoric" in this volume was written by Foster Watson, 1421-1423.

12 Small Latine, II, 179.

13 Mangan, Erasmus, II, 400.

14 See Watson, Grammar Schools, 439 and Baldwin, Small Latine, II, 179.
pia began to fall off after 1570, but even in the seventeenth century Erasmus's textbook is still being recommended by Brinsley and Hoole.

Pertinent to Erasmus's contribution to rhetorical theory is the controversy that raged during the early years of the sixteenth century about Ciceronianism. Adulation for Cicero's writings was fostered principally by the Italian purists, chief of whom were Christopher Longolius and Pietro Bembo. The Ciceronians maintained that Cicero should be the sole model for imitation and that no words or constructions should be admitted into modern Latin composition which could not be found in the extant writing of Cicero. This inordinate devotion to only one of the great classic writers seemed to Erasmus to be pedantic, ridiculous, and obscurantist. As early as 1520 Erasmus had written to Longolius protesting against this aping of Cicero. In 1528 he published his dialogue Ciceronianus, in which he fired broadside at the Latin purists. Far from silencing the disciples of Cicero, this clever satirical dialogue stimulated them to write spirited defenses of their Roman hero and to make scurrilous attacks on his impugners. Julius Caesar Scaliger headed the counter-attack by writing a vehement pamphlet against Erasmus, which he entitled Pro M. Tullio Cicerone contra D. Erasum Roterodamum (1531). Vives supported Erasmus's side in De Tradendis Disciplinis (1531). The battle raged back and forth inconclusively and carried over into the seventeenth century. Erasmus's position is summed up in these words from Ciceronianus:

    Times are changed; our instincts, needs, ideas, are not those of Cicero.

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15 Accounts of this controversy are given in Mangan, Erasmus, II, 291-307; in Woodward, Erasmus on Education, 51-60; and in Atkins, English Criticism; Renaissance, 46-47.
Let us indeed take example from him. He was a borrower, an imitator, if you will; but he copied in order to assimilate, to bring what he found into the service of his own age. Throughout Cicero's letters,—what verve, what actuality, what life! How remote they are from the compositions of the pedant working in his study. 16

"The work made a multitude of enemies," Mangan says, "but sold hugely." 17

Erasmus's treatise on letter-writing Modus Conscribendi Epistolas was published in 1522. Letter-writing had been the favorite rhetorical exercise during the Middle Ages. During the Renaissance, letter-writing dropped to an inferior, but not insignificant, position in the curriculum. For Erasmus, letters became the first extended form of composition after the student had mastered the fundamental rules of rhetoric. 13

Although Erasmus made no startling innovations in the art of letter-writing, his text was widely used in the schools. 19 The boys at Eton during the first half of the sixteenth century used Erasmus in conjunction with Sturm's edition of Cicero's letters. The pupils at Bury St. Edmund's in 1550 were still being required to study the text of Erasmus in the fourth form. The statutes of Bangor grammar school (1569) and those at Harrow (1591) require Erasmus in the later forms but prescribe Cicero's epistles in the first and third forms. Upon consulting Bibliotheca Erasmiana, John Mangan finds that there were 103 editions

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16 Woodward's translation, Erasmus on Education, 63.

17 Erasmus, II, 299.

18 "... posteaquam suis tradiderit compendio artis Rhetoricae praeccepta, studibus illos brevibus, & Epistolaribus argumentis frequenter exercere."—Erasmus, Opera Omnia, ed. Le Clerc, 11 volumes, Leyden, 1703-1706, I, 352.

19 The information about the use of Erasmus's Modus in the Tudor schools is derived from Baldwin, Small Latine, I, 299-312.
of the Modus Conscribendi Epistolae printed.\textsuperscript{20} Next to the De Copia, which went through 139 editions, Erasmus's treatise on letter-writing would seem to have been his most popular rhetorical work.

When the tenth volume of the Oxford edition of Erasmus's letters was published, there came to light a little known and hitherto unavailable work of rhetoric by the great humanist.\textsuperscript{21} This was the Compendium Rhetorices, reprinted in the Oxford edition from the sole surviving copy of the only edition of the work, which was originally published in 1544 for the use of William Bernaerts's pupils at the College of the Castle in Louvain. In form it is nothing more than a set of lecture notes on the methods of collecting and presenting proofs in forensic, deliberative, and epideictic oratory. The Compendium is of interest to us chiefly for showing Erasmus's great dependence on such classical treatises as the Rhetorica ad Herennium, Cicero's De Inventione and Topica, and Quintilian's Institutio Oratoria. The fact that the work had only one edition would suggest that this book was neither widely used nor wholly satisfactory as a textbook for the schools.

It is not too much of an exaggeration to call Erasmus the "Schoolmaster of Europe." There were at least twenty-four hundred editions of all of Erasmus's textbooks published in Europe.\textsuperscript{22} Even if there were only five hundred

\textsuperscript{20} Erasmus, II, 400.


\textsuperscript{22} Mangan, Erasmus, II, 395.
copies printed for each of these editions, well over a million copies of Eras-
mus's works circulated throughout Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth
centuries. This wide circulation coupled with the prestige of Erasmus's name
gave a vigorous currency to the educational and rhetorical ideas of the great
Dutch humanist.

Along with Erasmus, Juan Luis Vives (1492-1540) stands in the fore-
front of those continental scholars who spent only a few years in England but
exercised an influence on the English grammar school that endured for well over
the attention of Henry VIII when, upon encouragement from Sir Thomas More, he
undertook an edition of St. Augustine's Civitas Dei in 1522 and dedicated the
work to the English monarch. Cardinal Wolsey had the approval of the King and
Queen when in 1523 he appointed Vives to the Lectureship of Rhetoric at Oxford.
The King entrusted the education of his daughter Mary to Vives and Thomas Lin-
amore. Vives became a persona non grata when Henry VIII was seeking a divorce
from Vives's compatriot, Catherine of Aragon, and he left England, never to re-
return, in 1528.

Vives published the De Disciplinis, his major work on education, at
Antwerp in 1531. Three works on rhetoric followed soon after: Rhetoricae, sive

23 The present writer is indebted for his biographical facts to Fos-
ter Watson, Luis Vives: El Fran Valenciano, Hispanic Notes & Monographs, Oxford,
1922.

24 The De Disciplinis is the title that comprehends two of Vives's
major works: the seven books of the De Causis Corruptarum Artium and the five
books of the De Tradendis Disciplinis. Foster Watson has published a transla-
tion of the De Tradendis Disciplinis in his book Vives: on Education, Cam-
bridge, 1913, 1-304.
De Ratione Discendi, Libri Tres (Louvain, 1533); De Consultatione (Louvain, 1533), a short treatise on rhetoric that he had composed while at Oxford; and De Conscribendis Epistolis (Basle, 1536). His Exercitatio Linguæ Latinæ (1538), a book containing interesting sidelights on the life and habits of Tudor scholars and pupils, was designed to aid students in learning how to speak Latin.25

Although the contribution of De Ratione Discendi to the art of rhetoric may be, as C. S. Baldwin says,26 "meager and vaguely general," this text, together with the companion De Consultatione, is important to the literary historian for having provided a rich mine of ideas for Ben Jonson when he composed his Timber, or Discoveries. Both to Mr. Percy Simpson and to M. Castelain27 we are indebted for a detailed revelation of Jonson's indebtedness to Vives.

Vives has sometimes been called "the second Quintilian."28 Like the Quintilian of the first century A.D., Vives was a native Spaniard and made a significant and influential contribution to the theory of rhetoric and education. But we must not suppose that Vives merely reproduced the ideas of his famous countryman. He was prepared to accept what was most valid and permanent in the heritage from the ancients, but he preferred to look upon the ancients as

25 This was translated into English under the title, Tudor School-boy Life, London, 1908. The Introduction to this translation gives a good account of the significance of this widely used textbook.

26 Charles Sears Baldwin, Renaissance Literary Theory and Practice, New York, 1939, 54.


a springboard rather than as a station.

While Vives's educational theories unquestionably had an influence on the English schools, there is little available evidence of his books being used as texts. His Ad Sapientiam Introductio is recommended in the statutes for Eton (1560), Westminster (1574), and St. Paul's (1592-1583).29 Professor Baldwin does not find the Exercitatio Linguae Latinae mentioned in any of the curricula, but on such evidence as the fact that Henry Bynneman records a printing of the book he is certain that it was used in the schools.30 The Cathedral School at Durham (1593) specifically recommends Vives's De Conscribendis Epistolis, together with Erasmus's treatise, as the text for letter-writing.31 Besides being a storehouse of ideas for Ben Jonson, the De Ratione Dicendi quite probably influenced Shakespeare.32 Erasmus's textbooks, however, seem to have had the main, if not the exclusive, franchise in the early English grammar schools. Why was this so? Professor Baldwin may have hit on the answer. Erasmus, he says, was the true Renaissance champion; men like Vives and Colet belonged to the Catholic Reformation rather than to the Renaissance. "While they might condemn barbarity, and praise literary polish," Professor Baldwin says of Vives and Colet, "yet their consuming interest was in moral reform."33 Schoolmasters undoubtedly read Vives's books, but they bought Erasmus's books.

29 Baldwin, Small Latine, I, 355, 383, 416.
30 Ibid., 497.
31 Ibid., 412.
32 For evidence of this probable influence on Shakespeare, see Baldwin, Small Latine, I, 729-750.
33 Ibid., 199.
Three other continental rhetorians who had a noticeable influence on English rhetoric deserve brief mention here. The first of these continental rhetoricians is Petrus Mosellanus or, to use his family name, Pierre Schade (1493-1524)—a German professor of Greek and a colleague of Rudolph Agricola (1490-1555) at Leipzig University. He published a rhetoric textbook entitled *Tabulae de Schematibus et Tropis Petri Mosellani: In Rhetorica Tabulae P. Melanchthonis: In Erasmi . . . Libellum de Duplici Copia* (Antwerp, 1529). As early as 1530 the boys at Eton were using Mosellanus's text in the sixth form, and during the first half of the sixteenth century Mosellanus became the standard author on *elocutio* in the English grammar schools.35 Vives, too, recognized the soundness of Mosellanus's rhetorical teaching and recommended that the German humanist's table of figures of speech "be hung up on the wall so that it will catch the attention of the pupil as he walks past it, and force itself upon the eyes."36 As the reference to Erasmus's *De Copia* in the sub-title might suggest, Mosellanus was providing a handbook to aid also in the exercise of amplification.

The other name mentioned in the sub-title of Mosellanus' book is Philippus Melanchthon (1497-1560) or Philip Schwartzerd,37 a professor of classics at Wittenberg and a close associate of Martin Luther. Among his many published

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34 A brief biographical sketch of Mosellanus is given in *Biographie Universelle, Ancienne et Moderne*.


37 Melanchthon is the Greek equivalent of Schwartzerd, black earth.
works were three rhetoric texts: De Rhetorica Libri Tres (Wittenberg, 1519); Institutiones Rhetoricae (Hagenoa, 1521); and Elementorum Rhetorices Libri Duo (Wittenberg, 1531). The particular merit of Melanchthon's rhetorics as textbooks was that they were well organized and were written in a plain, succinct Latin style. He gives only a minimum treatment of the figures, referring his readers, for a fuller treatment, to such rhetoricians as Cicero, Quintilian, Erasmus, and Mosellanus. It is noteworthy that the tripartite division of De Rhetorica (inventio in the first book; dispositio in the second; elocutio in the third) is the same division that Thomas Wilson was to use in the Arte of Rhetorique. In the Institutiones Rhetoricae, a compilation of his lecture notes, Melanchthon classifies the figures under three heads: those of diction; those which appeal to the emotions; and those of thought. In his later rhetorical work, however, Melanchthon classifies the figures according to dialectical processes: ex definitione, de divisione, ex causis, de contrariis, ex similibus, a generi, et ex circumstantialibus. By relegating inventio and dispositio more and more to the province of logic, Melanchthon was laying the groundwork for the revolution that Ramus and Talaear were to effect in rhetoric later on in the sixteenth century. According to Baldwin's summary statement, "Mosellanus furnished the key to elocutio or rhetoric proper. The similar rhetoric of Melanchthon furnished allied structural information on composition."38

Joannes Susenbrotus's Epitome Troporum ac Schematum (Zurich, 1540) was an amalgam of Mosellanus and Melanchthon. Susenbrotus follows Mosellanus's table of figures very closely but observes Melanchthon's tripartite organiz-
tion of the figures. The Epitome, with its collection of 132 schemes and tropes, had a printing in England in 1562, and thereafter, for the remainder of the sixteenth century, it replaced Mosellanus as the standard grammar-school text for the figures and the tropes. After 1560 such schools as Eton, Westminster, and Durham were prescribing Susenbroctus for the fifth or sixth form. The success of Susenbroctus prompted Sherry, Peacham, and Puttenham to compile English versions of this treatise on the schemes and tropes.

Before going on to the vernacular rhetorics, we will look briefly at the classical rhetoricians whose treatises were used in the schools or influenced the course of English rhetorical theory. Perhaps in no other branch of English letters was the impress of classical writers so noticeable and of such long duration as it was in rhetoric. Our modern rhetoric books never even mention such names as Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian. At least until the end of the eighteenth century, rhetoric books not only mentioned the classical writers but quoted them extensively. As the following survey will show, the impact of the various classical rhetoricians was continuous in its duration but fluctuating in its intensity.

Aristotle's Rhetoric did not play a conspicuous part in the development of the rhetorical program in sixteenth-century England. Significantly enough, the index to Foster Watson's The English Grammar Schools to 1660 has no...

39 Ibid., II, 216.

40 Ibid., I, 356, 382, 413.

entry for Aristotle or his Rhetoric. There are, however, scattered references
to Aristotle's text. Early in the century Vives recommends Aristotle's treat-
ise.42 John Astley and Roger Ascham read the Rhetoric together,43 and in 1551,
Ascham's pupil, Edward VI, was studying Aristotle's Rhetoric (but in an Italian
translation).44 Sir Thomas White prescribes the Rhetoric in the curriculum for
St. John's, Oxford, in 1555;45 John Reynolds (1649-1607) lectured at Oxford on
the three books of the Rhetoric;46 but in the curriculum of other English schools
Aristotle's name is conspicuous by its absence. Later on in the century, Hos-
kins mentions that Sir Philip Sidney had translated the first two books of the
Rhetoric.47 According to Watt's Bibliotheca Britannica, the first English edi-
tion of the Rhetoric was produced by T. Goulston in 1619. In 1657 Thomas Hobbes
published a condensation of Aristotle that he entitled A Briefe of the Art of
Rhetorique.48 Little used as it was, the Rhetoric was still better known and
more studied in the sixteenth-century English schools than the Poetics.49

43 Works of Roger Ascham, ed. W. A. Wright, Cambridge, 1904, 123.
45 Ibid., 166.
47 Directions for Speech and Style by John Hoskins, ed. Hoyt H. Hudson,
48 There is a convenient reprint of Hobbes's digest in the Everyman
Library edition, Aristotle's Poetics, Demetrius on Style, and Other Classical
49 See Marvin T. Herrick, The Poetics of Aristotle in England, Cor-
Despite the revival of interest in Greek under the English humanists, readers were thwarted in their reading of the Poetics and Rhetoric by the fact that the most readily available texts of Aristotle were those in Italian translations. Another explanation of Aristotle's failure to gain a foothold in the English grammar schools may be gained from Donald L. Clark's account of the Renaissance attitudes toward rhetoric:

From the beginning there were three characteristic and divergent views on rhetoric. There was the moral philosophical view of Plato, who condemned rhetoric because it seemed to him to deal with appearances, opinion, and pleasure, whereas it ought to deal with reality, truth, and the good life. . . . Then there was the philosophical scientific view of Aristotle, who endeavored to devise a theory of rhetoric without moral praise or blame for it. . . . There was finally the practical educational view of rhetoricians from Isocrates to Cicero to Quintilian, who praised rhetoric, practiced it, and taught it as an essential attribute of the free citizen.50

The schoolmasters felt that the more practical approach of the Latin rhetoricians, with their emphasis on the educational and ethical value of the study of rhetoric, would be more suitable for their pupils. But while other rhetorics won the school market, the influence of the Stagyrite was not negligible. Aristotle had an indirect influence on rhetorical training in England, for, as Lane Cooper observes, "the Rhetoric not only of Cicero and Quintilian, but of the Middle Ages, of the Renaissance, and of modern times, is, in its best elements, essentially Aristotelian."51

To this day the authorship and date of περὶ Ερμηνείας (De Eloc-
cutione, as it is often translated in Latin; or, in English, On Style) has not been ascertained. It has commonly been attributed to Demetrius Phalereus, a pupil of Theophrastus, who governed Athens from 317 to 307 B.C. and who was invited by Ptolemy Soter to help collect books for the great library at Alexandria. Even Hugh Blair credited the treatise to Demetrius Phalereus (Lecture XI). Modern scholars, however, after examining internal and external evidence, have come to the conclusion that no one knows precisely who the author is and when it was written. W. Rhys Roberts draws these three conclusions:

(1) it is not, in its present form, the work of Demetrius Phalereus, whatever the weight of tradition in favour of this view; (2) probably belongs either to the first century B.C. or the first century A.D., the latter period being on the whole the more likely; (3) its author may have borne the name Demetrius. 62

Whoever wrote the treatise composed a full, interesting, and, in some respects, valuable study of style. The book is organised according to the four styles. After a preliminary discussion of clauses and periods (1-35), 63 Demetrius proceeds to discuss the (1) elevated style (38-127); (2) the elegant style (128-189); (3) the plain style (190-235); and (4) the forcible style (240-304).

In discussing the four styles, the author points out the peculiar qualities of each style, expatiates on what subject-matter is most appropriate to each style. 54 Demetrius is interested particularly in the choice and arrangement of

52 Demetrius on Style, trans. W. Rhys Roberts, Cambridge, 1902, 64.

53 The numbers refer to the paragraph divisions introduced by Petrus Victorius in 1552 and adopted by Roberts in his translation.

Atkins maintains that the influence of the *On Style* on Renaissance rhetoric is unmistakable, and he goes on to remark that "it inspired in all probability many of those treatises on letter-writing of which the *Epistolica Institutio* of Justus Lipsius was perhaps the most famous example."55 Vives recommended the book;56 in his Tractate of Education Milton recommended Demetrius for study; and as late as the second half of the eighteenth century, Hugh Blair speaks of the book with favor. It is a curious fact that among the twenty-five editions of Demetrius, from the *editio princeps* in 1508-1509 until 1900, there was no edition from an English press.57

Any discussion of Cicero's rhetorical works must take into account, if it must not begin with, a consideration of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. Professor Baldwin, in discussing the English grammar-school curriculum during the Tudor Age, says that since the *Ad Herennium* was "the basic elementary text on rhetoric" one would be well advised "to consider it first as the key text to the rhetorical system."58

For many years this anonymous work was ascribed to Cicero and during the Middle Ages was commonly printed at the head of Cicero's rhetorical works. In 1492, however, a Renaissance scholar named Raphael Rhægius assigned the work to Cornificius, a Roman quaestor living about 81 B.C.59 Rhægius decided the

57 See the bibliography in *Demetrius*, trans. Roberts, 311-314.
58 *Small Latine*, II, 72.
59 For an account of this piece of detection, see the Introduction to
case on the grounds that quotations which Quintilian had taken from a rhetoric known to be by Cornificius bore a striking resemblance to certain sections of the Ad Herennium. While it is generally agreed today that Cicero is not the author of this work, it is not widely agreed that Cornificius is the author. Although the work cannot be dated with any certainty, internal evidence seems to point to some date between 86 and 82 B.C. The Ad Herennium, which together with Cicero's De Inventione represents the earliest extant Latin work on rhetoric, remained almost unknown in the ancient world but enjoyed a great popularity in the Middle Ages and wide currency in the Renaissance. "By conservative count," Karl Wallace says of the Ad Herennium, "there were twelve appearances from 1470-1669."61

The schematic arrangement of the Ad Herennium may have been just the thing which recommended the text to the Tudor schoolmasters. Its influence on Renaissance rhetoricians was extensive. Erasmus frequently refers to the Ad Herennium in his De Copia, and Susenbrotus used the work as the principal source for his Epitome Troporum ad Schematum. Sherry was to take his list of rhetorical figures mainly from the Ad Herennium, and Thomas Wilson,62 laboring under the delusion that the Ad Herennium was the work of his literary god Cicero, embodied certain sections of it in his Arte of Rhetorique. In summarizing the


61 Bacon on Rhetoric, 203.

significance of this book, Atkins says that "apart from the fact that it is one of the earliest works in Latin prose that have come down complete, it also embodies the earliest treatment of prose style in Latin, and presents, also for the first time in Latin, the classification of plain, middle, and grand in connexion with style."63

Cicero's contribution to rhetorical theory, if we are to judge from the quantity, quality, and influence of his work in this field, establishes him at the head of the long line of classical rhetoricians. His impress on English theory and practice is as unmistakable as it is incalculable.

The catalogue alone of Cicero's rhetorical works is impressive. The first of these works was the De Inventione, probably written about 84 B.C. when Cicero was still a boy or a youth (puer aut adolescentulus). This work, of which only two books survive, strikes one as being a collection of notes taken in class rather than as an original treatise. It bears enough similarities in doctrine to the Ad Herennium to suggest a common origin, but there are enough differences to discourage the conclusion that these two works are by the same author. The De Optimo Genere Oratorum, which was written about 46 B.C., was originally intended as an introduction to a proposed translation of Demosthenes's On the Crown and Aeschines's Against Ctesiphon. If this translation was ever made, it has been lost, and the only remnant of the project is this short essay of less than a dozen pages.64 Cicero's next rhetorical work is the Top-

63 Criticism in Antiquity. II, 18.

cicero, written in 44 B.C. for the instruction of his friend Trebatius. In the introductory paragraphs of the Topica, Cicero says that his work is merely a summary of Aristotle's teaching on invention. One of the translators of this work expressed some doubt, however, about Cicero's debt to Aristotle: "What emerges is a miniature treatise on Invention, and it seems clear that Cicero is adapting, perhaps from memory, some late Hellenistic treatise, and that he was misled by the mention of Aristotle as the first writer on Topics into thinking that his source really represented Aristotle's work." The fourth of what is commonly considered Cicero's "minor" works in rhetoric is the De Partitio Oratorum (c. 45 B.C.). This comparatively brief but remarkably detailed treatise on the art of oratory takes the form of a dialogue between Cicero and his son Marcus Tullius. At times, this most scientific of all Cicero's treatments of rhetoric assumes the form and the tone of a catechism of questions and answers.

The most notable of Cicero's rhetorical works are the De Oratore (55 B.C.), the Brutus (46 B.C.), and the Orator (46 B.C.). These three works represent his major attempt to answer the Atticists and the Asiatics, who, during and after his exile, challenged his authority as an orator and a rhetorician.

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The exponents of the "Asiatic" style had won many disciples for that manner of writing characterized by lavish ornaments, labored conceits, and highly mannered constructions. The Atticists, on the other hand, influenced by Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, advocated the plain, neat, severe style of such writers as Lysias and Thucydides. Objecting to the vulgar excesses of the Asiatic style and to the cramping limitations of the Attic style, Cicero held up his own style as an example of a happy amalgam of the virtues of both styles and as a needful corrective of their vices and deficiencies. 68

Although Cicero's epistles and orations were frequently recommended by John Brinsley and Charles Hoole for study in the grammar schools, Cicero's rhetorical works seem to have been used in the universities more than in the grammar schools. Melanchthon, who in 1537 produced the first known English printing 69 of the Orator and the De Oratore, did not consider these texts suitable for elementary schools. 70 Sir Thomas Pope recommended Cicero's rhetorical works for the curriculum of Trinity College, Oxford, in 1554, 71 and Sir Thomas White recommended them for St. John's College, Oxford, in 1555. 72 R. C. Jebb in an article on Rhetoric in the Ninth Edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica says that the study of rhetoric at Cambridge and Oxford during the last quarter

68 See Atkins, Criticism in Antiquity, II, 34-37.
69 So says Baldwin, Small Latine, II, 20.
71 Baldwin, Small Latine, II, 66.
72 Ibid., I, 106.
of the sixteenth century was based principally on Quintilian, Hermogenes, and Cicero. There were many continental editions of Cicero's works, several of which were undoubtedly used in English schools. Professor Wallace discovered fourteen editions to 1546 of the De Inventione; six editions of the Topica; eleven editions of the De Oratore to 1569. From the English presses there were two editions of Opera Ciceronis (Perth, 1566-1577; London, 1585) and three editions of the De Oratore (London, 1537, 1575; Cambridge, 1589). Foster Watson points out that on the university level the "Moralia Catonis (so-called) and Cicero were the staple prose books, the latter's De Oratore being the first text book a knowledge of which qualified in Rhetoric." The Ciceronian controversy, involving such figures as Erasmus, Vives, John Sturm, Peter Ramus, Gabriel Harvey, Thomas Wilson, and Roger Ascham, indicates that a cult favoring Cicero's rhetorical theory and practice was firmly established in the schools. As will be seen, a respect for Cicero's rhetorical theory persisted well into the eighteenth century.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a Greek contemporary of Horace, taught rhetoric at Rome from 30 to 8 B.C. Like Cicero before him, Dionysius depre-
cated the worst features of Asianism and Atticism and recommended as models the best Attic orators. His monumental work, of which only the first part and fragments of the second part survive, was On Ancient Orators, a history and criti-
icism of the great Attic orators. Among his scripta rhetorica which have survived is a work that collectively has come to be entitled Three Literary Letters: (1) First Letter to Armaeus, an attempt to disprove the popular contention that Demosthenes was indebted to Aristotle's Rhetoric; (2) Second Letter to Armaeus, an analysis of Thucydides's style; (3) Letter to Gnaeus Pompeius, a discussion of Plato as a stylist, with some comparative remarks on the styles of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon and with a rather lengthy treatment of Imitation.

In the rhetorical work known as On the Arrangement of Words (περὶ συμβάσεως ἀρχῆς),76 Dionysius treats of only one aspect of rhetoric, the order of words. In the first chapter Dionysius remarks that in composition two things are worthy of note, the subject-matter and the expression. He will confine himself to the latter topic because that is the part of eloquence which is most teachable to the young. Eloquent expression involves a due regard for arrangement and choice of words. But because other rhetoricians have dealt exclusively and sufficiently with choice of words, he will confine his study to the arrangement.

Dionysius was by no means a wholly original rhetorician, but he did show for the first time the inherent beauty of words and possibility of achieving charm and beauty with even everyday words if they were skillfully arranged. He was one with Cicero and Horace in laying the foundations of a sound classicism which was to serve as the inspiration for the Augustan Age in Rome and later on in England. Because he lays special emphasis on literary rather than

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76 The Greek συμβάσεως can be translated into Latin by the word compositio or collocatio.
oral composition, Foster Watson claims that Dionysius was "the first great exponent of the art of literary criticism."  

The *editio princeps* of Dionysius's works was published in Paris by Robertus Stephanus in 1546. John Sturm published the Greek text of the *De Compositione Verborum* at Strasbourg four years later. English editions of Dionysius did not appear until the eighteenth century. John Upton published a Latin translation in London in 1702. J. Hudson published a two-volume edition of Dionysius, with Greek and Latin text, at Oxford in 1704. Hugh Blair must have used either Hudson's text or the Greek and Latin text published by William Holwell, London, 1766. There is no evidence that Dionysius's rhetorical writings were ever used as a textbook in the classroom in the way that the texts of Cicero and Quintilian were used.

Horace does not exercise his influence on English writers until the late seventeenth century, but he will be discussed here along with the other classical writers. His *Ars Poetica*, or *Epistle to the Pisos*, was primarily a treatise on poetry, not on rhetoric. When English rhetoricians quoted him, they referred to isolated dicta, not to a general body of rhetorical theory. They

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77 Encyclopaedia on Education, III, 1421.
79 Rhys Roberts says (Three Literary Letters, 211) that Holwell's edition was "the most considerable direct contribution made by English scholarship to the study of the *Scripta Rhetorica* of Dionysius."
81 It was Quintilian who first referred to this Epistle as *Ars Poetica*. See Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, VIII, iii, 60.
refer to such things as "the purple patches" (purpureus pannus), the doctrine of appropriateness and decorum, the doctrine of usage in regard to words, and "the labor of the file" (limae labor). Professor Atkins considers that Horace's greatest contribution to criticism was his fervent recommendation of the Greeks as models; "in asserting once for all," Atkins says, "the supremacy of classical Greek art he may be said to have inaugurated a new phase in the history of criticism."82

One of the reasons why Horace infiltrated English literary criticism so thoroughly, especially during the Augustan Age, was that his doctrines were propagated by so many of the literary dictators. Dryden, for instance, averred that Horace's criticisms were "the most instructive of any written in this art,"83 and in the Preface to Troilus and Cressida he says that "Aristotle with his interpreters, and Horace, and Longinus, are the authors to whom I owe my lights."84 Addison showed his admiration for Horace by the number of Horatian passages prefixed as mottos to the essays in the Tatler and Spectator and by his obvious attempts to imitate that curiosa felicitas in diction for which Horace is noted. Pope, of course, employs the Horatian form and manner in such works as The Essay on Criticism, the Moral Essays, and the Imitations of Horace. In the Essay on Criticism Pope's tribute to Horace is that "without method [he] talks us into sense," that he is "supreme in judgment, as in wit," and that "his

82 Atkins, Criticism in Antiquity, II, 100.


84 Ibid., 207. For a full study of Horace's influence, see Amanda M. Ellis, "Horace's Influence on Dryden," Philological Quarterly, IV, 1925, 39-60.
precepts teach but what his works inspire" (ll. 653-660). Horace was Dr. Johnson's favorite author too. A look at the index of G. B. Hill's edition of Boswell's Life reveals that no other classical writer is mentioned oftener than Horace. Johnson often prefixed lines from Horace to his essays in the Rambler and Adventurer, and he frequently backs up his own critical pronouncements with quotations from Horace's Ars Poetica.85

Promoted by such esteemed literary figures, Horace could not help making his way among English students, not, it is true, of the Tudor Age but of the eighteenth century. Bosker accounts for this great popularity in the eighteenth century by saying, "The terseness and elegance of his diction, his unrivalled clearness of statement, and his didactic tendency, appealed strongly to the writers of the Augustan Age, who made correctness and lucidity their aims."86 It was probably just this talent for elegance and clarity that made Blair in his Lectures quote Horace so often as a supporting authority for his own insistence on lucidity.

M. Fabius Quintilianus—or, as he is more familiarly known, Quintilian—exercised a wide influence on his own age and a marked influence on the rhetorical theory of England. Quintilian is like Shakespeare in one respect; more is known about his work than about the man himself.87 Born in Spain about

85 For a grouping of Johnson's references to Horace, see Goad, Horace in English Literature, 233-254.


87 The biographical facts here have been taken from J. S. Reid's article on Quintilian in the Ninth Edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica.
31 A.D., he went to Rome, where after completing his education he became a very successful pleader in the law courts. In the course of time he acquired such a reputation as a rhetorician that Vespasian established a chair of rhetoric for him at Rome. The prestige of this imperial endowment made him the supreme authority on rhetoric up to, and for many years after, his death, about 96 A.D. About the year 88 he retired from his teaching post to write his great work on the training of the orator, the *Institutio Oratoria*.88

The *Institutio Oratoria* is a multi-volume work comprising twelve books. A general outline of the work would run something like this:89

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Main Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book I</td>
<td>Deals with preliminary education necessary for a study of rhetoric.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book II</td>
<td>Defines the nature, aims, and scope of rhetoric.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books III-VII</td>
<td>Treat of oratory itself, with emphasis on the finding (inventio) and arranging (dispositio) of material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books VIII-X</td>
<td>Treat of style (elocutio).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book XI</td>
<td>Deals with memory (memoria) and delivery (pronuntiatio).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book XII</td>
<td>Deals with the requirements for a perfect orator.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quintilian tells us that rhetoric can best be studied under three main heads—the art (de arte), the artist (de artifice), and the work (de opere).90 This division is reminiscent of the divisions made in Hellenistic poetics:91 poesis or subject-matter, poema or form, and poeta or the poet. Quintilian follows this plan, in general, in the arrangement of his own work: Books III-VII deal-


89 A more detailed outline is given in C. S. Baldwin’s *Ancient Rhetoric and Poetics*, New York, 1924, 63-66.

90 *Instit.*, II, xiv, 5.

ing with subject-matter, Books VIII-XI, and Book XII dealing with the orator.

No exposition of Quintilian's rhetorical views is possible here, but Quintilian's name and doctrines will recur frequently when Blair's rhetorical theories are being investigated.

According to D. L. Clark, English rhetorical training during the Renaissance was based firmly on Quintilian. Another historian of the period said, "Every humanist tract upon education or upon rhetoric is largely a reproduction of Quintilian." The truth of these claims is corroborated by the testimony of prominent sixteenth-century schoolmasters and by other modern authorities. Sir. Thomas Elyot, for instance, recommends that rhetoric be taught "either in greke out of Hermogines or of Quintilian in latine." William Kempe in 1588 maintained that Cicero and Quintilian "are the only Latin schoolmasters to all good students even at this day." As early as 1530 Eton and Winchester were reading Cicero and Quintilian in the upper forms. The Statutes of Edward VI required the professor of dialectic and rhetoric at Cambridge to use Aristotle, Hermogenes, Cicero, and Quintilian. In setting the curriculum for the newly-founded Trinity College, Oxford, in 1555, Sir Thomas Pope pre-

92 Milton at St. Paul's School, 132, 165.
93 Woodward, Erasmus on Education, 121.
96 Baldwin, Small Latine, I, 158.
scribed Quintilian’s rhetoric by name.98

Watt’s Bibliotheca Britannica reveals that there were more than forty-five editions of Quintilian’s Institutes of Oratory between 1470 and 1560. Making a count of the number of editions of Quintilian published throughout Europe between 1470 and 1600, Elbert W. Harrington found there were some one hundred and eighteen editions of the Institutes.99 These, of course, were all continental editions. Not until 1641 did an edition of Quintilian’s work issue from an English press. Until someone does a definitive study of the textbooks used in English schools, one will not really know to what extent Quintilian and the other classical authors were used. But after studying some of the pedagogical and rhetorical treatises of the sixteenth century, one does not find it difficult to concur with a modern authority like William G. Crane when he says, “Most of the rhetorical theory of . . . the Renaissance was derived from the treatises of Cicero and Quintilian.”100 The influence of Quintilian and Cicero is still strong when Hugh Blair composes his lectures on rhetoric in the latter half of the eighteenth century.101

As the previous paragraphs reveal, the classical rhetorician who shared the spotlight with Cicero and Quintilian, for a while at least, was Her-

98 Baldwin, Small Latine, I, 105.


100 Crane, Wit and Rhetoric, 3-4.

101 For a list of the later English writers who were influenced by Quintilian, see H. F. Harding, “Quintilian’s Witnesses,” Speech Monographs, I, September, 1934, 1-20.
Hermogenes of Tarsus flourished (c. 170 A.D.) in the reign of Marcus aurelius. A precocious child, he secured a position as teacher of rhetoric by the time he was seventeen years old, but by the time he had reached the age of twenty-five his mind gave way, and he spent the remaining ten years of his life in a state of intellectual impotency. The rhetorical work of his that enjoyed a great vogue was the Progymnasmata. The progymnasmata were the first writing exercises, the "themes," that the schoolboy attempted after he had learned his rhetorical precepts. Hermogenes's Progymnasmata was used extensively in the Middle Ages after it had been translated into Latin by Priscian about 500 A.D. When Hermogenes's Progymnasmata is taken up by the Renaissance schools it is read in the original Greek. Besides being used at Cambridge about 1570 as one of the three basic classical texts on rhetoric, it is recommended by Vives, Thomas Elyot, Leonard Cox, Sir Thomas White, and John Sturm. For all its popularity, however, Atkins feels that because Hermogenes's Progymnasmata embodied "a system of subtle distinctions and technical rules mostly trivial and


103 For the history of progymnasmata in the classical schools, see Georg Reichel, Quaestiones Progymnasmaticae, Leipzig, 1909.

absurd" it had a stultifying effect on rhetorical studies.\textsuperscript{105}

Hermogenes was soon supplanted in the English schools by Aphthonius's 
Progymnasmata, largely because in addition to supplying the same principles and 
exercises as found in Hermogenes he gave short illustrations of the fourteen 
minor forms of composition.\textsuperscript{106} Aphthonius was a sophist and teacher of rhetoric 
in Antioch during the fourth century A.D. During the sixteenth and seventeenth 
centuries at least thirty editions in Latin and twenty editions in Greek of Aph-
thonius's Progymnasmata were published in Europe.\textsuperscript{107} Five Latin editions were 
published in England before 1600, and four more between 1600 and 1635.\textsuperscript{108} The 
form of Aphthonius that enjoyed the greatest vogue in the English grammar 
schools after 1572, when Henry Middleton published an edition in England, was a 
combination of the Latin translations by Rudolphus Agricola and Joannes Maria 
Catanaeus together with the commentary of Reinhardus Lorichius. Aphthonius's 
text was prescribed for such grammar schools as Sandwich (1580), Rivington 
(1566), Norwich (1566), Durham (1593), Blackburn (1597); and in the curricula of 
other grammar schools it is, Baldwin says "regularly implied when not specifi-
cally prescribed."\textsuperscript{109} John Brinsley and Charles Hoole provide testimony of the

\textsuperscript{105} Atkins, Criticism in Antiquity, II, 345.

\textsuperscript{106} The best account of Aphthonius's place in the grammar-school 
curriculum and of his influence on Shakespeare's writing is found in Chapter 
XXXIX, "Upper Grammar School: Shakespeare's Themes," of Baldwin's Small Latine, 
II, 288-354.

\textsuperscript{107} Crandall, Wit and Rhetoric, 62.

\textsuperscript{108} For a list of the Renaissance scholars who made translations of 
Aphthonius's work, see Francis R. Johnson's Introduction to the facsimile edi-
tion of Richard Rainolde's The Foundation of Rhetorike, New York, 1945, xi-xii.

\textsuperscript{109} Baldwin, Small Latine, II, 283.
continued popularity of Aphthonius's text in the early seventeenth century. 110 Aphthonius's name will recur in connection with Rainolde's Foundation of Rhetoric.

Like Horace's Ars Poetica, Longinus's On the Sublime did not exercise an influence on English rhetorical theory until the late seventeenth century, but this treatise will be discussed here along with the other classical texts. In 1554 Francis Robertello had published the editio princeps of the Greek text of this treatise and attributed the work to Dionysius Longinus, but not until the seventeenth century did respectable translations of it begin to appear. Today, On the Sublime is for most students one of the supreme documents of literary criticism. It is certainly that. But one must not forget that this work was written by a rhetorician and that it has made a contribution to rhetoric as well as to literary criticism. "The object of the author," says W. Rhys Roberts, "rather is to indicate broadly the essentials of a noble and impressive style." 111 Longinus's treatise played no part in the revival of interest in rhetoric during the Renaissance, but it did play a prominent part in the study of rhetoric during the eighteenth century.

Once Robertello had made Longinus available again to the Western World, interest in the treatise flourished. 112 The first edition to issue from English presses was Gerard Langbaine's publication at Oxford in 1636 of Petra's

110 See Brinsley, Ludus Literarius, ed. Campagnac, 172-190 and Hoole, A New Discovery, ed. Campagnac, 185-186.


112 Roberts's edition carries a full bibliography of the editions of Longinus, ibid., 249.
Latin translation. In 1662 John Hall produced the first English translation of Longinus. The most popular translation, however, the translation which did most to give on the Sublime wide currency, was the French translation by Boileau—

Traité du sublime ou du merveilleux dans le discours. Traduit du grec de Longin (Paris, 1674).113 In addition to John Hall's English translation, there were two more English translations in the seventeenth century: J. Pulteney, A Treatise of the Loftiness or Elegancy of Speech. Written originally in Greek by Longin, and now translated out of the French by Mr. J. P. (London, 1680); and an anonymous translation entitled, An Essay upon Sublime. Translated from the Greek of Dionysius Longinus Cassius the Rhetorician. Compared with the French

of the Sieur Despréaux Boileau (Oxford, 1698). During the first half of the eighteenth century at least four more English translations appeared: one by John Hudson (Oxford, 1710); one by Leonard Welsted (London, 1712); one by Zachary Pearce (London, 1724); one by William Smith (London, 1739). The most popular of the English translations, according to Atkins,114 was that by William Smith.

There is no evidence that on the Sublime was ever used as a textbook in the classroom. But its influence has been none the less widespread.115 The

113 Roberts lists the dates of eighteen editions of Boileau's translation, ibid., 249.

114 J. W. H. Atkins, English Literary Criticism: 17th and 18th Centuries, London, 1961, 187. Atkins says here of Smith's publication, "His translation had the merit of presenting to English readers a more complete version than Boileau had furnished."

The treatise is frequently mentioned, and always with respect, by Dryden and Pope. Edward Gibbon in his Journal (September 11, 1762) speaks of Longinus with something akin to awe. From the time of the publication of Boileau's translation, On the Sublime "became the bible of neo-classicists, who praised it while disregarding its rule," says the editors of a modern anthology of criticism. It is rather curious that Longinus's treatise should have enjoyed its greatest vogue in the eighteenth century. The treatise laid stress on emotion, on enthusiasm, in an age when the Augustans were calling for reason and restraint. The Augustans were acute enough, however, to see that many of Longinus's dicta had acquired universal validity by having gone back to "nature," back to first principles. Because of his marked influence on such men as Coleridge, Arnold, and T. S. Eliot (each of them the supreme critic of his age), Longinus is thought of today as a literary critic rather than as a rhetorician. Nevertheless it will be interesting to see whether Hugh Blair owed any of his rhetorical theory to this astute critic.

Having looked at the classical and continental rhetoricians who most prominently figured in the formation and development of rhetorical theory and practice in England, we will turn now to a consideration of those native rhetoricians who took the tradition they inherited and either reproduced, modified, adapted, or altered it.

Leonard Cox, a schoolmaster at Reading, has the distinction of


117 Not to be confused with Richard Cox, the master of Eton in 1530 who set the pattern for Prince Edward's education.
having written the first rhetoric book in English. Professor Carpenter, in his edition of Cox's *Arte or Crafte of Rhetoryke* (1524), demonstrates convincingly that Cox's work was based upon, even partly translated from, the first book of Melanchthon's *Institutiones Rhetoricae* (1521). Cox devotes little or no attention to *elocutio* and *pronuntiatio*. He is interested primarily, almost exclusively, in *inventio*. While he discusses the three traditional species of address—the political, the forensic, and the demonstrative—he is more interested in finding material appropriate to these forms than in constructing the speech to fit the purpose and occasion. The fact that he gives most attention to forensic and demonstrative orations reflects the Tudor interest in legal activity and the Tudor concern for fame and position. Cox is careful to point out however, that he has written an elementary text; those "that bene entred all redy shal haue lytle neede of my labour." 120

In 1550 Richard Sherry, a headmaster at Magdalen College School, published through J. Day's press *A Treatise of Schemes and Tropes*, which has sometimes been called "the second book on rhetoric in English." 121 Five years later, Sherry printed a Latin-English revision of the earlier text, changing the title


120 Ibid., 42.

121 Crane, *Wit and Rhetoric*, 98.
to A Treatise of the Figures of Grammar and Rhetorike. In the revised edition, Sherry rearranged his material and turned the text into Latin, sometimes with an accompanying English translation.

In the Epistle at the head of the first Treatise, after pointing out what rhetoricians like Mosellanus, Quintilian, Cicero, and Erasmus have had to say about schemes and tropes, Sherry says,

Wherfore to make these things more playne to ye students that lyst to reade them in oure tongus, I haue taken a lytle payne, more thorowlye to try the definitions, to apply the examples more aptly, & to make things defused more plaine, as in dede it shal ryght wel apere to the dylygent.

This English version seems to have been designed with an eye to the grammar-school trade, but Sherry's hopes to win the field from such well-established rhetoricians as Mosellanus and Susenbrotus were destined to be disappointed. Sixteenth-century schoolmasters were still wary of textbooks in the vernacular. The Treatise of Schemes and Tropes had only one edition.

Works like those of Cox and Sherry lacked the vitality and freshness of approach which would recommend them as serious competitors to the classical rhetoricians being studied in the schools. They are of historical interest, however, because they point to the need for a guide in vernacular expression and for the application of classical precepts to the exigencies of contemporary oratory. Sherry's earlier treatise had some influence, as Professor Engelhardt

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122 The full title of this second edition is A Treatise of the Figures of Grammar and Rhetorike, profitable for all that be studious of eloquence, and in especial for such as in Grammar scholes doe read most eloquent Postes and Oratours: whereunto is joyned the oration which Cicero made to Caesar giv- ing thanks unto him for pardoning, and restoring again of that noble man, Mar- gus Marcellus sette forth by Richard Sherry, Londonar.

demonstrates, on that more significant rhetoric book which followed in 1555, Wilson’s Arte of Rhetorique.

In the same tradition with Sherry’s work was Henry Peacham’s The Garden of Eloquence, first published in 1577 and republished in revised form in 1593. In the original edition, Peacham follows quite closely the organization of John Susenbrotus’s Epitome Troporum ac Schematum. In 1593, he reshuffles the former divisions, omits a consideration of the grammatical schemes, and increases the number of rhetorical schemes. In the later edition, 196 figures are treated. Another innovation of the later edition is that to the discussion of the figures there was appended a section dealing with “The use” and “The Caution.”

That Peacham’s predominant interest lay in amplification is evident from his own ornate, copious style and from the great amount of space he devotes to figures which serve copiousness. The many illustrations that Peacham takes from the English Bible indicate his desire to convince his readers that eloquence was possible in the vernacular as well as in the classical languages. As Baldwin says, “Peacham is simply supplying a vernacular Susenbrotus for a Bible—"


125 The full title is The Garden of Eloquence conteyning the Figures of Grammar and Rhetorick, from whence maye bee gathered all manner of Flowers, Colours, Ornaments, Exornations, Formes and Fashions of speech, very profitable for all those that be studious of Eloquence, and that reade most Eloquent Poets and Orators, and also helpeith much for the better understanding of the holy Scriptures.

126 Crane, in Wit and Rhetoric, Appendix VII, 237-240, gives a list of all the figures treated in Peacham’s book and shows by means of diagrams the difference in organization between the 1577 and 1593 editions.
reading public." The fact that two editions of the work were printed suggests that there was some demand for Peacham's rhetorical text. But there is no evidence that The Garden of Eloquence was ever an influential textbook.

Interest in the rhetoric of letter-writing, the medieval art dictaminis, carried over into the sixteenth century and even into the seventeenth century.128 Angel Day's The English Secretorie,129 "the most thorough-going textbook on Letter-writing in English,"130 was first published in 1586 and had subsequent editions in 1592, 1595, 1599. Day's work, which was undoubtedly indebted to Erasmus's Modus Conscribendi Epistolae, was a popular text that applied ancient rules of rhetoric to the art of letter-writing. Day discusses some thirty different kinds of letters under four main headings: demonstrative, deliberative, judicial, and familiar. The English Secretorie did not become an authentic rhetoric until the second edition in 1592 when he added a section dealing with the duties of a secretary and a section on the figures of speech.131

In the 1592 edition Day also added notes in the margin which identify the vari-

127 Baldwin, Small Latins, II, 40.

128 A competent study of letter-writing during this period is Jean Robertson's The Art of Letter Writing, an Essay on the Handbooks Published during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, Liverpool, 1943.

129 The full title of the 1599 edition is as follows: The English Secretary, Or Methode of writing Epistles and Letters; With A declaration of such Tropes, Figures, and Schemes, as either usually or for ornament sake are therein required. Also the parts and office of a Secretarie, Devided into two bookes. Now newly revised and in many parts corrected and amended.

130 Watson, English Schools, 416.

131 Crane observes ("Lit and Rhetoric, 111) that in the section on tropes and figures Day is indebted to Susenbrotus.
ious tropes and figures in the illustrative letters.

The fact that Day's work went through four editions indicates that the book enjoyed some vogue in the late sixteenth century. Day's work was not as popular, however, as Erasmus's Modus Conscribendi Epistolas and Macropedius's Methodus Conscribendi Epistolas.132 Gabriel Harvey, in the course of his strictures on Thomas Nashe's style, expresses his doubts about the value of Day's work:

I have seldom read a more garish and pibald stile in any scribbling Ink-hornist, or tasted a more vnsavoury slauempump of wordes and sentence in any sluttish Pamflleter that denounced not defiance against the rules of Oratory and the directions of the English Secretary.133

George Puttenham's The Arte of English Poesie (1589) is remembered by students of English as one of that group of Elizabethan treatises which attempted a defense, an apology, of poetry. It was that, certainly, but what students of English are not always aware of is that it also made a contribution to rhetorical theory. The Third Book of the Arte of English Poesie, with its elaborate treatment of figures, is operating in the tradition of Susenbrotus,134 Mosellanus, Erasmus, Sherry, Peacham, and Day.

Puttenham's most notable contribution to rhetorical theory is his treatment of the figures. He decides, for one thing, that vernacular names for

132 See the testimony in Baldwin, Small Latine, II, 267.


134 "As all but one of these [rhetorical examples] is found in Susenbrotus' Epitome Troporum ac Schematum this was very probably one of the main sources of Book III, though indebtedness to Susenbrotus rather than to some kindred compiler cannot be proved."--Gladys D. Willcock and Alice Walker, eds., The Arte of English Poesie by George Puttenham, London, 1936, 328.
the various figures must replace the Greek and Latin terms, because his work is
designed primarily, not for "clerkes," to whom the classical terminology would
be comprehensible, but for "Courtiers," who are more at home in the vernacular;
but he will make a gesture toward the schools by supplying the classical terms
along with the English terms. In addition to his proposal to use English
terminology, he wants to arrive at a more rational basis for the classification
of the figures. He chooses to classify the figures according to the nature of
their appeal. Accordingly, his first group of figures are those which appeal
to the ear. This group, which depends for its effects on alterations of "sound,
ascent, time," he calls the auricular. The second group appeals to the mind
(or, to use his own words, the group which "serves the conceit onely"). This
group, depending for its effects on alterations of sense, he calls the sensible.
The third and largest group is that which appeals both to the mind and to the
ear and is called the sententious. All in all, Puttenham treats of 106 figures:
twenty-one auricular figures; twenty-four sensible figures; and sixty senten-
tious figures.

Although Puttenham's essay as a whole does not have the charm and
gracefulness of style that mark Sidney's Apology for Poetry, it is not without
its interest and importance in the history of English Poetics and Rhetoric. By
his reliance on first principles or "right reason" instead of on the dictates of
ancient authority, he formulated doctrines which met the changing needs of the

135 George Puttenham, The Arte of English Poesie, in Elizabethan
Essays, ed. Smith, II, 163-164.

136 Ibid., 166.
language and the times. As a contribution to rhetoric, Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie* contains "the most elaborate treatment of rhetorical figures to be found, up to its time, in English literature."\(^{137}\)

Thomas Wilson (1525-1581) was educated at Eton and at King's College, Cambridge. Sir John Cheke, who became provost of King's College while Wilson was there, introduced the promising young scholar to the most progressive side of English humanism. Wilson also formed fast friendship with Roger Ascham and Walter Haddon, from whom he acquired his abhorrence for extravagant Latinism and strange inkhorn terms. "Before he left Cambridge," Mr. Mair says, "he had become one of a school of men who, by their scholarhip and the individuality of their opinions, did much to mould the course of the Renaissance in England on its pedagogic side, and who had no inconsiderable influence on the development of English prose."\(^{138}\)

In 1551 Wilson published the first of his famous books, *The Rule of Reason, conteyning the Arte of Logike, sette therselfe in Englishes by Thomas Wilson*. In 1553, as a companion text to his book on logic, he published the book upon which his fame chiefly rests, *The Arte of Rhetorique*.\(^{139}\)


\(^{139}\) Mair's edition is based on the 1585 printing. The 1560 edition is generally regarded as the editio princeps. R. H. Wagner in an article, "The Text and Editions of Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique*," *Modern Language Notes*, XLIV, November, 1929, 421-428, says that Mair is responsible for the currency of the mistaken notion that Wilson substantially altered and augmented the 1555 version when he prepared the book for the 1560 edition. Karl Wallace (Bacon on Rhetorics, 189) says that Wagner's edition of the *Arte of Rhetorique* (Cornell University Doctoral Dissertation, 1929) is a more accurate edition than Mair's.
The Arte of Rhetorique has the careful organization and schematic form which characterized the best of the classical and medieval texts. Book I (pp. 1-99) considers such matters as the five elements of oratory ("Invention, Disposition, Elocution, Memorie, Utteraunce"); the seven parts of an oration ("Enterrance, Narration, Proposition, Division, Confirmation, Confutation, Conclusion"); the three kinds of oratory ("Demonstrative, Deliberative, Iudiciale"); and, in connection with these three kinds of oratory, the matter of Invention. Book II (pp. 99-160) treats of Disposition and the Figures of Amplification. Book III (pp. 160-222) deals mainly with Elocution (style) but gives also a summary treatment of Memory and Delivery.

Perhaps the most famous phrase in The Arte of Rhetorique occurs in Wilson's strictures on "straunge ynkehorne terms." Although the English humanists promoted the revival of interest in the Greek and Latin masters, one phalanx of the humanists was advocating the refinement of the English tongue of all foreign elements. While not rejecting the wisdom and the beauty produced by the ancients, they nevertheless realized that if the English language was ever to become an instrument capable of the usefulness, harmony, and flexibility displayed by the classical tongues, it must be allowed to develop along the lines of its own genius. Wilson was wholeheartedly behind this program of the humanists.

The Arte of Rhetorique, Karl Wallace maintains, "offers the best-developed and best proportioned discussion written by those who see rhetoric as a

140 Arte of Rhetorique, ed. Mair, 162.
complete art of public address."\textsuperscript{141} Professor Williamson sees its importance as being "the first English criticism of the schematic prose that was to become Euphistic."\textsuperscript{142} Even higher praise is accorded the book by the English literary historian, J. W. H. Atkins: "In the revival of rhetorical studies in 16th-century England it occupies the central position."\textsuperscript{143} This statement of the book's importance is corroborated by Gabriel Harvey, a contemporary of Wilson's: "Wilson's Rhetorique & Logique, the daily bread of our common pleaders, & discoursers."\textsuperscript{144}

Wilson's book went through numerous editions between 1553 and 1588, when, as G. H. Mair says, "whether owing to the advent of newer textbooks or to the changing taste of a more fastidious and sophisticated period we cannot know, it fell out of demand and public esteem and gradually ceased to be reprinted."\textsuperscript{145} The chief value of the Rhetorique as a textbook would seem to be that Wilson collected a great mass of sound classical doctrine and stitched it all together

\textsuperscript{141} Bacon on Rhetoric, 188.

\textsuperscript{142} George Williamson, The Senecan Amble: A Study in Prose Form from Bacon to Collier, Chicago, 1951, 63.

\textsuperscript{143} J. W. H. Atkins, English Literary Criticism; the Renaissance, London, 1951, 84.

\textsuperscript{144} Gabriel Harvey, Marginalia, ed. G. C. M. Smith, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1913, 122.

\textsuperscript{145} The Arte of Rhetorique, ed. Mair, v. See also R. H. Wagner, "The Text and Editions of Wilson's Arte of Rhetorique," Modern Language Notes, XLIV, November, 1929, 421-428. The Pollard and Redgrave Short Title Catalogue lists editions in 1553, 1560, 1563, 1567, 1568, 1580, 1584, and 1588. Dr. Wagner mentions an edition in the Cornell University Library which lacks a title page but which he conjectures to have been printed in 1561. Lowndes in the Bibliographer's Manual of English Literature (1864), IV, 2946, lists two editions for 1560.
with his own observations, expositions, and illustrations. In this respect it is much like Blair's Rhetoric. If Wilson's Rhetorique was not, as Foster Watson maintains,\textsuperscript{146} as significant in the development of grammar school rhetoric as Sherry's Treatise of Schemes and Tropes, the explanation may be that Wilson was too advanced for the younger students. But that it had some influence, for better or for worse, on English style seems undeniable.

Roger Ascham's The Scholemaster, completed in 1564 but not published until 1570, was not primarily a rhetoric book, but it did have many helpful things to say about learning to write. An outline of Ascham's discussion of rhetoric in The Scholemaster can be said to follow the six ways he assigns for learning a language and for increasing eloquence: (1) \textit{Translation} linguarum; (2) \textit{Paraphrase}; (3) \textit{Metaphrase}; (4) \textit{Epitome}; (5) \textit{Imitatio}; (6) \textit{Declamatio}.\textsuperscript{147}

The last five of these methods are, he remarks, more suited for advanced scholars than for grammar school boys. Accordingly, he recommends "double translating," the practice of translating from one language into another, as being the easiest and most profitable exercise for the young grammar school student.\textsuperscript{148}

In the process of translating, the student should observe "first, the cause and matter: than, the words and phrases: next, the order and composition: after, the reason and argumentes: than the formes and figures of both the tonges: lastelie, the measure and compass of sueries sentence."\textsuperscript{149}

\begin{flushleft}
146 \textit{English Grammar Schools}, 447.
148 \textit{Ibid.}, 244-245.
149 \textit{Ibid.}, 246.
\end{flushleft}
Ascham devoted fully a quarter of the Second Book of the Scholastator (about thirty pages) to the subject of imitation. He distinguishes at the outset two meanings of Imitatio. Plato in the Republic used the term in one of its senses when he speaks of comedy and tragedy as being (to use Ascham's own words) a "faire liuelie painted picture of the life of euerie degree of man." The second kind of imitation consists in "following the best authors." The preference of some schoolmasters for the second kind of imitation eventually led to the practice of, and the subsequent controversy about, Ciceronianism. The argument centered about the problem of whether "one or many are to be followed: and if one, who is that one." Ascham's opinion, delivered from the "Cokpit of learning," is that the best models will be found in Latin and Greek and that among these classical models of eloquence we must follow "choisellie a few, and chiefly some one."150 Among the choicely few would be Terence, Plautus, Caesar, Varro, Sallust; if one model must be followed that model would be Cicer, in whom the Latin language had "grown to the hiest pitch of all perfection."151

Ascham's recommendation of double translating probably had more influence on teaching methods in the schools than his theories of imitation. Translating from Latin into English and then back into Latin was an exercise that fell within the capacities of the boys in the lower forms. We find Brinsley not only approving but using this method in his own teaching.152 Hugh Blair will use a variant of this method when he proposes a method of imitating Addison's essays.

150 Ibid., 282.
151 Ibid., 294.
152 Brinsley, Ludus Literarius, ed. Campagnac, 147-158.
Since Ascham spent most of his time as a private tutor, his direct influence on English schoolboys must have been very slight. The prestige, however, of this tutor of three English monarchs must have given his educational works great weight with the schoolmasters of the period. Professor Spingarn maintains, perhaps with a touch of exaggeration, that among the humanists of the first half of the sixteenth century Ascham was "not only the first English man of letters, but also the first English classicist." 153

About Richard Rainolde (1530-1606), the author of A booke called the Foundation of Rhetorike (1563), very little is known. The Dictionary of National Biography reveals that he was a student at St. John's College, Cambridge, during the time when Sir John Cheke was the shining light of that institution. From Trinity College, Cambridge, he took his B.A. about 1550 and his M.A. in 1563. Although he studied medicine later, he never took his medical degree. In 1571 the Royal College of Physicians placed him under censure for practicing medicine without a license. Besides the book on rhetoric, he published A Chronicle of all the noble Emperours of Romaines (1571).

In the Foundation of Rhetorike Rainolde considers the same fourteen types of elementary composition that Aphthonius treated. William Crane holds that Rainolde's book was merely a translation of Lorich's edition of Aphthonius. 154 Harold B. Allen, on the other hand, proposes that Rainolde's primary debt is to Hermogenes. 155 Francis Johnson, however, after making a close colla-

154 Wit and Rhetoric, 69.
tion of texts, takes issue with both of these scholars and affirms that Rainolde's treatise is really "a free adaptation of the material in Lorich's edition of Aphthonius's Progymnasmata, with some additions from Rainolde himself." 156

Only one edition of the Foundation of Rhetorike was produced, and it has approached so close to oblivion that only five copies of the original edition exist today. 157 Rainolde's hope that his English text would replace Aphthonius was doomed to disappointment. Schoolmasters preferred the simple schematic arrangement of Aphthonius's text to the discoursiveness of Rainolde's text, cluttered as it was with lengthy illustrations that could lay no claim to being really literary. A debt of gratitude, however, is owing to the Scholars's Facsimile and Reprint Society, for its reproduction of Rainolde's Rhetorike has preserved a valuable record of Tudor pedagogy. 158 The modern age may never restore the study of rhetoric to a predominant position in the curriculum, but it can study, with interest and profit, the disciplines that were responsible to a great degree for the production of some of the most distinguished prose in English literature.

Pierre de la Ramée or Peter Ramus was a French scholar who died in the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre of August, 1572. Although the common view is that he revolted against Aristotelian logic and rhetoric in favor of the simpler

156 Foundation of Rhetorike, ed. Johnson, xiv.

157 Ibid., xviii-xix. The five copies are in the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Chapin Library at Williams College, the Bodleian Library, the Cambridge University Library, and Dr. Williams's Library in London.

and more practical system of John Sturm and Rudolphus Agricola, he thought of himself as being a conservative reviser and adapter of Aristotle; and Professor Duhamel suggests that it would be better to think of Ramus as bent on "simplifying and clarifying the logic and rhetoric of Aristotle which had become obscured by layers of useless rules and mechanical applications." 159

What is of particular pertinence to this survey is the extent of the revolution that Ramus effected in the teaching of rhetoric. Ramus denied the existence of a separate art of oratory. Oratory really fell within the domain of two other arts—logic and rhetoric. Ramus distributes the traditional parts of rhetoric between logic and rhetoric:

Dialectic seeks to establish the all-round strength of the human reason in the discovering and disposing of matter... Rhetoric demonstrates how to ornament an oration with tropes and figures and the dignity of proper delivery. 160

In other words, *inventio* and *dispositio* fall within the province of logic; *elocutio* and *pronuntiatio* belong to rhetoric; the fifth process in the classical system, *memoria*, is simply ignored. Ramus was working for a strict departmentalization of knowledge, for he felt that a great deal of the error and confusion that had sprung up in the arts was the result of scholars' mistaking the proper subject-matter of the arts. Although the teaching of the two arts would be kept separate, logic and rhetoric in practice would combine and work to-


This dichotomy became a hallmark of the Ramistic system. The most significant effect of this Ramistic dichotomy upon the attitude of Elizabethan scholars toward discourse is well pointed out by Professor Wallace:

There is, first, a literal or rational operation and movement of the intellect, embracing the processes of discovery, arrangement, and judgment or criticism. Then there is an imaginative operation which, although definitely felt, is only hinted at in terms of "dress," "ornament," "heightening," and garnishing." Not until Bacon late in Elizabeth's reign formulates the function of rhetoric is the imaginative operation stated in more analytic terms and given broader scope.\(^2\)

Although Ramus wrote extensive critiques of the rhetorical systems of Cicero and Quintilian in his \textit{Ciceronianus & Brutinae Quaestiones} (Basle, 1577) and \textit{Rhetoricae Distinctiones in Quintilianum} (Paris, 1559), he never himself produced a rhetoric text. He provided the inspiration, however, for several important rhetoric textbooks.\(^3\) The first of these was the rhetoric prepared by his compatriot, Talaeus.

The almost total eclipse of Audomarus Talaeus (Omer Talon) is a telling object lesson in the fickleness of fortune. John Brinsley tells us that Talaeus's \textit{Rhetorica} was the rhetoric text "most used in the best Schooles,"\(^4\) and a modern authority on English grammar schools informs us that the two most

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\(^1\) See Peter Ramus, \textit{Ciceronianus & Brutinae Quaestiones}, Basle, 1577, 280. "... quod Grammaticus praecessit doceatur, id rursus in Rhetoricis non miscetur: Quod in Rhetoricis instituatuer, a dialecticis non attingatur: breviter artium omnium fines & institutiones separantur: usum tamen conjugatur."

\(^2\) \textit{Bacon on Rhetoric}, 196.

\(^3\) \textit{A good discussion of Ramus's influence is that by Wilbur S. Howell, "Ramus and English Rhetoric: 1574-1681," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXXVII, October 1951, 299-310.}

\(^4\) \textit{Ludus Literarius}, ed. Campagnac, 203.
popular rhetoric textbooks were those of Talaeus and Charles Butler. Yet Talaeus has all but passed into oblivion. None of the authorities on rhetoric supplies any identification of him other than that he was the author of a popular rhetoric; his name does not appear in the English or American encyclopedias; copies of his Rhetorica are exceedingly rare. Although the Biographie Universelle, the French equivalent of the Dictionary of National Biography, has an entry on Omer Talon, the entry is very short. What is even more curious about Talaeus's eclipse is that his close associate, Peter Ramus, is still very much in the public eye.

Talaeus's Institutiones Oratoriae (or, as it is more familiarly known, Rhetorica) was first published in Paris in 1644. This Latin textbook was printed in England as early as 1578, with a preface by Peter Ramus. In 1560 Talaeus had written a commentary on Ramus's logic text--Dialecticae Libri Duo--a Talae Praelectionibus Illustrati (Paris, 1560). The Dialecticae and the Rhetorica were to serve as companion texts and were "to underlie the chief grammar school rhetorics of the seventeenth century." This combination corres-

165 Watson, English Grammar Schools, 441.

166 T. W. Baldwin quotes from one of the few copies available in America--a copy of the Paris edition of 1648 that is in the University of Illinois Library. See Small Latine, II, 11.

167 Walter J. Ong, S.J., in " Fouquetin's French Rhetoric and the Ramist Vernacular Tradition," Studies in Philology, LI, April, 1954, 127-142, says that of this original edition he has been able to find only two copies in the libraries of Europe--one in the Cambridge University Library, the other in the Bibliotheque National at Paris. Later versions of this work, which usually bear a simple title like Rhetorica, ran to at least fourteen editions before 1555.

168 Baldwin, Small Latine, II, 58.
ponded to Thomas Wilson's *The Rule of Reason* and *The Arte of Rhetorique*. Professor Baldwin points out 169 that by the end of the sixteenth century the French-Calvinistic school of Ramus and Talaeus had scored a complete triumph over the German-Lutheran school of Melanchthon and Sturm. The main reason for the popularity of Talaeus's text with schoolmasters seems to have been its brevity and simplicity. Talaeus was to serve as the model for the rhetorics of Dudley Fenner (1584), Abraham Fraunce (1588), Charles Butler (1597), and Thomas Farnaby (1625).

The first English translation of Ramus's *Dialecticae Libri Duo* was made by a Scot, Roland MacIlwaine, in 1574. In 1584 Dudley Fenner anonymously published Talaeus's rhetoric and Ramus's dialectic together in an English translation entitled *The Artes of Logike and Rethorike* [sic]. The second edition of this work in 1588 bore Fenner's name but, like the first edition, made no acknowledgment of debt to Ramus and Talaeus. Wilbur S. Howell explains Fenner's reticence about his sources by saying that Fenner "probably realized that all literate Englishmen of that period would recognize the doctrine for what it was" and that therefore Fenner had no need to acknowledge the obvious. 170 The major change that Fenner made was to substitute Biblical illustrations for the classical illustrations that Ramus and Talaeus had used.

Abraham Fraunce's *The Lawiers Logike* and *The Arcadian Rhetorike*, both published in 1588, represented another exploitation of the Ramus-Talaeus dichotomy. While at Cambridge, Fraunce had been impressed by Gabriel Harvey's enth-

169 Ibid., 59.

siastic recommendation of Ramus and Talaes. If Fraunce ever entertained any hopes of dislodging the well-established Latin textbooks, he was soon to realize how miscalculated his hopes had been. Both of Fraunce's works had only one edition. The only surviving copy of the Arcadian Rhetorike is the one in the Bodleian Library.171

The Arcadian Rhetorike can lay no claim to being either an original or an influential book. Puttenham's Arte of English Poesie treated the figures much more elaborately than Fraunce did. Professor Crane asserts that the illustrative material drawn from Sir Philip Sidney is Fraunce's only legitimate claim to credit.172 Foster Watson maintains that Fraunce performed a real service in extending rhetorical training "by applying rhetorical rules to the Scriptures and to the English vernacular."173 The chief historical significance of the Arcadian Rhetorike is that it is another manifestation of the Elizabethan tendency to narrow the scope of rhetoric according to the directions laid down by Ramus and Talaes.

One of the most ardent of the English Ramists was Charles Butler. In 1597 he published at Oxford an abridgment of Talaes's Rhetorica under the title of Ramese Rhetoricae Libri Duo. In the following year he republished the work but now dropped Ramus's name from the title: Rhetoricae Libri Duo. John Brinsley recommends Butler's adaptation in the following words:

Or in stead of Talaes, you may use Master Butlars Rhetoricks, of Magdalens

171 The Arcadian Rhetorike is reproduced, partly in summary, partly in abstract, in Elizabethan Critical Essays, ed. Smith, 1, 303-306.

172 Wit and Rhetoric, 56.

in Oxford. . . being a notable abbriddgement of Talaes. . . It is a book, which (as I take it) is yet very little knowne in Schooles, though it haue beene forth sundry yeares. 174

Fifty years later, Charles Hoole testifis that the Talaes-Butler combination had gained a place in the grammar-school curriculum:

And to enter them in that Art of fine speaking, they may make use of Elementa Rhetoricae, lately printed by Mr. Dugard, and out of it learn the Tropes and Figures, according to the definitions given by Talaes, and afterwards more illustrated by Mr. Butler. 175

Although English literature was not taught in schools during the first half of the seventeenth century, Butler in his rhetoric book came closer than any of his predecessors to according serious academic consideration to English literature.

As we pass from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century, we find English criticism making a break from Renaissance traditions under the stimulus of the French. Renaissance critics had drawn eclectically from classical, medieval, and contemporary theory. No one authority or no one system was accepted as final. It was the French who induced the English to write and judge by a single, settled canon of rules.

Under Louis XIV, France rose to the first place among the nations of Europe. Not only did France become supreme politically, but she assumed the role of dictator of the arts. England submitted gradually, although reluctantly, to the French influence. Circumstances made that submission almost inevitable: Charles I married Henrietta Maria, who brought with her to England a retinue of French wits and courtiers; after the Cromwell coup, many of the Royalists took refuge in France and absorbed the French culture and attitudes; the

174 Ludus Literarius, ed. Campagnac, 204.
175 A New Discovery, ed. Campagnac, 132.
prolonged residence in England of such brilliant exiles as Saint-Evremond served to circulate the French esprit among the coffee-house wits. Several of the most influential writers of the seventeenth century—men like Hobbes, Davenant, Cowley, Waller, and Denham—spent many months in France. As a result of these and other circumstances, French standards of dress, speech, and art came to be accepted by many as decisively authoritative.

Since most of the French criticism of the seventeenth century was concerned with poetry or poetical drama (largely as a result of the importation of the pseudo-Aristotelianism of such sixteenth-century Italian critics as Castelvetro and Robortello), poetics began to absorb more attention than rhetoric. More than ever before, poetics and rhetoric merged and became almost indistinguishable. As a result, it is frequently difficult to point to a seventeenth-century textbook and say with any finality, "This is a rhetoric text" or "This is a treatise on poetics." One is just as likely to find rhetorical theory in Spingarn's collection of seventeenth-century critical essays as in a textbook whose title explicitly designates it as a rhetoric book. So one will find rhetorical theory woven into the text of René Rapin's Réflexions sur la Poétique et les Poètes as well as in his Réflexions sur L'Eloquence; in Boileau's Réflexions sur Longin (where one would expect to find it) and in his Art Poétique (where one would not expect to find it). If the present writer had looked into every critical work of this period that contained some rhetorical theory, there would have been no end to this survey. For the most part, the present writer has confined his investigation to the more important books and essays that are wholly or predominantly devoted to rhetoric. Within these arbitrary limitations, the number of rhetoric texts is considerably less than the number in the Renais-
Besides the growing preoccupation with the rules, the seventeenth century exhibits some concern for the development of the simple, utilitarian style. The incipient (one can hardly say revived) interest in science—an interest created by Bacon and fostered, after the close of the anti-science Puritan regime, by the members of the Royal Society—encouraged the development of a "scientific" style. In this period, Tudor ornamentation elicited smiles if not downright sneers. Thanks to the via media style developed by John Dryden, a literary style as severely barren and denotative as mathematical symbols never did develop. But the way was prepared for the easy, familiar style that graced so many eighteenth-century compositions.

Two of the best sources of information about the curricula and methods of the English grammar schools are John Brinsley's *Ludus Literarius* (1612) and *A Consolation for Our Grammar Schoole* (1622). Although not so famous as Ascham's *The Scholemaster*, Brinsley's two treatises give a more intimate picture of the English elementary schools than any other extant contemporary documents. Charles Hoole's *A New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching Schoole* (1660) was to give a supplementary account of grammar-school practice and a valuable record of changes in method and objectives that had taken place in the fifty years since Brinsley's *Ludus Literarius* first appeared. The foremost modern authority on English grammar schools of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has said:

I especially plead for the books of John Brinsley and Charles Hoole. The names may be but little known to the general public. Yet for an account of the best educational procedure of their times, and for educational bibliography, there are surely no superior works in English history. 175

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175 Foster Watson, in an article in the *Educational Review*, London,
Although Brinsley and Hoole treat mainly of pedagogical problems connected with all subjects in the grammar-school curriculum, they have some pertinence to this survey of rhetoric texts in that they mention (as we have already seen) some of the rhetoric texts used by the students and give some of their own advice about the writing of epistles and themes.\textsuperscript{177} It is impossible to say just how extensive was the influence of Brinsley and Hoole on the teaching of composition in the schools, but one feels safe in saying that something very much like the method proposed by them prevailed in the "pette schooles." Professor Baldwin, for instance, without actually assigning any cause-and-effect relationships, observes that Brinsley's "compositional sequence is essentially that established at Eton by 1560, which spread to Westminster, to Merchant Teylors', and to their numerous imitators" and that by 1607 these schools had abandoned the study of the formal oration as Brinsley had advocated.\textsuperscript{178}

Although Francis Bacon (1561-1626) wrote no systematic work on rhetoric, there are scattered throughout his writings remarks and discourses that throw light not only on his own literary practice but on the direction that rhetorical theory was to take in the seventeenth century. The chief loci for Bacon's rhetorical theory are The Advancement of Learning and the expanded Latin translation of this work, De Augmentis Scientiarum. Complementary material can be found in his Colours of Good and Evil and Apophthegmes, New and Old. The

\textsuperscript{177} See especially Ch. XII and Ch. XIII of Brinsley's \textit{Ludus Literarius}.

\textsuperscript{178} Baldwin, \textit{Small Latine}, I, 404.
best guide to Bacon's rhetorical theory is Karl R. Wallace's *Francis Bacon on Communication and Rhetoric* published by the University of North Carolina Press in 1943. If an entire book can be devoted to Bacon's rhetorical theory, it should be obvious how futile it is to attempt an adequate summary in a few paragraphs. This discussion must be limited to two or three points.

"The duty and office of Rhetoric," Bacon says, "is to apply Reason to Imagination for the better moving of the Will." In a later work, Bacon says, "Rhetoric is subservient to the imagination, as Logio is to the understanding; and the duty and office of Rhetoric, if it be deeply looked into, is no other than to apply and recommend the dictates of reason to imagination, in order to excite the appetite and will." Bacon's conception of the function of rhetoric as being utilitarian and ethical is of course nothing new; such a conception is as old as Aristotle. What is new here is his viewing reason and imagination as distinct faculties. Readers of the *Biographia Literaria* will remember that in the fourth chapter of that work Coleridge viewed himself as being the first one of his countrymen to formulate a distinction between fancy and imagination; there was no need to make a distinction between the reason and the imagination because that distinction had been made long before him. The existence of the Greek term *Phantasia* and the Latin term *Imaginatio* indicates that the idea of imagination did not begin with Bacon. But formerly reason and imagina-

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180 *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, Bk. VI, ch. 3, in *Works*, IV, 455. The translation is that given in Wallace, *Bacon on Rhetoric*, 27.
tion were conceived of as two different operations of the same faculty. By viewing the imagination and reason as definitely distinct faculties, Bacon lays the groundwork for the great amount of subsequent discussion about the separate provinces and the separate cultivation of these faculties; and of course he is thereby continuing in the Ramistic tradition. Unfortunately, Bacon never makes quite clear just what he means by the imagination (but the complete clarification of that term was not to come even from Coleridge). Bacon speaks of the imagination as a kind of "agent or nuncio" between the affections and the intellect. "For Sense," he says, "sendeth over to Imagination, before Reason hath judged: and Reason sendeth over to Imagination before the Decease can be acted."

Bacon's viewing imagination and reason as being distinct and yet as having to work together constituted the base for his observations on style. Because he considered imagination subservient to the reason, he advocated the precedence of res over verba. He took issue with that school of rhetoric--the Ciceronians especially--whose spirit is summed up in Ascham's words: "Ye know not, what hurt ye do to learning, that care not for wordes, but for matter." Bacon mentions Ascham, together with Sturm, Car, and Osiuris, as being responsible for the shift of emphasis to elegance and copiousness of speech. As a result of this preoccupation with style, men began to hunt more after words than matter; and more after the choice-ness of the phrase, and the round clean composition of the sentence, and the sweet falling of the clauses, and the varying and illustration of their works with tropes and figures, than after the weight of matter, worth of

181 Advancement of Learning, in Works, III, 382.
182 The Scholemaister, ed. Wright, 265.
subject, soundness of argument, life of invention, or depth of judgment. 183

Although holding a preference for res over verba, Bacon did not entirely neglect the matter of style. The three stylistic features that he concentrated on were the conformity of the style to the subject-matter, the use of simple words, and the cultivation of "agreeableness." Bacon's insistence on the integral relationship between style and content is one expression of his revolt against the Ciceronians, who tended to employ the copious style for all forms of address. Closely connected with this idea of style suiting the matter is Bacon's admonition that the style should be so adapted to the audience that "if a man should speak of the same thing to several persons, he should nevertheless use different words to each of them [apud singulos tamen aliis atque aliis verbis sit utendum]." 184

Bacon's recommending the comparative study of languages 185 (an adumbration of the eighteenth-century concern for universal grammar) and his adapting Tacitus's "aculeate style" to the vernacular, 186 and his developing a peculiarly succinct and pointed style suited for the exposition of the science in which he took such an interest cannot be discussed here because of limitations of space. Perhaps enough has been disclosed to point the course that English

183 Advancement of Learning, in Works, III, 283.
184 De Augmentis Scientiarum, Bk. VI, ch. 3, in Works, IV, 457-458.
185 See De Augmentis Scientiarum, Bk. VI, ch. 1.
186 For a study of Bacon's special contribution to English prose, see Morris Croll, "Attic Prose: Lipsius, Montaigne, Bacon," in Schelling Anniversary Papers, New York, 1923, 117-150; also Williamson, The Senecan Amble, 120.
prose was to pursue in the seventeenth century. In summarizing Bacon's contribution to rhetorical theory, Karl Wallace says that Bacon gave a new perspective to rhetoric by viewing it in relation to all learning and that he was the first "to work out the central function of rhetoric on psychological grounds." 187

Wallace finds that the traces of Bacon's influence are most pronounced in such later rhetoricians as Thomas Blount (Academy of Eloquence, 1654), John Lawson (Lectures Concerning Oratory, 1752), and George Campbell (Philosophy of Rhetoric, 1776).

John Hoskins (1566-1638) provides a convenient transition to the discussion of Ben Jonson as a rhetorician. After taking his M.A. at Oxford in 1592, Hoskins served as a schoolmaster in Somerset for about a decade and then went on to the Middle Temple to become a lawyer. 188 "Serjeant Hoskyns," as he was commonly referred to in the seventeenth century was elected to the House of Commons and became intimate with such notables as Sir Henry Wotton, Sir Philip Sidney, and Ben Jonson. In 1599 or 1600, Hoskins composed a rhetoric text which he entitled Directions for Speech and Style. This little book of some fifty pages was written (but never published in Hoskins's lifetime) for the instruction, Hoskins tells us in his Introductory Epistle, of a certain young gentleman of the Middle Temple.

The Directions for Speech and Style is not a complete text in the art

187 Bacon on Rhetoric, 218.


189 Hoyt H. Hudson, in the Introduction to his edition of Directions for Speech and Style, Princeton Studies in English, Princeton, 1935, xiv-xv, argues that 1599 is the more likely date.
of rhetoric. As the title might indicate, Hoskins intended to deal with only two of the traditional parts of rhetoric—**pronuntiatio** and **elocutio**. If Hoskins ever composed a section on **pronuntiatio** or delivery, that section has been lost. The first seven pages of the text are devoted to a discussion of letter-writing. The remainder of the book is given over to a survey of about forty figures of speech, which are illustrated predominantly from Sir Philip Sidney’s *Arcadia*.190

One of Hoskins’s greatest services to English prose style was that he deterred students from imitating the worst excesses of Kuphuism and Arcadianism and steered them toward the plain, “sententious” Senecan style, which was eventually to culminate in the clean prose style of Jonson and Dryden.191

Since Hoskins did not intend his *Directions* for publication, his influence on rhetoric was an indirect one—that is, an influence exerted through those rhetoricians who borrowed from him. In the *London Times Literary Supplement* for May 1, 1930, Miss Louise B. Osborn pointed out that Ben Jonson had incorporated into his *Timber* some of Hoskins’s *Introductory Epistle* and the whole of Hoskins’s section on letter-writing. Thomas Blount will borrow from Hoskins for his *Academie of Eloquence* and John Smith will reveal a debt to Hoskins in his *The Mysterie of Rhetorique Unvail’d*.

The body of Ben Jonson’s dicta on matters of rhetoric is found in *Timber* or *Discoveries*, first printed in the Folio of 1640. *Timber* is a commonplace book of notes, extracts, and meditations, varying in length from single

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190 Hoskins was not the first to draw on Sidney for illustrative quotations. Abraham Fraunce in his *Arcadian Rhetorike* used more than fifty quotations from the manuscript text of the *Arcadia*.

sentences to short essays. Most of the passages are translations or adaptations of Latin writers, principally Quintilian and Vives. Jonson has given his collection an air of originality by adapting his borrowings to fit the contemporary situation and by coloring the whole with his personality and taste. In the process of translating the classical authors into the vernacular, he has abridged some of the borrowings, expanded others, and paraphrased still others in such a way that only the idea can be traced to the source. Jonson's literary potpourri is an example of how valuable a commonplace book could be made by an intelligent man of wide and discriminating reading.

Jonson went to the classical authors, not with the servile adulation of some of the earlier humanists but with the reverence and respect of a connoisseur. "I know nothing can conduce more to letters," he says, "then to examine the writings of the Ancients, and not to rest in their sole Authority, or take all upon trust from them." Jonson went to the classical authors, not with the servile adulation of some of the earlier humanists but with the reverence and respect of a connoisseur. "I know nothing can conduce more to letters," he says, "then to examine the writings of the Ancients, and not to rest in their sole Authority, or take all upon trust from them." 192 We should look upon them as "Guides, not Commanders." The faculty of perfecting art, moreover, is not the exclusive prerogative of the ancients. "I cannot think Nature is so spent, and decay'd," he says, "that she can bring forth nothing worth her former yeares." 193 In this rejection of a preclusive awe for classical authority, Jonson shows himself to be one with Francis Bacon. This change of attitude toward the ancients from one of superstitious awe to one of discriminating respect was to gain momentum throughout the seventeenth century and was to culminate in the famous battles of


193 Ibid., 567.
the Ancients and Moderns. Jonson's discriminating respect for the ancients was essentially Blair's attitude too.

Jonson had been dead nearly four years before Discoveries appeared in print. Considering the fragmentary nature of the notes, the unclassified groupings, the haphazard arrangement, one seriously doubts that Jonson intended his commonplace book for publication—at least in the form in which it has come down to us. Quite possibly, other notes were destroyed in the fire that swept through Jonson's study. It does seem likely that Jonson was preparing for future publication, a discursive treatise on rhetoric and poetics. Such a book from a man of Jonson's erudition, discernment, and skill would have been a major contribution to criticism. As it is, we must be content with the skeleton. But this skeletal work, like that other fragmentary document, Aristotle's Poetics, is not without its interest, importance, and influence. Saintsbury perhaps best sums up Jonson's contribution when he says,

He is thus doubly interesting—interesting as putting both with sounder scholarship and more original wit what men from Ascham to Puttenham, and later, had been trying to say before him, in the sense of adapting classical precepts to English: and far more interesting as adumbrating, beforehand, the creed of Dryden, and Pope, and Samuel Johnson. 194

Thomas Blount (1618-1679), a lawyer whose practice was limited because he was a Roman Catholic in a milieu hostile to men of that persuasion, produced in 1654 The Academie of Eloquence. 195 As Professor Hudson has pointed out, 196

194 Saintsbury, History of English Criticism, 91

195 The full title is The Academie of Eloquence. Containing a Compleat English Rhetorique, Exemplified, with Common Places, and Flores, digested into an easie and Methodical way to speak and write fluently, London, 1654.

196 Directions, ed. Hudson, xxxi.
the first forty-eight pages of this 232-page book is an out-and-out copy of Hoskins's treatment of the same subject. Not once in his text, however, does Blount acknowledge his debt to Hoskins. Other parts of the Academie are borrowed from Francis Bacon, but Blount in this case is good enough to acknowledge his debt to Bacon. He draws many of his illustrations from such contemporary writers as Sir Philip Sidney, Ben Jonson, and Edmund Spenser.

For Blount, the four virtues of style are Brevity, Perspicuity (and "under this vertue may come Plainness, which is not to be too curious in the order," but should use "a diligent kind of negligence"), "Life" or wit, and "Respect" or propriety. Blount's discussion of sententia and of other figures connected with the curt style indicates that the Senecon manner was beginning to regain the attention it had enjoyed briefly at the beginning of the century. Blount is undoubtedly referring to the "pointed style" when he says in the section of the book dealing with commonplaces: "Eloquence is a way of speech prevailing over those whom we design it to prevail; That is, if we will take it in the short or Laconick way, a distilling our notions into a quintessence, or forming all our thoughts in a Cone and smiting with the point." Blount treats of about twenty-five figures (for the most part, those treated by Tzaleus in his Rhetorica) and devotes about thirty pages of his book to amplification.

In the thirty years after the original publication of this book, five

197 See Wallace, Blacon on Rhetorio, 220.
198 See Blount, Academie of Eloquence, London, 1664, 142-145.
199 Ibid., 66.
editions were produced, and George Williamson attests that "no other rhetoric of that time seems to have been quite so popular." 200

John Smith seems to have been as nondescript as his name. He is such an obscure figure, at any rate, that he does not even win a place in the Dictionary of National Biography. Seemingly, all that is known of him is that he was the author of a rhetoric text entitled The Mysteries of Rhetorique Unvail'd (1657). 201 This book, which defined rhetorical figures with special reference to the Scriptures, seems to have been rather widely used. By 1709, nine editions of the work had appeared, and as late as 1739, "J. H., Teacher of Geography" was publishing an abridgment of the work. 202 Although Smith's text bears a remarkable resemblance to Hoskins's, we have no reason to believe that he ever saw the manuscript copy of the Directions. The explanation for the similarities of Smith's work to Hoskins's lies in the fact that he had used Thomas Blount's Academie. Smith never mentions Hoskins or Blount, and although he quotes frequently from the Arcadia, he never once mentions the book by name and only once mentions the name of the author. Professor Williamson has seen enough importance in Smith's book to feel justified in making the claim that "especially in Blount and Smith this decade [the 1650's] might claim to have produced the rhet-

200 The Senecan Amble, 217.

201 The full title gives some idea of the contents of the work: The Mysteries of Rhetorique Unvail'd Wherein above 150 of the Tropes and Figures are Severally Divided from the Greek into English together with Lively Definitions and Variety of Latin, English Scriptural Examples, London, 1657.

202 See Directions, ed. Hudson, xxxvii. The present writer has not seen a copy of Smith's work. T. W. Baldwin (Small Latine, '', 155), reveals that he owns a copy of the 1657 edition.
John Smith's book was only the most popular of those seventeenth-century rhetorics that used the Scriptures as a storehouse of illustrations. With the ascendancy of the Puritans in the seventeenth century, rhetoric came more and more to serve as the tool of the sermon-writer and the expositor of the Scriptures. The sub-title of Centuria Sacra (1654) by Thomas Hall, a Puritan clergyman and schoolmaster at King's Norton, reveals the use to which rhetoric was being put during the Commonwealth period:

About one hundred Rules for the expounding and clearer understanding of the Holy Scriptures. To which are added a Synopsis or Compendium of all the most material Tropes and Figures contained in the Scriptures.

John Prideaux, who was successively Rector of Exeter College, Regius Professor of Divinity, and Bishop of Rochester, published a rhetoric in 1659 entitled Sacred Eloquence: or, the Art of Rhetoric as it is laid down in the Scriptures. The names of John Smith, John Prideaux, and Thomas Hall have all but passed into oblivion, and although John Smith's book alone of these three enjoyed a brief spurt of success, neither the popularity nor the influence of these Scriptural rhetorics was ever widespread or long-lived.

Thomas Farnaby (1575?-1647) wandered far afield in his search for knowledge and experience. After his graduation from Merton College, Oxford, he went to Spain, where he received a sound classical education at a Jesuit college. Later he accompanied Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Hawkins on their last

203 The Senecon Amble, 281.

204 Biographical facts in this paragraph are taken from Sidney Lee's article on Farnaby in the Dictionary of National Biography.
sea voyage. Upon his return, he fought and was wounded in one of the battles in the Lowlands. He set up as a schoolmaster in Somertshire, and was so successful in this venture that he decided to establish a grammar school in London. Before long he had a school of some 300 scholars, and before the second decade of the seventeenth century came to an end, his reputation as a classical scholar and schoolmaster had spread throughout Europe. Sidney Lee, Farnaby's biographer in the DNB, makes the bold claim that "Farnaby was the chief classical scholar as well as the chief schoolmaster of his time."

Besides the composition of a new Latin grammar and the translation of several classical works, Farnaby produced a popular rhetoric, Index Rhetorius (1625). Subsequent editions came out in 1633, 1640, 1646; by 1767 the fifteenth edition had appeared. In 1660 T. Stephens produced an epitomised version of the Index for use at Bury St. Edmunds School. Whereas Brinsley, writing in 1612, names Talsaus as the leading rhetoric text in the grammar schools, Hoole somewhat later in the century designates Farnaby as the leading text.

A small book written in Latin, the Index was packed with erudite, highly technical matter that must have proved difficult for many grammar-school boys. The first section of the book supplied a table of the various methods of persuasion. The second section carried chapters on Dispositio, Elocutio.

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205 The full title of the 1625 edition was Index Rhetorius Scholii et Institutioni Tenerioris Aetatis Accomodatus. In 1640 the book was re-issued under the title Index Rhetorius et Oratorius sum Formulis Oratorii et Indices Poetico.

206 See the bibliography in the DNB article.

207 Hoole, A New Discovery, ed. Campagnac, 181.

208 Foster Watson, in English Grammar Schools, 443-444, gives a fairly detailed analysis of the Index.
Pronuntiatio, Imitatio, Lectio, Tropes, and Figures. The third section was a comprehensive collection of references to poets and prose writers on a wide variety of subjects.

Despite the growing popularity of textbooks in the vernacular, Latin textbooks, as the success of Farnaby's book attests, were still holding their own in the seventeenth century. T. W. Baldwin offers a plausible explanation of this:

The sixteenth century had aimed by its simplification and digestes to lead its pupils finally to the true classic originals, Cicero and Quintilian. But by the seventeenth century, these preliminary works had been so condensed and systematized that the classic originals were regarded as superfluous. So the seventeenth century took the modern rhetorical compends of Talleus, Butler, Farnaby, etc., as better pedagogical works than the originals of Cicero and Quintilian. Ramus had won; the classics could be improved upon both in their reasoning and in their practice. The Renaissance was fading fast. 209

Joshua Poole210 intended his The English Parnassus211 to be a vade mecum for poets. In essence his book is an anthology of choice epithets, phrases, and figures culled exclusively from English writers like Milton, Sidney, Spenser, and Jonson. This collection was the result of the application of rhetorical principles to examples of English literature. Poole hoped that his English


210 For some brief identifying information about Poole, see Foster Watson, The Beginnings of the Teaching of Modern Subjects, London, 1909, 35-36.

211 The full title is as follows: The English Parnassus: or a Help to English Poesie. Containing a short Institution of that art; a collection of all Rhyming Monosyllables, the Choicest Epithets and Phrases: with some General Forms upon all occasions, Subjects and Themes, Alphabetically digested. By Jos(h)ua Poole, M.A., Clare Hall, Camb. 1657. 8vo. Foster Watson, in The Beginnings of the Teaching of Modern Subjects, 35, informs us that the British Museum copy has manuscript notes by Dr. Isaac Watts.
Parnassus would serve as a practical supplement to a rhetoric that merely supplied the theory. The book seems not to have enjoyed a wide currency, and today it barely gains a mention in surveys of rhetorical texts.

The life of Obadiah Walker (1616-1699) would make an interesting chapter in any history of religious intrigue. But an account of the suspicions about his Roman Catholic leanings and about the part he played in the conversion of several Oxford men while he was a tutor at University College, Oxford, can find no place here. Obadiah Walker comes into the picture here because of the rhetoric book he produced—Some Instructions concerning the Art of Oratory (1659). A second edition of this book was called for in 1682. Like Hoskins's Directions, Walker's Instructions was designed for the young student. One of Walker's distinctive contributions to seventeenth-century rhetoric was the distinction he made between spoken and written styles. "For speaking," he says, "tis necessary, that you observe a fuller and opener style; a stricter for the pen. For the same man, when an Auditor, is not so curious and vigilant, as when a Reader." He points out the "proper graces and defects" of the long style and the short style (the main divisions of style, according to Walker) and then goes on to suggest the dangers to which the extremes of both styles are liable:

Either very long, or very short, periods are subject to obscurity: one not opening and spreading the matter enough; the other overburdening the Auditor's memory. Yet who so will not lose the acuteness and elegance in the one, or suffer the disembarring in the other, must in some things hazard the

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212 See William Carr's article on Walker in the DNB.

213 Walker, Instructions (1659), 95, quoted from Williamson, The Senecan Amble, 259.
imperspicuity of his style. 214

All in all, Walker's predilection is for that pointed brevity which was to be-
come the ideal of the neo-classical period. Pliny the Second is his Latin ideal;
Hooker, Bacon, and Andrewes are the chief English models that he holds up for
 emulation.

One section of Thomas Hobbes's Answer to Davenant's Preface to Gondi-
bert (1650), the section dealing with the "natural" style, has some pertinence
to rhetoric. True and natural expression is based, according to Hobbes, on two
things, to know well and to know much. Hobbes goes on to examine the psychologi-
cal effects of these two qualities:

A signe of the first is perspicuity, property, and decency, which delight
all sorts of men, either by instructing the ignorant or soothing the learned
in their knowledge. A signe of the latter is novelty of expression, and
pleaseth by excitation of the minde; for novelty causeth admiration, and
admiration curiosity, which is a delightful appetite of knowledge. 215

To know much was taken care of by inventio, that part of rhetoric concerned with
finding things to say. The invention of matter, however, eventually had its ef-
fect on style when there developed a great interest in amplification. Copia re-
sulted in that variety of expression which pleased because of its novelty and
ingenuity. To know well was originally more the concern of logic than of rhet-
oric. But the quality of one's knowledge was seen to have some effect on style
too. Many later rhetoricians, including Hugh Blair, were to insist, for in-

214 Walker, Instructions, 98, quoted from Williamson, The Senecon
Amble, 260-261.

215 Thomas Hobbes, Answer to Davenant's Preface to Gondibert, in
Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century, ed. J. E. Spingarn, 3 vols., Oxford,
1908, II, 63.
stance, that an idea could not be expressed clearly if it were not apprehended clearly.

The natural style must also avoid words which are high-sounding but hollow (those "windy blisters") and phrases which express either "more then is perfectly conceived, or perfect conception in fewer words then it requires."\textsuperscript{216}

The good style requires not only that our words be chosen with regard to their "Property and Significance" but that the words be put together in a perspicuous and facile construction. Hobbes's general attitude toward figures and tropes can be inferred from the fact that he has very little to say about ornament. In general, his feeling is that while figures of speech add a certain grace and charm to our writing they should be used sparingly and discreetly.\textsuperscript{217}

Hobbes's idea of the use of images in description seems to be akin to Quintilian's enargeia: "a Poet is a Painter, and should paint Actions to the understanding with the most decent words as Painters do Persons and Bodies with the choicest colours to the eye." As we have come to expect from Hobbes, fancy must always submit itself to the control and guidance of reason.

While Hobbes has very little importance as a rhetorician proper, he is important for the direction that he gave to subsequent poetics and rhetoric. Professor Atkins very well sums up Hobbes's special contribution:

By his philosophy was brought to bear on aesthetic matters; and his rationalistic outlook not only led to a bridling of poetic fancy and to a discrediting of works of pure romance, it also suggested a simpler and more lucid expression in verse and prose alike. It was as a pioneer in psycho-

\textsuperscript{216} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{217} Ibid., 70-71.
logical inquiries, however, that his main influence was ultimately felt. 218

In December, 1664, two years after its founding and in response to demands from certain quarters, the Royal Society named a committee for the improvement of the English language. Charles II and many of his court had recently returned from exile in Paris, where the prestige and influence of the French Academy carried great weight in literary and academic circles. Among those named to this committee were John Dryden, John Evelyn, Thomas Sprat, and Edmund Waller. Their hope was that the authority of the Royal Society would help to refine, augment, and fix the English language. What few meetings this committee did have were rather desultory, and nothing official ever emerged from the project. Something of what the committee proposed to do, can be learned from a letter that John Evelyn wrote to Sir Peter Wyche in 1665. 219 Besides proposals for a lexicon and for improved and standardized spelling, the committee was to propose some criterion for good usage among colloquial and formal words. Since the English language was deficient in certain expressions, Evelyn suggested that certain French words be adopted, like ennui, bizarre, effort, concert, emotion, chicaneries. The tone of Evelyn's letter is diffident, however, as though he already knew the project was doomed to failure.

Although this project never advanced beyond the planning stage, the Royal Society was to have some influence on the kind of prose that was written in the neo-classical period. The encouragement that Bacon had given to the for-


219 This letter is reprinted in Critical Essays of the 17th Century, ed. Spingarn, II, 510-318.
nation of a "scientific" prose was to be supported by the Royal Society and give
on a new impetus. One section of Thomas Sprat's History of the Royal Society
(1667) contains the manifesto of this reform.

The "superfluity of talking," Sprat says, has had such a devastating
effect on the Arts and Professions that he cannot help concluding "that elo-
queness ought to be banish'd out of all civil Societies, as a thing fatal to
Peace and good Manners." The only remedy for this disease of "fine speaking" is
"to reject all amplifications, digressions, and swellings of style; to return
back to the primitive purity and shortness, when men deliver'd so many things al-
most in an equal number of words."222

In "An Account of the Life and Writings of Mr. Abraham Cowley" (1668),
Sprat had more to say about the style proper to the new scientific age. Cowley
exemplified this "proper" style. In his choice of words, Cowley "neither went
before nor came after the use of the Age," and he "forsook the Conversation, but
never the Language, of the City and Court." Cowley had mastered "the hardest
secret of good Writing, to know when he has done enough." Despite the "new com-
liness" that Cowley achieved in his expression, he did not lose sight of decorum:

But it seems all to arise out of the Nature of the subject, and to be just
fitted for the thing of which he speaks. If ever he goes far for it, he
dissolves his pains admirably well.224

220 This Section (Section XX) of the History of the Royal Society is
221 Ibid., 116.
222 Ibid., 117-118.
224 Ibid., 130.
According to Sprat, "the true perfection of Wit is to be pliable to all occasions, to walk or flye, according to the Nature of every subject." Professor Williamson has been keen enough to catch a hint of inconsistency here. "To assert that 'the true perfection of Wit is to be pliable to all occasions,'" Williamson says, "is to counter the levelling tendency imputed to the programme of the Royal Society." 226

It is regrettable that Cowley did not live long enough to write his projected "Discourse concerning Style." 227 Undoubtedly he would have said many sensible things about the plain style; we must not forget, after all, that Cowley was Dryden's first literary god. This "metaphysical" poet distrusted metaphysics because he felt that the schoolmen had reduced philosophy to a matter of mere words. As he says in his ode "To Mr. Hobs,"

Then nought but Words it grow,
And those all Barb'rous too.

Scattered throughout his poems 228 there are several instances of the sort of comment that might have figured in his proposed treatise on style.

Much the same ideas about the plain style as those advanced by Sprat were presented by John Wilkins (1614-1672), one of the pillars of the Royal Society and later Bishop of Chester, in Ecclesiastes (1646) and An Essay towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language (1668). In the former essay he

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225 Ibid., 138.

226 The Senecan Amble, 314.

227 It is Sprat who tells us that Cowley intended to write such a treatise. See Critical Essays of the 17th Century, ed. Spingarn, II, 142.

228 See the series of quotations from Cowley's poetry in Williamson, The Senecan Amble, 316-322.
maintains that style should be "plain and natural, not being darkned with the
affection of Scholastical harshness, or Rhetorical flourishes." As the
marginal glosses in this book indicate, Wilkins's doctrines of style derive
largely from Seneca's Epistles. Like Seneca, Wilkins seems to be recommending a
style that follows a happy medium. As Wilkins goes on to say, the style "must
be full without empty and needless Tautologies"; our expressions "should be so
close, that they may not be obscure; and so plain, that they may not seem vain
and tedious."

The extreme to which the Royal Society's advocacy of a plain, utilitarian
style could be pushed is discovered in Wilkins's Essay towards a Real Char-acter and a Philosophical Language. Here Wilkins proposes "a Real universal
Character, that should not signify words, but things and notions." In other
words, a series of symbols would be established, each symbol having a univocal,
universal, and constant meaning. Literary symbols would thus approach the pre-
bision of mathematical symbols. Fortunately for literature, this project never
crystallized. Instead of words with rich associations and many-leveled mean-
ings, our literary vocabulary might have been made up of "useful," univocal ideograms.

Perhaps it was Dryden who prevented the English language from develop-
ing to that extreme. That the "father of English prose" had some influence on
the theory and practice of rhetoric in England should come as a surprise to no
one. Because Dryden's pronouncements on language and style are scattered about

229 John Wilkins, Ecclesiastes, London, 1675, 199.
230 John Wilkins, Essay towards a Real Character and a Philosophical
in his essays, it is perhaps safe to say that the eminence of his prestige and the example of his practice carried greater weight than did his theory.

Dryden was to make propriety the central doctrine in his views on style. The propriety that Dryden calls for is threefold: the language and style must fit "the occasion, the subject, and the persons."231 Those words and thoughts are the most correct "which cannot be changed, but for the worse."232 Dryden eventually adopted the conversational standard as his criterion of the good style. He urges the use of "easy language," language which conveys thought "in words so commonly received, that it is understood by the meanest apprehensions."233 In addition, the words must be placed in a natural order—an order such as men use "in ordinary speaking."234 Dryden's celebrated strictures on the "preposition in the end of the sentence"235 puzzle modern arbiters of usage, especially since Dryden advocated a conversational ease in written prose. This was an instance where the traditional rhetorical training that he received from Dr. Busby won out over the dictates of idiom.

Dryden condemned Ben Jonson because "he did a little too much to Romanize our tongue."236 It is Dryden's move "to English" contemporary prose


233 Ibid., 52.

234 Ibid., 7.

235 Ibid., 168. Ker points out (Essays, I, xxvii) that in the 1684 revision of the Essay of Dramatic Poesy Dryden carefully corrected this fault in his own writing, changing a clause like "the end he aimed at" to "the end at which he aimed."

236 Essays, ed. Ker, I, 82.
which has been largely responsible for Dryden's reputation as the father of modern English prose style. His advocacy of native words and his encouragement of vernacular, rather than Latinate, syntax are part of his program to refine the language.

So jealous was Dryden of naturalness of style that he, unlike most of the rhetoricians who preceded him, discouraged the "labor of the file." At the end of his essay "A Parallel of Poetry and Painting" he says, quite significantly:

A work may be overwrought, as well as under-wrought; too much labour often takes away the spirit by adding to the polishing, so that there remains nothing but a dull correctness, a piece without any considerable faults, but with few beauties; for when the spirits are drawn off there is nothing but a capit mortuum.

Thus Dryden places himself on the side of those who are calling for more naturalness, more ease, more spontaneity, in writing. And in his recognition of the "beauties" and the "spirits" of writing he is preparing the way for the triumphant re-entry of the Longinian "transport" into the rhetorical criticism of the eighteenth century.

John Hughes (1677-1720) was stigmatized by Swift as being one "among the mediocribus, in prose as well as verse." A good friend of Addison, Hughes was one of the most frequent contributors to the Spectator. His is the distinction of having produced the first critical edition (1715) of Spenser's

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237 Ibid., II, 152.

If the reproduction of commonplaces entitles a person to be called a mediocrity, then Hughes deserves the title that Swift bestowed upon him. His short essay is full of the sort of truisms that gains one’s assent but wearies one’s attention. And yet, for all its conventional dicta, his essay would reward the attention of the ordinary freshman who comes to college with only the vaguest notion of what constitutes a "good style." He has some very sensible things to say about what he considers the four qualifications of a good style: Propriety, Perspicuity, Elegance, and Cadence.

Although Hughes does not figure importantly in the history of rhetorical theory, his commonsense observations on style have gained for him the kind of immortality that attends admission into an anthology. His essay On Style was the latest significant treatise on rhetoric to be published in the seventeenth century.

The first half of the eighteenth century in England merely consolidated the neo-classicism that had been imported from France during the seventeenth century. As Atkins says, "Hitherto French influence had been tentative, intermittent and partial; whereas after 1700 the teaching of Boileau, Rapin, and Le Bossu, now viewed in clearer perspective, became yet more influential." Professor Bosker says that Rapin’s Réflexions sur la Poétique (1674), Boileau’s L’Art Poétique, and Le Bossu’s Traité du poème épique (1675)241 "dominated Eng-


240 Atkins, English Criticism: 17th and 18th Centuries, 143.

241 Thomas Rymer published an English translation of Rapin’s work in
lish literary criticism in the days of Dryden and Pope, and their influence continued to be felt throughout the eighteenth century.242 The French critics of course were retailing Aristotelian and Horatian doctrines. The lamentable feature of this adulation for classical precepts was the uncritical manner in which they were accepted as absolute law.

The questioning of Aristotelian and Horatian canons came with the appearance of editions and translations of Longinus. Longinus's treatise On the Sublime was to give a new direction to criticism in the eighteenth century. Judgment came to be more a thing of taste and less a thing of rule. The new temper was displayed in such works as Leonard Welsted's Dissertation concerning the Perfection of the English Tongue, and the State of Poetry (1724), Robert Lowth's De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum (1753), and Edward Young's Conjectures on Original Composition (1759). With the freer, more subjective type of criticism gradually claiming more and more adherents the stage was being set for the appearance of the "romantic" writers.

These critical currents were reflected in the rhetoric books of the period. The eighteenth-century rhetoricians still paid allegiance to the classical precepts, but at the same time they urged their pupils to strike out on their own, to discover a style that was natural to themselves, to submit to the dynamic force of enthusiasm. They no longer felt it necessary to classify, define, and illustrate multitudes of figures and tropes. It sufficed no longer that figures have a mere ornamental relationship to the composition; figures must

1674; Sir William Soame published an English translation of Boileau's work in 1680; and an anonymous English translation of Bossu's work appeared in 1680.

242 Bosker, Literary Criticism in the Age of Johnson, 3.
justify themselves by exhibiting a functional relationship. The eighteenth century did not buy the severely barren style that the Royal Society had advocated, but it did encourage the cultivation of the simple, easy style. Delivery, that aspect of rhetoric which had been neglected for over a century, began to receive attention again, largely as a result of the elocutionary programs of such mentors as Sheridan and Walker. Pulpit oratory began to be assiduously cultivated again, under the inspiration of such famous English preachers as Tillotson, Barrow, Atterbury and of the even more famous French preachers Bossuet, Bourdaloue, and Massillon. By the end of the century collections of sermons sold as well as novels.

In short, rhetoric in the eighteenth century became more of a practical art and less of an academic one. As in the seventeenth century, the line between poetry and rhetoric was hard to ascertain. Critics and rhetoricians turned more and more to native literature for their illustrations. "In fact," Saintsbury says,243 "Rhetoric, now dubbed as Eloquence, becomes the Art of Literature, or in other words Criticism." In the growing awareness of belles lettres, the English began to recognize that they had a heritage of literature of which they could be proud. Within the space of fifty years Paradise Lost had become enough of a classic that Addison could feel perfectly justified in devoting eighteen numbers of the Spectator to an analysis of this epic. Historical criticism had its rise in this century, and for the first time genres other than the epic and tragedy began to receive serious consideration. But for all this awakening in the Age of Enlightenment, one must remember that this was the last

243 History of English Criticism, 204.
great age of a serious academic interest in rhetoric. 244

This survey of eighteenth-century rhetorics might well begin with Anthony Blackwall (1674-1730), a fervent classical scholar who in the years 1722-1726 and 1729-1730 served as the headmaster of Market Bosworth Grammar School. 245 He was invited to the headmastership of Bosworth largely on the strength of the success of his An Introduction to the Classics. 246 This rhetoric text, first published in 1718, continued to sell throughout the century. There were extra editions in 1719, 1725, 1737, 1746, and 1809.

It is the essay on tropes and figures (pp. 148-272) that gives this text a title to be considered as a rhetorical treatise. Blackwall says in his Introduction that his purpose is "to reform Rhetorick from the rubbish and barbarism which it lies under in the common books and to reduce it to a liberal and rational science." 247 He explains and illustrates some eight Tropes and twenty-eight Figures. 248 The illustrations are taken not only from such classical sources as Cicero, Virgil, and Homer, but also from modern English writers, like Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, and Archbishop Tillotson.

244 The present writer must acknowledge at the outset his heavy indebtedness in the following survey, especially in the discussion of the minor figures of the second half of the century, to Harold F. Friend, English Rhetorical Theory, 1750-1800, Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1957.

245 The DNB article on Blackwall says that Dr. Johnson may have been an assistant of Blackwall's at Bosworth school for a few months.

246 The full title is An Introduction to the Classics with its Essay on the Nature of those Emphatical and Beautiful Figures which gave strength and ornament to writing.

247 An Introduction to the Classics, London, 1719, iii.

248 Ibid., 156-160 and 182-189.
Blackwall's An Introduction to the Classics has the advantage of being lucid, sensible, and practical. His devotion to the Greek and Latin classics did not make him an obscurantist in regard to modern literature. He enthusiastically recommends "the choicest Authors in our own Tongue, and some of the best writers of our neighbor nations." The schoolmaster who prescribed An Introduction to the Classics could rest assured that his pupils were getting a safe and sane text.

"Proper words, in proper places, make the true definition of a style." This famous definition of style first appeared in Jonathan Swift's A Letter to a Young Clergyman. Swift is not generally remembered as a rhetorician, and indeed he never composed a formal work on rhetoric. His observations in A Letter to a Young Clergyman are the most extensive animadversions he ever made on style. It is this essay, incidentally, that Blair in Lecture XXIV analyzes for its style.

The greater part of the Letter deals with propriety of diction. As early as 1710 in a letter to the Tatler (No. 230) Swift advocated the refining and the fixing of the language. In 1712 he expatiated on this same subject in his pamphlet Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue. Swift objected to the clipping of words—e.g., the formation of mob from mobile. He objected also to the contraction of verbs—e.g., drudg'd, disturb'd, rebuk'd—because "our language was already overstocked with monosylla-


250 Works, ed. Scott, IX, 343-363.
Swift also opposes the canonization of such vulgar coinages as sham, banter, bully, palming.

In the same vein are the objections advanced in A Letter to a Young Clergyman. Swift inveighs against jargon of all kinds. He interdicts the use of such terms as omniscience, omnipresence, ubiquity, attributes, beatific vision (note that they are all Latinate words), because such diction is known only or mainly to ecclesiastical writers. The other extreme is practiced by those who are afraid to appear as pedants. Their deliberate adoption of the style of "a gaming ordinary" is a pedantry no less reprehensible than the style of the learned classes. What should be the norm for diction then? Swift's answer can be inferred from his statement that "a divine has nothing to say to the wisest congregation of any parish in the kingdom, which he may not express in a manner to be understood by the meanest among them." Swift favored the sort of discipline to which Gertrude Stein in the twentieth century submitted the young Hemingway: the unsparing excision of qualifying words ("flat unnecessary epithets") and trite expressions ("old threadbare phrases").

Swift is another of those literary figures whose influence on English prose style has stemmed more from their practice than from their theory.

251 Ibid., 351.
252 Ibid., VIII, 339.
253 Ibid., 341.
254 Ibid., 342.
255 An instructive study of Swift's rhetorical practice can be found in Martin Price, Swift's Rhetorical Art: A Study in Structure and Meaning, New Haven, 1955. Price says (p. 1) that the "central tradition in which Swift grew was an anti-rhetorical one."
Swift is perhaps the most celebrated practitioner of the plain, "rational" style that enjoyed such a vogue in the eighteenth century. Dr. Johnson, in his well-known "Life of Swift" put his finger directly on the effectiveness and shortcomings of this style, which was more suited for exposition than for persuasion: "For purposes merely didactic, when something is to be told that was not known before, it is the best mode, but against that inattention by which known truths are suffered to lie neglected, it makes no provision; it instructs, but does not persuade." It was this kind of style that Blair was to employ in his lectures.

John Stirling did not win sufficient prominence during his lifetime to merit inclusion in the Dictionary of National Biography.257 He did compile a little book on rhetoric, however, which, to judge by the number of editions,258 proved to be very popular. Stirling's A System of Rhetoric (1733), only thirty pages in length, contains in the first part a listing of ninety-seven figures and tropes. The Greek or Latin terms for the figures and tropes are translated into their English equivalents, and all are simply defined and briefly illustrated. The second part, entitled Ars Rhetorica, is nothing more than a Latin translation of the first part.

With its list of ninety-seven figures and tropes, A System of Rhetoric


257 For information about Stirling and his book the present writer has had to rely wholly on Harding, English Rhetorical Theory, 11-14.

258 Harding lists eleven editions of A System of Rhetoric, the last one appearing as late as 1833.
has the distinction of providing a catalogue of more figures than was given by any other rhetoric book in the eighteenth century. Among eighteenth century rhetorics, only John Holmes's book, with eighty-three figures and tropes, approaches this abundance, and among all English rhetoric books, only Puttenham's *Art of English Poesie*, with 120 figures and tropes, exceeds this listing. Stirling admitted that the Latin definitions in his book were derived principally from Farnaby's *Index Rhetorius*, which was published exactly one century earlier.

John Holmes prepared his *The Art of Rhetoric* for the use of his own pupils at the Free Grammar School in Norfolk. Holmes defines rhetoric as "the art of speaking or writing well and ornamentally on any subject." Such a definition reveals how firmly established was the concept of rhetoric at this time as an art that covered both written and spoken discourse.

Professor Harding says that "two-thirds of the *Art of Rhetoric* is taken directly and without change from Quintilian; Cicero and Aristotle furnish most of the remaining third." Holmes defines and illustrates some eighty-three figures and tropes. Holmes's part in the compilation has been to act as an editor and translator of appropriate passages culled from the standard classical rhetoricians. At the end of each section he has prepared a series of

259 Because the present writer has been unable to obtain a copy of this text, he has had to rely wholly on the information given by Harding, *English Rhetorical Theory*, 7-10.

260 Harding records the curious fact that in the Cornell University copy, which was published at Philadelphia, 1849, and edited by John A. Getty, this definition was supplanted by one taken verbatim from Hugh Blair's Twenty-fifth Lecture: "Rhetoric is the art of speaking in such a manner as to attain the end for which we speak."

questions and answers to facilitate the students' apprehension and retention of the matter in the book.

The Art of Rhetoric was first published in London in 1739. The British Museum Catalogue lists subsequent editions in 1755, 1768, 1786, and 1826. In the nineteenth century, a hundred years after the publication of the first edition, James Carnahan, President of the College of New Jersey, and Samuel B. Stow, President of Dickinson College, were still heartily recommending The Art of Rhetoric for American schools.262

What Edmund Burke had to say about taste, the sublime, and the beautiful is of some pertinence in this survey because a discussion of these terms was to find a place in the books of the Scottish rhetoricians. Burke defined his views in a work that he published when he was only twenty-seven years old, The Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1756). As a result of the growing interest in Longinus, the terms sublime and beautiful gained currency, but they were being used loosely.263 In the interests of keener aesthetic appreciation, Burke proposed to sharpen the meanings of these terms.

Before making a distinction between the sublime and the beautiful, Burke attempts in his Introduction to clarify the meaning of the term taste. Burke rejects the view that taste is a separate faculty of the mind, distinct from imagination and judgment. Taste is made up of sensibility (a term that Burke seems to consider synonymous with imagination) and judgment.264 Taste is

262 See footnote, ibid., 10.


no mere instinct, for its operation is governed by reason and imagination. Taste becomes the faculty of critical judgment, and Burke's object in the essay is "to find whether there are any principles, on which the imagination is affected, so common to all, so grounded and certain, as to supply the means of reasoning satisfactorily about them." According to Burke's view, taste judges literature, not by applying a set of rules to it but by analyzing its appeal to human emotions and passions. 265

Burke made his most significant contribution to aesthetics, however, when he discussed the sublime and the beautiful. Burke considers terror to be the principal source of the sublime (Part I, Section 7). That which contributes most to the terrible is obscurity, for when "we know the full extent of any danger, when we can accustom our eyes to it, a great deal of the apprehension vanishes" (Part II, Section 3). Other sources of the sublime are those objects which give the sense of power, vastness, magnitude, infinity, and silence. Burke makes the curious statement that a "clear idea is therefore another name for a little idea" (Part II, Section 4). Burke goes on to analyze then why obscure ideas or images arouse a greater feeling of the sublime than do clear ideas or images.

In Part III of the treatise Burke discusses beauty. He opposes the view that proportion of parts is an essential element in the beautiful (Part III, Section 2). Nor is fitness or utility a necessary part of beauty; a flower, for instance, can be beautiful although it has no use (Part II, Section 6). Perfection is not a constituent of beauty either (Part III, Section 9). Because

265 Ibid., 10.
woman instinctively recognize this, "they learn to limp, to totter in their
walk, to counterfeit weakness and even sickness." So far, Burke has been defin-
ing beauty negatively. For the positive definition, one has to go to the dis-
tinction that Burke draws between the sublime and beautiful:

For sublime objects are vast in their dimensions, beautiful ones compara-
tively small: beauty should be smooth and polished; the great, rugged and
negligent; beauty should shun the right line, yet deviate from it insensi-
bly; the great in many cases loves the right line; and when it deviates, it
often makes a strong deviation: beauty should not be obscure; the great
ought to be dark and gloomy; beauty should be light and delicate; the
great ought to be solid and even massive. (Part III, Section 27).

The general difference between them, he goes on to point out, is that the sub-
lime is founded on pain while the beautiful is founded on pleasure.

How much influence Burke's treatise had on subsequent discussions of
the sublime and beautiful is difficult to calculate. But it is noteworthy, if
not significant, that every English and Scottish rhetorician who wrote on the
sublime after 1756 mentioned Burke. Professor Bosker concludes his own discus-
sion of Burke by saying, "Burke's ideas of sublimity fell in with the growing
love of sensation, the strong predilection for the wilder aspects of nature,
which found their best illustration in the enthusiastic welcome given to the Os-
sic poems."266

Lectures Concerning Oratory was published in 1759267 by John Lawson
(1712-1759), a Master of Arts from Trinity College, Dublin, and the first librar-
ian of the University library. Lawson's book is firmly based on Aristotle's
Rhetoric and is pieced out by examples, mainly from Cicero and Quintilian. The

266 Bosker, Literary Criticism in the Age of Johnson, 168.

267 There were two other editions--1759 and 1760. The present writer
has seen the Dublin Edition of 1759.
first six lectures give a short history of classical rhetoric and modern rhetoric. Lecture 7 presents "some thoughts concerning Imitation." The remaining lectures treat of eloquence in relation to Reason (8 and 9), to Passion (10 and 11), and to the Senses (12-18). It is in the seven lectures devoted to Eloquence and the Senses that Lawson treats of style or elocution "as it comprehendeth Ornament, Composition, Figures."

Lawson is a sensible, sometimes original scholar, one who had absorbed a good deal of the learning of the past without closing his mind to the excellences of the present and the promises of the future. Following Aristotle as he did, he was deviating from the Longinian direction that criticism and rhetoric were taking in the eighteenth century. Harding, who sees many striking parallels between the Lectures and Swift's Letter to a Young Clergyman, finds Lawson's book of particular interest to modern students of rhetoric because it anticipates the conversational quality that was to develop in English style and because it makes the distinction between private and public speech. In addition, Lawson's book, he says, "was opposing the elocutionary movement then gaining ground in the British Isles."269

John Ward served as professor of rhetoric at Gresham College in London from 1720 until his death in 1758. In the year after his death there was published a two-volume collection of lectures on rhetoric, A System of Oratory, which Harding has called "the most elaborate and detailed synthesis of Greek and

268 See Harding, English Rhetorical Theory, 57.

269 Ibid., 40.
Roman rhetorical theory published in English." Although his greatest debt is to Quintilian, Ward acknowledges early in the first volume that he has borrowed "the finest precepts of Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, Longinus, and other celebrated authors, with proper example taken from the choicest parts of purest antiquity." The fifty-four lectures cover 863 pages—a bulk which indicates the thoroughness of the work but which probably precluded its use in the classroom.

Ward's chief preoccupation is with style. Exactly one half of the lectures are devoted to elocutio. It is noteworthy that Ward considers good sense to be the foundation of the good style. This was the criterion that most of the Scottish rhetoricians were to accept a few years later. The other parts of rhetoric receive less thorough treatment. Disposition rates eight lectures; six lectures treat of Invention; four lectures are spent on Delivery; Memory is the subject of only one lecture. The last eight lectures deal with Imitation, the nature of the Passions, the character of the Orator (these latter two subjects, as one might suspect, are based on Aristotle's Rhetoric), and a brief history of oratory.

It is impossible, in the limited space here, to do justice to Ward's pregnant lectures on oratory. It was the only English rhetoric published in the eighteenth century which came anywhere near matching the comprehensiveness of Blair's Lectures. Ward's lectures were obviously compiled over a period of many years.

270 Ibid., 41.
272 Ibid., II, 118.
years spent in the classroom, and they must continually have been added to. They reveal how seriously and thoroughly rhetoric was still being taught in the mid-eighteenth century. Although only one edition of this solid work was called for, Ward's book was used for a number of years in such non-Conformist academies as those at Bristol, Hoxton, and Findern. 273

In Harold Harding's bibliography of rhetorical works published in England in the eighteenth century, 274 there are eight entries under the name of Thomas Sheridan, and Harding says that "between the years 1757 and 1780 Sheridan was easily the best known non-academic teacher of speaking and probably the most successful in a financial way." 275 Sheridan's works fall into three categories: those dealing with (1) reading and speaking; (2) pronunciation; (3) education.

The most popular and probably the most representative of his printed works was Lectures on Elocution (London, 1762). This book, which is a compilation of seven of his public lectures, deals exclusively with the problems of delivery--articulation, pronunciation, accent, emphasis, tones, pauses, pitch, voice control, and gesture. His Lectures on Reading (1775) gives directions for reading prose and for reading verse. Sheridan's success as an actor lent great weight to his pronouncements on matters of delivery. Sheridan is perhaps as much responsible as any other Englishman for the shift in meaning of elocution from style to delivery. He is also largely responsible for the great vogue of the

273 See H. McLachlan, English Education under the Test Acts, Manchester, 1931, 95, 123, 132.
275 Ibid., 63.
"elocution contest" in the schools.

Because Sheridan's lectures were designed for a popular appeal and because they confined the discussion to only one part of rhetoric, they had little or no influence on those two contemporary rhetoricians who rivaled him in popularity, Blair and Campbell. Although Sheridan's predilection for delivery verged on monomania, he did make some sensible and valuable contributions to speech teaching. Archbishop Whately, in his famous rhetoric book, lauded Sheridan's system of marking passages to be read aloud.276 Sheridan's chief contribution would seem to be that he directed attention once again to pronunciation, that part of rhetoric which, from the end of the sixteenth century to the middle of the eighteenth, had been almost wholly neglected.

Henry Home, Lord Kames (1696-1732), a Scottish jurist and psychologist, would have a place in this survey if he had done nothing more than urge Adam Smith and Hugh Blair to give lectures on rhetoric at the University of Edinburgh.277 In addition to this service, however, he published in 1782 in three volumes The Elements of Criticism, a work that was frequently reprinted and that exercised a marked influence on subsequent poetical and rhetorical theory.

Miss Helen Randall, who has made a close study of The Elements of Criticism, divides the work into the following general sections:

Fundamental Principles of Human Nature (Ch. I and II); Principles of the Arts (Ch. III-XV); Transitional Chapters on Minor Principles (Ch. XVI and

276 Richard Whately, Elements of Rhetoric, New York, 1867, 399-400.

277 For biographical information about Lord Kames, see Alexander Fraser Tytler, Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Honourable Henry Home of Kames, 2 vols., Edinburgh, 1807.
The scope of this work is much broader than most texts considered in this survey. Kames's book, as a matter of fact, makes its major contribution to aesthetics in general. In that regard, it is of a piece with Francis Hutcheson's Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue (1725), David Hume's Of the Standard of Taste (1757), and Alexander Gerard's Essay on Taste (1758). Only a small part of the book deals with rhetoric in the traditional sense of that word. His purpose, he tells us, is "to examine the sensitive branch of human nature, to trace the objects that are naturally agreeable, as well as those that are naturally disagreeable; and by these means to discover, if we can, what are the genuine principles of the fine arts." Kames hoped that by probing human psychology he could find an immutable standard of taste by which to assess all works of art.

It will not be possible here to detail Kames's views on rhetoric, but later, in the discussion of Blair's theories, some of Kames's doctrines will come to the fore. Kames's Elements was never widely used in the schools. It was bulky, involved, and surprisingly enough, written in a rather ponderous style. The real influence of Kames's Elements on rhetoric proved to be an indirect one. As Miss Randall says, "If one may consider the direct influence of Blair as a secondary influence of Kames, one may almost say that the text-books


on this subject for about a hundred years owed their main outline and many of their rules to the *Elements of Criticism*. Kames's good sense and impeccable taste made him one of the most respected of the "philosophical" critics.

Thomas Gibbons (1720-1735) was an Independent minister who wrote some respectable hymns and devotional verses, taught for several years at Mile End Academy, and in 1767 published a rhetoric book entitled *Rhetoric, or a View of its Principal Tropes and Figures*. Almost 500 pages in length, this book treats of seven tropes (Metaphor, Allegory, Metonymy, Synecdoche, Irony, Hyperbole, Catachresis) and twenty-one figures. This list is considerably less than the list of ninety-seven figures and tropes in Stirling's rhetoric. But whereas Stirling devoted only a few lines to each figure and trope, Gibbons devoted an entire chapter. The result is a much more thorough exposition of the important figures and tropes. In his Preface, Gibbons tells us that in preparing for the composition of this work he looked into more than a score of rhetorical works from Aristotle to Fenelon.

Gibbons's *Rhetoric* was definitely used at Mile End Academy, and there is a hint that it was also used at Rotherham school. Although the book was a

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280 Randall, *Lord Kames*, 85. Miss Randall goes on to name rhetoric textbooks, both English and American, which owe a debt to Kames's book.

281 Dr. W. Neuman, in his *Die Bedeutung Howe's für die Ästhetik und sein Einfluss auf die deutschen Ästhetiker*, Halle, 1934, traces very thoroughly the influence of Kames's book on the development of aesthetic theory on the continent.

282 This is almost exactly the same list of tropes that Blair treated at some length in his lectures.

considerable improvement over similar works by Blackwall and Stirling, its influence did not extend outside of non-Conformist academies, and it never required more than one edition.

Saintsbury has called George Campbell's *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776) "the most important treatise on the New Rhetoric that the eighteenth century produced." Campbell was a member of that Scottish School of Rhetoric which not only extended the range of rhetoric but also sought to investigate its "philosophy." He was at once more readable than Lord Kames and more profound than Hugh Blair.

What was Campbell's peculiar contribution to the art of rhetoric? For one thing, he advanced the notion that oratory could have an end other than to persuade. In the first two paragraphs of his treatise he defines eloquence (the term he prefers to rhetoric) as the "art or talent by which the discourse is adapted to its end," and says that a speech may have any one of four ends: "to enlighten the understanding, to please the imagination, to move the passions, or to influence the will." He agrees with Lord Kames that eloquence is among the fine arts, but he goes a step further than Kames by insisting that eloquence is also one of the useful arts, closely connected with the understanding and the will. Harold Harding observes that whereas Aristotle and his followers conceived of rhetoric as an offshoot of logic, Campbell was "the first writer on rhetoric in English to reverse that fundamental idea," for Campbell regarded logic merely


285 Throughout this section the edition used is the one published by Harper & Brothers of New York in 1853.
as the tool of rhetoric. 286

Campbell is perhaps best known to students of English for having established as the criterion of good usage the norm that language be reputable, national, and present. 287 In connection with this norm, Campbell's nine Canons of Verbal Criticism288 are, Saintsbury claims, 239 "so sound and so acute that they are not obsolete to the present day."

More than twenty editions of The Philosophy of Rhetoric were demanded during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Along with the works of Blair and Archbishop Whately, Campbell's book was regularly used in American colleges until about 1870. 290 De Quincey felt that he was according high praise to Whately's rhetoric when he proclaimed that it was the best book of its kind to appear since Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric. 291 Literary historians generally agree that although Blair's Rhetoric proved to be the more popular book, Campbell's Rhetoric proved to be the more original and the more substantial book.

Joseph Priestley (1733-1804), educated at Batley Grammar School and Daventry Academy, eventually became a Unitarian minister. In histories of ideas he is usually cited as the original formulator of the Benthamite theory of the

286 Harding, English Rhetorical Theory, 159.
287 See Philosophy of Rhetoric, Bk. II, ch. 1.
288 See Philosophy of Rhetoric, Bk. II, ch. 2.
289 History of English Criticism, 205.
291 Thomas De Quincey, Essays on Style, Rhetoric and Language, ed. Fred Newton Scott, Boston, 1898, 148.
"greatest happiness of the greatest number," as the simplifier of Hartley's psychology, and as the discoverer of oxygen ("dephlogisticated air"). While a tutor at Warrington Academy (1761-1767), he gave a series of lectures on rhetoric and oratory. These lectures were published in 1777 under the title A Course of Lectures on Oratory and Criticism.

Of the thirty-five lectures, five (which make up Part I) are devoted to Invention, five (Part II) to Disposition, and twenty-five (Part III) to Style. In the Preface Priestley acknowledges his debt to John Ward's System of Oratory, Lord Kames's Elements of Criticism, and David Hartley's Observations on Man (1749). The sources of his doctrines would indicate that he is one of those rhetoricians interested mainly in the philosophy or the psychology of composition.

It is somewhat strange that a scientist, especially one like Priestley whose thinking was utilitarian and materialistic, should have shown such a genuine interest in style. But Priestley was one of a small group of men interested in science who were not in accord with the stylistic reform proposed to the Royal Society by Dr. Sprat. Rare, unornamented prose does little more, Priestley says, "than make an impression on those persons who, of themselves, and from a regard to the nature and importance of the subject, will give their attention to it"; whereas a style graced by harmony and by striking or pleasant turns of thoughts will "attract and engage the attention."292 And so he devotes the final thirteen lectures (22-35) to a discussion of the traditional figures and

tropes, the problems of word-order and rhythm, and the sources of wit, humor, and the ridiculous.

Professor Harding doubts that Priestley's Lectures was much used outside of Warrington Academy. The book was too bulky and complicated for classroom use. Perhaps Priestley's greatest contribution to rhetoric was his strong espousal of the doctrine of usage. Baugh maintains that Priestley "more whole-heartedly than any one else" advocated the doctrine of usage as the criterion of what is proper in speech and writing.

John Walker (1732-1807) is remembered primarily as a lexicographer and grammarian, but because of his works on elocution and composition he figures in a discussion of eighteenth-century rhetoric. Walker became a Roman Catholic and an actor while he was living in Dublin. Later, he and his wife acted together at the Covent Garden Theater. In 1768, he gave up the stage for good, and after teaching for a time with James Usher at Kensington Gravel-pits School, he embraced a career of lecturing, at which he continued, with signal success, for the next thirty-five years.

Walker's first appearance in print came in 1777 when he published The Exercises for Improvement in Elocution. This book was nothing more than a

293 Harding, English Rhetorical Theory, 179.
295 See Thompson Cooper's life of Walker in the DNB.
296 Despite the many editions through which Walker's works went, the present writer has not been able to lay a hand on any of them. Even Mr. Harding had difficulty finding copies of some of them. He had to go to the British Museum, for instance, to find a copy of The Exercises for Improvement in Elocution.
collection of readings from select authors for those desirous of acquiring the art of reading or speaking in public. Perhaps the best and most popular of Walker's works was *Elements of Elocution* (1781). This two-volume work covered such matters as rhetorical punctuation, voice inflections, gesture, accent, emphasis, and pronunciation. The similarity of this work with Sheridan's *Lectures on Elocution* is apparent. Both Walker and Sheridan were well qualified to discourse on delivery as a result of their experience on the stage and the lecture platform. Walker, however, did not have the grounding in the classics that Sheridan did and accordingly did not have the reserves to draw upon when it came to citing collaborative or illustrative material.

Walker's textbooks on grammar and composition were written and published during the last ten years of his life. The most popular of these textbooks was *The Teacher's Assistant in English Composition* (1801). This was later reprinted under the title *English Themes and Essays*. This text, according to Harding, reached an eleventh edition by 1853. Despite the multiple editions of Walker's works, Harding believes that they had no "great bearing on the theories of other writers," and he concludes his consideration of Walker by saying,

> The works of Blair and Campbell and later on of Whately soon supplanted Walker in school and college classes and on library and booksellers' shelves. Today except by special students John Walker's works on elocution are seldom read and little known.297

Walker's real claim to distinction must rest on his dictionaries,298 which, ac-

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298 A Critical and Pronouncing Dictionary and Expositor of the English Language (1791); A Dictionary of the English Language (1792), which in the third edition (1819) was more accurately entitled A Rhyming Dictionary; The Key to the Classical Pronunciation of Greek and Latin Proper Names (1798).
According to Sir James Murray,299 established Walker as the supreme authority on English pronunciation.

On June 7, 1783 in London and on July 5 in Edinburgh, there appeared a two-volume quarto edition of Hugh Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres.300


300 "The Lectures were issued by Strahan and Cadell in London, and Creech in Edinburgh. They sold for £1/16 in boards, and £2/2 bound."--Robert Morell Schmitz, Hugh Blair, New York, 1946, 95.
CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY OF BLAIR'S LECTURES ON RHETORIC,
AND BLAIR'S OBSERVATIONS ON TASTE,
THE SUBLIME AND THE BEAUTIFUL

By the time that Hugh Blair published his Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, he had been delivering his lectures to the students at the University of Edinburgh for twenty-four years. On December 11, 1759, at the urging of Lord Kames and with the approval of the Town Council, Blair had begun reading his lectures within the walls of the College. In the next year, the Council formally appointed him to the Professorship of Rhetoric, but without salary. Blair's lectures were so enthusiastically received that his friends applied to George III for the establishment of an endowed Chair of Rhetoric. The reputation of the celebrated preacher of St. Giles in Edinburgh was already so high that the English monarch had no hesitation about acceding to the application. Accordingly, on April 7, 1762, George III commissioned Dr. Hugh Blair as Regius Professor of Rhetoric with a salary of seventy pounds a year. Perhaps the most

1 Alexander Grant, *The Story of the University of Edinburgh during its first Three Hundred Years*, London, 1854, I, 276-277.

2 James Finlayson, "A Short Account of the Life and Character of Dr. Hugh Blair," in *Sermons by Hugh Blair*, 5 vols., London, 1819, I, xiv. This will be referred to henceforth as *Life*.
distinguished successor to this Chair, which still exists at the University of Edinburgh, was George Saintsbury.

Up to the time of Blair's appointment, rhetoric had been taught in the University by the Professor of Logic. Blair himself had been instructed in rhetoric at Edinburgh by John Stevenson, who based his lectures solidly on the classical rhetoricians, Longinus, Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian. A good deal of the credit for the establishment of a separate chair of rhetoric is owing to Lord Kames. In 1748 Lord Kames induced Adam Smith to give a series of lectures on taste and composition at the University. Blair heard these lectures and, according to Smith's biographer, used them in the preparation of his own lectures. Since, at Smith's own request, these lectures were burned shortly before his death, we shall probably never be able to determine the full extent of Blair's appropriations. The only debt to Smith that we know of with any certainty is the debt that Blair himself acknowledges in a footnote in Lecture XVIII:

On this head of the general characters of style, particularly the plain and the simple, and the characters of those English authors who are classed under them, in this, and the following lecture, several ideas have been taken from a manuscript treatise on rhetoric, part of which was shown to me, many years ago by the learned and ingenious author, Dr. Adam Smith and which, it is hoped, will be given by him to the public.

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3 "A Short Account of the University of Edinburgh, the Present Professors in it, and the Several Parts of Learning Taught by them," The Scots Magazine, Edinburgh, III, August, 1741, 373.

4 John Rae, Life of Adam Smith, London, 1895, 32.

5 Since there are so many editions of Blair's Lectures and since the text is substantially the same in all editions, it will be the practice throughout this dissertation to document quotations from Blair, not by a page number in a specific edition, but by the Lecture number. The present writer has used a one-volume American edition, edited by Abraham Mills and published in Philadelphia (no publication date given).
In 1751 John Watson, afterwards a biographer of Philip II of Spain, succeeded Adam Smith as Lecturer in Rhetoric. Watson held this post until 1758, when he was promoted to the Chair of Logic at St. Andrews. No testimonial exists of Watson's effectiveness or influence as a teacher of rhetoric, and Blair has made no mention of his immediate predecessor. That Watson had some competency, however, can be inferred from the fact that he was recommended to the post by the discriminating Lord Kames.

"The following Lectures were read in the University of Edinburgh, for twenty-four years," Blair says in the very first sentence of his Preface. It is this acknowledgment which has disposed many literary historians to take a dim view of Hugh Blair as a teacher of rhetoric. The implication of Blair's statement is that the Lectures were never altered, once they had been written. Was there no development in Blair's view of his subject over a period of a quarter of a century? Did not some of his precepts need qualification in the light of the stimulating ideas that were circulating in the latter half of the eighteenth century? "Blair can hardly have been a good Professor," says the man who wrote the standard history of the University of Edinburgh. "The Lectures are fairly good for those times," Grant goes on to say; "but that a Professor should go on all this time in such a cut-and-dry fashion seems deplorable."

In a letter to Thomas Percy, dated January 31, 1772, Blair confessed that occasionally he occupied himself with "adding to and improving my Lectures."
We know too that he subtracted some things from the Lectures. We know for instance that at one time his Lectures had included an analysis of Ossianic poetry⁹ and that he deleted from the printed Lectures a passage in which he turned a sentence from Addison into caricatured Johnsonese.¹⁰ Substantially, however, the Lectures were the same in 1783 as they were when Blair began delivering the Lectures. This failure to modify the Lectures is characteristic of Blair's conservatism and lack of originality. This arbiter elegantiarum in late eighteenth-century Edinburgh was "a vain, timid, fussy, kind-hearted little man that everybody liked."¹¹ A man of this character, endowed with very real talents but no great genius and idolized by his followers, is prone to preserve intact what others have applauded enthusiastically. His fellow clergyman and biographer testifies that the estimation in which Blair was held "disposed him to dwell at times on the thought of his success with a satisfaction which he did not affect to conceal."¹²

And indeed there is ample evidence that Blair's Lectures were a success. From 1708 until 1759 classes in rhetoric were attended by only a handful of students every term. Blair, however, frequently had classes of 100 to 150 students.¹³ The average attendance in his classes was some fifty to sixty stu-

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¹² Finlayson, Life, I, xviii.

¹³ Grant, University of Edinburgh, I, 350.
That the popularity of these Lectures was not just the result of a revived interest in rhetoric is evident from the fact that when William Greenfield, Blair's successor, took over the classes in 1784, the size of the class immediately dwindled to twenty or less. The small dingy room in the old building of the college was filled by the best society: the lawyers, the literati—to use the favourite term—and the ministers attended, and all the pronouncements of the critic were received with profound respect. Robert Chambers in his Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen (1863) informs us that students copied Blair's Lectures and sold them to Edinburgh booksellers, who in turn boldly displayed them for sale to a public that was eager to acquire even manuscript records of the celebrated Lectures. Blair himself tells us in the Preface to the Lectures that he was moved to publish his Lectures because for many years he had seen them circulate freely and because he had been frequently threatened with a surreptitious publication of them. Blair's popularity as a lecturer was not at all due to any histrionic ability. Although Blair was the most renowned pulpit orator of his day, the effectiveness of his delivery was diminished by the fact that he had a weak voice and a strong provincial accent. The students were enthralled more by the matter and style of the Lectures than by the delivery.

In his Preface, Blair tells us that his Lectures were designed for the

14 See Schmitz, Hugh Blair, 63.
15 Grant, University of Edinburgh, II, 358-359.
the instruction of youth who were "studying to cultivate their taste, to form their style, or to prepare themselves for public speaking or composition." Perhaps it was this threefold purpose which prompted Blair to make the daring claim that the "Lectures will afford a more comprehensive view of what relates to these subjects than, as far as he knows, is to be received from any one book in our language." One of the purposes of this study will be to determine just how much justification Blair had for making this claim.

Another purpose of this study will be to ascertain just how much of Blair's rhetorical theory is original and how much of it is derivative. The study of sources is, of course, always fraught with dangers. Similarities in doctrine do not necessarily prove that one author has borrowed from another. Unless parallels can be shown to be exclusive, they will not justify the source-hunter in proclaiming the dependence of one author on another. Sometimes, too, similarities in doctrine stem not from any one source but from the general "climate of opinion." Blair has considerably facilitated this study of sources by acknowledging, in several instances, the specific loci of the doctrines he is expounding. On the other hand, as he tells us, he has sometimes "adopted the sentiments of some author into whose writing he had then looked, without now remembering whence he derived them." Blair makes this revealing statement in his Preface:

The author gives them to the world, neither as a work wholly original, nor as a compilation from the writings of others. On every subject contained in them, he has thought for himself. He consulted his own ideas and reflections; and a great part of what will be found in these Lectures is entirely his own. At the same time he availed himself of the ideas and reflections of others, as far as he thought them proper to be adopted.

Considering the character of this "vain, fussy" little man who had the temerity
to avow that "a great part of what will be found in these Lectures is entirely his own," one is tempted to make the a priori judgment that more often than was intimated Blair has adopted the theories of others without acknowledgment. One has only to consider the case of Coleridge, that erudite, astute genius of the nineteenth century, to realize that even honest men can sometimes be deceived into proposing as their own what they have unconsciously derived from others.

In the published Lectures Blair has retained "the simplicity of the lecturing style." The present writer was first attracted to Blair by the grace and clarity of his style, and he feels confident that the reader, after seeing several examples of Blair's writing, will agree that here is one of the most charming, one of the most perspicacious styles in all of eighteenth-century literature. Although William Cobbett, in his celebrated Grammar, has quoted at least a half dozen examples of inept writing in the Lectures, Blair's pedestrian style is, by and large, perfectly suited to exposition, and it exhibits convincingly that Blair could practice what he preached.

At the end of the first Lecture, entitled "Introduction," Blair provides an outline of The Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres. The Lectures fall into five main parts:

First, some introductory dissertations on the nature of taste, and upon the sources of its pleasures. Secondly, the considerations of language; Thirdly, of style: Fourthly, of eloquence, properly so called, or public speaking in its different kinds. Lastly, a critical examination of the most distinguished species of composition, both in prose and verse.

An outline with the titles of the Lectures in each of the major divisions will give the reader an over-all view of the organization of Blair's book.

Introduction: Lecture I. Blair expresses his general views about such matters as the importance of studying rhetoric, the suspicions under which rhetoric has fallen, the relative impor-
tance of natural endowments and cultivated skill in perfecting a student in the rhetorical art, and the value of cultivating good taste.

I. Consideration of Taste (pp. 16-58).
   A. Lecture II. "Taste" (pp. 16-26).
   B. Lecture III. "Criticism, Genius, Pleasures of Taste, Sublimity in Objects" (pp. 27-57).
   C. Lecture IV. "The Sublime in Writing" (pp. 37-49).
   D. Lecture V. "Beauty and Other Pleasures of Taste" (pp. 49-58).

II. Consideration of Language (pp. 58-101).
   A. Lecture VI. "Rise and Progress of Language" (pp. 58-68).
   B. Lecture VII. "Rise and Progress of Language and of Writing" (pp. 68-78).
   C. Lecture VIII. "Structure of Language" (pp. 78-89).
   D. Lecture IX. "Structure of Language; the English Tongue" (pp. 89-101).

III. Consideration of Style (pp. 101-261).
   A. Lecture X. "Style--Perspicuity and Precision" (pp. 101-112).
   B. Lecture XI. "Structure of Sentences" (pp. 112-122).
   C. Lecture XII. "Structure of Sentences" (pp. 123-133).
   D. Lecture XIII. "Structure of Sentences--Harmony" (pp. 134-146).
   E. Lecture XIV. "Origin and Nature of Figurative Language" (pp. 146-157).
   F. Lecture XV. "Metaphor" (pp. 158-169).
   G. Lecture XVI. "Hyperbole, Personification, Apostrophe" (pp. 169-181).
   H. Lecture XVII. "Comparison, Antithesis, Interrogation, Exclamation, and Other Figures of Speech" (pp. 181-192).
   I. Lecture XVIII. "Figurative Language. General Characters of Style--Diffuse, Concise, Feeble, Nervous--Dry, Plain, Neat, Elegant, Flowery" (pp. 192-204).
   J. Lecture XIX. "General Characters of Style--Simple, Affected, Vehement. Directions for Forming a Proper Style" (pp. 205-216).
   K. Lecture XX. "Critical Examination of the Style of Mr. Addison in No. 411 of the Spectator" (pp. 216-226).

18 The page numbers, which are those in the Philadelphia edition used by the present writer, will give the reader an idea of the length of the lectures.
L. Lecture XXI. "Critical Examination of the Style in No. 412 of The Spectator" (pp. 226-234).
M. Lecture XXII. "Critical Examination of the Style in No. 413 of The Spectator" (pp. 235-242).
N. Lecture XXIII. "Critical Examination of the Style in No. 414 of The Spectator" (pp. 242-249).
O. Lecture XXIV. "Critical Examination of the Style in a Passage of Dean Swift's Writing" (pp. 250-261).

IV. Consideration of Eloquence or Public Speaking (pp. 261-387).

A. Lecture XXV. "Eloquence or Public Speaking: History of Eloquence, Graecian Eloquence--Demosthenes" (pp. 261-273).
B. Lecture XXVI. "History of Eloquence Continued: Roman Eloquence--Cicero; Modern Eloquence" (pp. 273-284).
C. Lecture XXVII. "Different Kinds of Public Speaking: Elocution of Popular Assemblies--Extracts from Demosthenes" (pp. 284-298).
D. Lecture XXVIII. "Elocution of the Bar--Analysis of Cicero's Oration for Cluentius" (pp. 298-312).
E. Lecture XXIX. "Elocution of the Pulpit" (pp. 312-326).
F. Lecture XXX. "Critical Examination of a Sermon of Bishop Atterbury's" (pp. 326-341).
G. Lecture XXXI. "Conduct of a Discourse in All Its Parts--Introduction, Division, Narration, and Explication" (pp. 341-352).
H. Lecture XXXII. "Conduct of a Discourse--The Argumentative Part, the Pathetic Part, the Peroration" (pp. 355-365).
I. Lecture XXXIII. "Pronunciation or Delivery" (pp. 365-376).
J. Lecture XXXIV. "Means of Improving in Eloquence" (pp. 377-387).

V. Consideration of Various Genres (pp. 387-544).

A. Lecture XXXV. "Comparative Merit of the Ancients and the Moderns; Historical Writing" (pp. 387-398).
B. Lecture XXXVI. "Historical Writing" (pp. 398-410).
C. Lecture XXXVII. "Philosophical Writing--Dialogue; Epistolary Writing; Fictitious History" (pp. 410-420).
D. Lecture XXXVIII. "Nature of Poetry: Its Origin and Progress; Versification" (pp. 421-433).
E. Lecture XXXIX. "Pastoral Poetry; Lyric Poetry" (pp. 433-446).
F. Lecture XL. "Didactic Poetry; Descriptive Poetry" (pp. 447-459).
G. Lecture XLI. "The Poetry of the Hebrews" (pp. 459-470).
H. Lecture XLII. "Epic Poetry" (pp. 470-481).
I. Lecture XLIII. "Homer's Iliad and Odyssey; Virgil's Aeneid" (pp. 481-498).
J. Lecture XLIV. "Lucan's Pharsalia; Tasso's Jerusalem; Camoens' Lusiad; Fenelon's Telemachus; Voltaire's Henriade; Milton's Paradise Lost" (pp. 493-506).
What must immediately strike anyone reading this outline is the amazing comprehensiveness of the Lectures: discussions of Taste, Beauty, and Sublimity--three of the key terms in eighteenth-century criticism; a survey of philology and a review of classical and English grammar; a detailed exposition of the principles of style, with special attention to the major figures of speech, and a detailed analysis of several pieces of prose composition; a history of oratory and instructions for the composition and delivery of speeches; a study of the various genres in belles lettres with criticism of many of the recognised masterpieces in each genre. It was this very comprehensiveness which accounted, in part, for the popularity of Blair's text in the schools. Most of the vernacular rhetoric books had tended to concentrate on one or two of the traditional parts of rhetoric--e.g., Richard Sherry's concentration on elocutio, Thomas Sheridan's concentration on pronuntiatio. The only part of rhetoric that Blair slights is inventio (perhaps because the student would be trained in the discovery of arguments in the Logic classes that all students at the University of Edinburgh took). The present writer has been unable to discover an exact analogue for Blair's text among English rhetoricians. Lord Kames's Elements of Criticism and George Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric had broadened the purview of rhetoric texts by investigating the psychology of taste and sublimity, but neither of these texts gave close analyses of prose passages or provided extensive literary history, as Blair's text did. Perhaps we must go back to Cicero and Quintilian for an example of the comprehensive coverage that Blair gives us.
The range of Blair's reading is astounding. The subject-author index at the back of Blair's text does not fully reveal the extent of Blair's reading. In a more thorough index that the present writer compiled, some 143 different writers are mentioned, cited, or quoted. Blair did not know all of these writers at first hand, to be sure, but he certainly had read an impressive number of them. This display of wide reading must have given contemporary readers the impression that here was a man of broad erudition, and this impression together with the comprehensiveness of the coverage contributed to the prestige that Blair's text enjoyed among schoolmasters and students. As this study proceeds, we shall be better able to determine whether Blair's erudition was as deep as it was broad.

Of the forty-seven lectures in this series, fifteen (180 pages) were given over to a discussion of style; thirteen (157 pages) to a study of belles lettres; ten (126 pages) to eloquence; four (42 pages) to taste and the pleasures of imagination; four (42 pages) to language. The generous attention granted to the problems of style is evidence that in this age of growing "romanticism" there still existed a lively interest in the formal aspects of literary composition. The large number of lectures devoted to a study of the genres indicates that historical criticism, which had its beginning in this century, was now firmly established in academic circles. What we shall see with increasing clarity is that Blair's text reflects the main currents of English thought in the latter half of the eighteenth century.

The reader may have noted from the outline that the average length of the Lectures is ten pages. The Lectures run to about 6000-7000 words. At the normal lecturing rate, each discourse would take about fifty minutes to deliver. The time-limit set on the lectures accounts for the running over of some of the
lectures into the next day's lecture. Neither discussion nor questions were allowed at the University of Edinburgh during the lecture period; and no evidence exists that Blair deviated from his text or elaborated on it extempore. One can imagine the fastidious little professor arranging his notes on the podium, glancing briefly over his glasses at the packed classroom, delivering his lecture in his weak voice with its noticeable Scottish burr, pausing occasionally in deference to the shuffling of students' feet, and then at the end of his lecture gathering up his papers and quietly stealing away.

Since Blair gave his lectures three times a week, the entire course of lectures covered a period of sixteen weeks—roughly equivalent to a semester in the modern college. At first, Blair delivered his lectures to the public, but after 1780 he restricted the lectures to students enrolled in the University, and he resisted all appeals to reopen the lectures to the general public. Of the hundreds of students who attended Blair's lectures over the period of twenty-four years, we know the names of only six; but it seems safe to conjecture that the majority of professional men who passed through the University between

19 Schmitz (Hugh Blair, 67) relays an anecdote told to him by a student of David Masson, who held Blair's professorship at Edinburgh from 1865 to 1895: "When Masson deviated ever so slightly from the preceding year's text there was a shuffling of feet in the classroom, whereupon Masson, rising, would remark: 'Gentlemen, . . . As I have been in the habit of saying. . . ." Finlayson, among others, testifies to Blair's "inaptitude for extemporary speaking."—Life, I, xvii.


21 Schmitz, Hugh Blair, 63.

22 Schmitz (Hugh Blair, 64-66) gives the names of these six students and a brief history of their connection with Blair.
1780 and 1783 came under Blair's tutelage. How many students in later years used Blair's Lectures in the classroom is incalculable.

We must pass now to an examination of some of the key ideas in the Lectures. From the introductory lecture only two ideas seem worthy of special notice. The first of these ideas has to do with the relative importance of nature and art (the ars aut ingenium discussion that occupied so much of the attention of the classical rhetoricians) in the formation of the writer of discourse.

Blair entertain no extravagant notions about the efficacy of rhetorical rules in forming the orator. The rules alone, he maintains, cannot make an orator. Some measure of natural genius is a prerequisite. "But at the same time, though rules and instructions cannot do all that is requisite, they may, however, do much that is of real use. They cannot, it is true, inspire genius, but they can direct and assist it." Blair is perhaps adopting Horace's view that neither art nor genius avails by itself to produce works.\(^\text{23}\) While the rules cannot produce "great excellencies," Blair says, they "may at least serve to prevent the commission of considerable errors." Blair demotes art to a kind of negative function, decidedly inferior to genius.\(^\text{24}\) What is significant about Blair's position here, however, is that at a time when the balance of emphasis

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\(^{23}\) Natura fieret laudabile carmen an arte, quiesitum est: ego nec studium sine divite vena, nec rude quid prosit video ingenium: alterius sic altera poscit opem res et coniurat amice. 
Ars Poetica, 11. 408-411.

\(^{24}\) In Lecture III, where Blair equates taste with the power of judging and genius with the power of executing, he makes a more explicit statement about the relative importance of art and nature: "Genius, therefore, deserves to be considered as a higher power of the mind than taste."
was shifting to natural endowments, to "the divine fire of inspiration," to the 
powers of the imagination, Blair was retaining some hold on the neo-classical 
rules. That Blair was reluctant to abandon all allegiance to the rules was even 
more evident in his Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian (1763), where he subjec-
ted the Ossianic "effusions of native fire" to an analysis by the Aristotelian 
rules, much in the same way that Addison had examined Milton's Paradise Lost. 
In men like Addison, Johnson, Young, and Blair, neo-classicism was not dying; it 
was merely being readjusted. Blair of course had to make some plea for the 
rules, or there would have been no excuse for the kind of lectures he was about 
to give.

The other point in the introductory lecture that calls for considera-
tion is Blair's assertion that "without possessing the virtuous affections in a 
strong degree, no man can attain eminence in the sublime parts of eloquence."
This idea goes back at least as far as Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, but Blair 
probably took it from Lord Kames, who maintained that "a taste in the fine arts 
goes hand in hand with the moral sense, to which it is allied."25 The validity 
of this doctrine has frequently been challenged. What connection is there, the 
impugners ask, between a man's moral health and his artistic skill? Have not 
consummate scoundrels been great writers? As though in answer to such questions, 
Blair affirms that he would not "go so far as to say that the improvement of 
taste and of virtue is the same." The exercise of taste is, he maintains, "mor-
al and purifying"; it ranks "among the means of disposing the heart to virtue."

Nearly a century later, Cardinal Newman, in The Tenworth Reading Room, argued

that secular knowledge was not a direct means of moral improvement; but in The Idea of a University he did grant that secular knowledge could generate within the mind a certain fastidiousness which would "often or generally be lively enough to create an absolute loathing of certain offences." In our own day Jacques Maritain says something very much like this:

For the virtue of art, which directly affects and controls it, presupposes the rectification of the appetite so far as the beauty of the work is concerned. And if the beauty of the work is Christian, it is because the appetite of the artist is rectified in regard to such beauty, and because Christ is present in the soul of the artist by love.

Few of us would deny that refinement of taste renders certain sins aesthetically repulsive, and we might even agree that a faculty for sublime utterance is often concomitant with a virtuous disposition; but where we might disagree with Blair is in his insistence that the virtuous affections are a sine qua non for the attainment of excellence in discourse. Perhaps the position to take in this matter is the position that Henry James took:

There is one point at which the moral sense and the artistic sense lie very close together; that is in the light of the very obvious truth that the deepest quality of a work of art will always be the quality of the mind of the producer. In proportion as that intelligence is fine will the novel, the picture, the statue partake of the substance of beauty and truth.

As a clergyman, Blair could be expected to emphasize the necessity of the virtuous disposition. But it also seems that this doctrine was widely held in the

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26 See The Tamworth Reading Room, Letter III and The Idea of a University, Discourse VIII, Sec. 4.


eighteenth century. The literary men of this age were fond of citing the pagan
Quintilian who had insisted that in order to be a perfect orator one had to be a
good man. 29 In 1769 when Blair was launching his lectures Edward Young averred
that "all true critics allow, that virtue assists genius, and that the writer
will be more able, when better is the man." 30 The doctrine remains disputable,
but in the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth, allegiance to this
doctrine would secure for a textbook the allegiance of schoolmasters.

Blair felt it fitting that his lectures on rhetoric be prefaced with a
discussion of taste, for taste was the faculty "which is always appealed to, in
disquisitions concerning the merit of discourse in writing." 31 He did not men-
tion—perhaps did not need to mention—that the discussion of taste was very
rife at the time. Hobbes, Locke, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and the Abbe de Bos
had launched the discussion late in the seventeenth century; Gerard, Hume, Rey-
olds, Burke, and Kames (among others) had continued the discussion in the
eighteenth. 32

As is his wont, 33 Blair provides an outline of the discussion that is

29 "Oratorem autem instituimus illum perfectum, qui esse nisi vir bo-
nus non potest."—Institutio Oratoria, I, pr. 9.

30 Conjectures on Original Composition, in The Great Critics, ed.

31 All quotations from Blair on Taste are taken, unless otherwise
noted, from Lecture II.

32 For a full-fledged review of the discussion of Taste in this cen-
tury, see Walter J. Bate, From Classic to Romantic: Promises of Taste in Eight-

33 It might be well to remark at this point, by way of observation on
Blair's lecturing technique, that the organisation of the lectures is always ex-
I shall first explain the Nature of Taste as a power or faculty in the human mind. I shall next consider, how far it is an improveable faculty. I shall show the sources of its improvement, and the characters of taste in its most perfect state. I shall then examine the various fluctuations to which it is liable, and inquire whether there be any standard to which we can bring the different tastes of men, in order to distinguish the corrupted from the true.

Blair begins his inquiry into the nature of taste by defining taste as "the power of receiving pleasure from the beauties of nature and of art." What is curious about this definition is that it takes account only of the beauties. Is it no part of taste to note the defects? The notion of defects must be implied in the definition, for certainly, throughout the discussion that follows, there is ample evidence that taste operates to distinguish beauties and blemishes. The notion that criticism should be concerned more with the search for beauties than with the search for blots was suggested by Horace but was developed by Longinus and popularised by Boileau's translation of Longinus.

Another point to remark about Blair's definition of taste is the recognition that taste must be concerned with the beauties of nature as well as of art. This concern for the beauties of nature reflects the growing interest in Nature during this century and adumbrates the many investigations of the sublime.
in Nature. The English Augustans had, for the most part, little concern for rustic beauty. They had been preoccupied with beauty of form in statuary, furniture, pottery, gardens, and poetry. The "pre-Romantics" set about to make people conscious of the beauties in "wild, unregulated Nature." Blair himself had advertized the beauties of Nature in his popular *Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian*.

Elaborating on his definition, Blair informs us that taste is a faculty distinct from reason. Taste operates intuitively, and therefore is more nearly allied to feeling than to reason. But though taste is distinct from and independent of reason, the best taste will be compounded "of natural sensibility to beauty and of improved understanding." It is taste which experiences the pleasure; it is reason which makes the judgment. "We are pleased," Blair says, "through our natural sense of beauty. Reason shows us why, and upon what grounds, we are pleased."

The distinction that Blair and other eighteenth-century critics were making between taste and reason is of a piece with the distinction that we noted above between art and genius. Although the faculties of taste and reason are born to a man, taste operates by instinct, and reason operates according to rule. This is not to deny, however, that taste is an improvable faculty. One man's taste is better than another man's partly because of superior natural gifts ("nicer organs and finer internal powers") and partly because of education and cultivation. Just as our senses become keener with use, our taste improves with frequent exercise. Blair now adds a third requisite for the formation of a just taste: a virtuous disposition. "He whose heart is indelicate or hard," he says, "he who has no admiration of what is truly noble or praiseworthy, nor the proper
sympathetic sense of what is soft and tender, must have a very imperfect relish of the highest beauties of eloquence and poetry." If the previous sentence explains what Blair means by "virtue," we can conclude that Blair used the term in a sense different from the usual Christian sense of moral excellence or rectitude. Blair here seems to be defining that "ethical character" that Shaftesbury expounded in his Characteristics and that Newman was to delineate in his Definition of a Gentleman; this is the man of acute intelligence, urbane manners, and sharpened sensibilities. Virtue in this sense may be a requisite for the man of taste. That virtue in the orthodox sense of the word is a requisite for the man of taste does not, as the reader may recall from the previous discussion of this point, so readily win acquiescence.

The two marks of a good taste are Delicacy and Correctness. Delicacy is the quality connected with that natural sensibility on which taste is founded. Correctness is that quality which taste receives through its connection with reason or understanding. "The power of delicacy is chiefly seen in discerning the true merit of a work; the power of correctness, in rejecting false pretensions to merit." Taste then is concerned, as Blair's definition did not reveal, with the discerning of faults as well as beauties.

We come now to Blair's most distinctive contribution to the study of taste. Blair asks whether we must accept the proverbial statement, "De gustibus non est disputandum." At a time when the voice of authority was coming more and more to be rejected and when democratic sentiments were gaining currency, this proverbial statement was gaining (or perhaps re-gaining) more adherents. Literary history seemed to reveal that taste was "fluctuating and capricious." Standards of excellence varied from age to age. Did not such fluctuations argue
that taste was merely arbitrary?

Blair approaches the question by making a distinction. "The tastes of men may differ very considerably as to their object," he says, "and yet none of them be wrong." But with respect to the same object no diversity of opinion is allowable. Some men like poetry best; others prefer history. One man has a predilection for the simple style; another man has a liking for the ornamented style. "Though all differ, yet all pitch upon some one beauty which peculiarly suits their turn of mind, and therefore no one has a title to condemn the rest."

If a man prefers Virgil to Homer, he must be allowed his preference; but if he asserts that Homer has no beauties whatever; that he holds him to be a dull and spiritless writer, and that he would as soon peruse any old legend of knight-errantry as the Iliad; then I exclaim, that my antagonist either is void of all taste, or that his taste is corrupted in a miserable degree; and I appeal to whatever I think the standard of taste, to show him that he is in the wrong.

How valid is Blair's distinction? Is there to be no disputing preferences, even when the objects are different? If I hold Homer to be a greater poet than Virgil, is there no standard by which my taste can be judged to be better--or worse--than my neighbor's? Anyone who believes in objective values would say that while I have to allow my neighbor his preference I do not have to grant that his taste in literature is as good as mine. One wonders whether Blair would have been so tolerant if the opposition in taste concerned the latest Grub Street doggerel and one of Thomas Gray's polished gems. Extremes like this have to be resorted to sometimes in order to point up the absurdity or tenuousness of a position. A Moderate in politics and religion, Blair seems here to be making one of his characteristic compromises. He concedes more validity to di-
vergent judgments than the neo-classical critics would allow, and yet he stops just short of the line that runs over into pure subjectivity. The Trimmer had not died off completely with William Temple.

What is Blair's standard of taste when the opposition in taste concerns the same object? He admits that in most instances "conformity to nature affords a full and distinct criterion of what is truly beautiful." But seeing that there are some cases when the conformity-to-nature test will not apply, he looks for a "more clear and precise" standard. Then he presents his criterion of taste:

That which men concur the most in admiring, must be held to be beautiful. This criterion, it is clear, depends on the assumption that human nature is fundamentally the same. This was the notion to which A. O. Lovejoy gave the name "Uniformitarianism." 35

Blair diminishes the reliability of this criterion by investing it with a series of qualifications: we can respect the judgment only of men "in polished and flourishing nations" (who is to determine, one might ask, which nations are polished and flourishing?); we must make allowances for the accidental causes which "may occasionally warp the proper operations of taste" (if one begins to make allowances for individual and local differences in temperament, prejudices, and customs, what is to happen to the sure standard of taste?); and one must recognize that the standard of taste, in every particular instance, is not readily ascertainable (would not such a situation be the general rule?

rather than the exception?). Blair seems not at all daunted by the difficulties that attend the application of his criterion of taste. He takes the rather optimistic view that in the course of time "the genuine taste of human nature never fails to disclose itself and to gain the ascendancy over any fantastic and corrupted modes of taste which may chance to have been introduced." There is a measure of truth to such a view, but if one must wait for time to relieve taste of its dross, the practicality of Blair's criterion in judging contemporary literature is considerably lessened.

Blair realizes that his standard of taste, founded upon the common feeling of human nature, is different from the standard that rests upon established principles, but he believes the difference to be nominal rather than essential. He finds that those who lay the greatest stress on sentiment and feeling frequently appeal to established principles to confirm their feeling; on the other hand, he finds that those who judge chiefly by established rules admit the compatibility of the rules with the general sentiments of man. "These two systems, therefore, differ in reality very little from one another," Blair says. "Sentiment and reason enter into both; and by allowing to each of these powers its due place, both systems may be rendered consistent."

Blair is again acting as the compromiser between the extreme rationalists and the apostles of feeling. Loath to concede that taste is an arbitrary principle, he seeks to bolster taste by some immutable criteria. Although, as we have seen, his own standard of taste is fraught with practical difficulties, he was pointing the way to peaceful co-existence between the School of Reason and the School of Taste.

It is no great task to discover the sources of Blair's doctrines on
but that although in regard to truth and falsity, the objects of reason, there seems to be quite general agreement about the criteria, there is not "the same obvious concurrence in any uniform or settled principles which relate to taste." Blair's friend David Hume maintained that "amidst all the variety and caprice of taste, there are certain general principles of approbation or blame,"\(^{41}\) but because he believed that there were two inevitable sources of variation (viz. "the different humours of particular men" and "the particular manners and opinions of our age and country"\(^{42}\)) he was not ready to grant as much unanimity to taste as Blair did. What the present writer has not been able to find is some precedent for Blair's toleration of difference in taste where the objects are different.

We shall probably have to agree with Schmitz that Blair's discussion of taste did not "move very far in the direction of an organic philosophy."\(^{43}\) "His was merely a liberal attitude towards the privileges of the intuitive sense," Schmitz goes on to say, "with ample checks against any possible vagaries." That the succeeding age did not pick up and develop the inchoate efforts of the eighteenth-century writers may be due to a certain amount of bungling among these writers. One critic has well summed up the shortcomings of this group:

In the first place, they disagreed among themselves on every point, and each man tore down part of the structure erected by his predecessors; in the second place, the arguments advanced were so incomplete and propositions so vague that reviewers were quick to point out that they failed in

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41 David Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," in Criticism, ed. Sohor, Miles, McKenzie, 442.

42 Ibid., 447.

43 Hugh Blair, 99.
their endeavor to supply a standard; in the third place, the emphasis upon sensibility as possessing a kind of instinctive infallibility tended to make rules superfluous; and finally, the division of aesthetic objects into disparate classes, the sublime and the beautiful, which were conceived of as subject to entirely different principles but which were never clearly defined or clearly distinguished, made for hopeless confusion. 44

The reviewer of Gerard's Essay on Taste can say, after noting the attempts of various critics to define taste, that "the word taste, though in almost everybody's mouth, is used in a very loose and indeterminate sense."45

There certainly was a diversity of theory about aesthetics during the latter half of the eighteenth century.46 But R. W. Babcock47 objects to Professor Hooker's attempt to classify the writers on taste in this period as either Intuitionists or Psychologists. Mr. Babcock mentions a letter he received from R. S. Crane in December, 1928, in which Professor Crane set down seven different pairs of conflicting ideas on Taste in the eighteenth century. Perhaps in the literary history that Professor Crane is reported to be writing we will get an exposition of this astonishing variety of views.

Blair intended the discussion of taste to serve as a prelude for the discussions that were to follow in the next three lectures. Taste is the faculty that plays a great part in creating and judging works of art and that re-


46 See F. T. Wood's classification (in Englische Studien, Holland, LXVI, 1931, 279-281) of the 522 discourses on aesthetics for the period from 1752 to 1800 as listed in John W. Draper's Eighteenth Century English Aesthetics: a Bibliography, Heidelberg, 1931.

responds to the "Pleasures of the Imagination." Taste will also play a prominent part when the Lectures turn to a study of style.

Lecture III starts out with a brief discussion of the function of criticism and with a nice distinction between the offices of taste and genius. "True criticism," Blair says, "is the application of taste and of good sense to the several fine arts." Two things are noteworthy about this definition. First of all, there is the mention of "good sense." The term "good sense" had gained increasing currency during the eighteenth century. The "school of common sense," according to Professor Spingarn,48 began with that stinging satire on heroic drama, The Rehearsal (1671). Whether the beginning of any school can be assigned with any such definiteness, we need not pause to discuss, but it should be remarked that the debunking spirit of The Rehearsal appeared at a time when the Cartesian philosophy was making the ego the starting-point for certain knowledge. Early in the eighteenth century le bon sens was extolled and popularised in Pope's An Essay on Criticism and Addison's Spectator essays. Gerard considered good sense "an indispensable ingredient in true taste"49 and found that "sense has a kind of instinctive infallibility by means of which, when it is vigorous, it can preserve from error, though judgment should not be perfect."50 As suspicion of the classical rules increased, as admiration for the je ne sais quoi elements in art spread, as the "romantic" confidence in the individual waxed, "commonsense" gained respectability and began to be considered as the quality

49 Gerard, Essay on Taste, 84.
50 Ibid., 89.
that saved a critic's judgment when reason and taste failed him. Blair nowhere in the Lectures expatiates on this quality, but he never leaves us in doubt that good sense is the leavening ingredient in the make-up of the best writers and critics.

The other thing to observe about the definition is that Blair conceives of criticism as being directed to several fine arts. He owes this view of the scope of criticism immediately to his friend Kames. Kames's *Elements of Criticism* examined man psychologically with a view to establishing those principles by which man enjoys and analyzes all forms of art. Kames was merely meeting the demands of an awakened interest in painting, architecture, music, gardening, furniture, and pottery. Abbé Du Bos's *Réflexions Critiques sur la Poésie et sur la Peinture* combined, as the title indicates, an investigation of literary art with an investigation of one of the visual arts. Hogarth's *The Analysis of Beauty* was designed to fix the fluctuating ideas of taste in several of the arts. Sir Joshua Reynolds's *Discourses* sought the common principles in the arts. Lessing's *Laocoon*, published some six years after Blair began his Lectures, used the Horatian formula "ut pictura poesis" as the basis of his comparison of the literary and plastic arts. Because Blair set as his main object the analysis of pleasurable discourse, he did not treat at length of the other arts, but he chose to remind his audience that criticism ranged in fields other than the literary.

Blair is in tune with his age in his insistence that "the rules of criticism are not formed by any induction a priori"; criticism was, he said, "an art founded wholly on experience." That the rules of art are empirical rather than a priori is a truism that hardly needs underscoring. But Blair, like others
of his contemporaries, had to underscore the point because of the blind reverence with which the classical rules were held. Lord Kames felt obliged to deplore the influence of the French critic Le Bossu, who could discover no better foundation for the rules he propagated "than the practice merely of Homer and Virgil, supported by the authority of Aristotle." Gerard had made the even stronger charge that "authority in all its forms usurps the place of truth and reason." Blair was not one to advocate a wholesale jettisoning of the rules; he wanted to re-examine the rules in the light of reason and practice in order to distinguish arbitrary, ad hoc principles from those of permanent validity. He reminded his audience that Aristotle's rules took "their rise at first from feeling and experience, were found on examination to be so consonant to reason and to the principles of human nature, as to pass into established rules, and to be conveniently applied for judging of the excellency of any performance."

Since in the five paragraphs in Lecture III that Blair devotes to genius he adds nothing new to what we have already observed in the discussion of the Introductory Lecture, we shall pass on to one of the major topics of the remaining lectures in the first group—the matter of Sublimity.

At the beginning of this section Blair tells us how he will proceed: "For the greater distinctness I shall, first, treat of the grandeur or sublimity of external objects themselves, which will employ the rest of this lecture; and, afterwards, of the description of such objects, or, of what is called the sublime in writing, which shall be the subject of a following lecture." Having re-

52 *Essay on Taste*, 129.
marked that he will use the terms **sublimity** and **grandeur** synonymously and having referred his readers to such other contemporary writers on the sublime as Burke, Gerard, and Kames, Blair proceeds to name and discuss the various sources of the sublime.

The reader may appreciate having these sources of the sublime set forth in outline form:

**I. Vastness or amplitude**

A. infinite space -- "It is to be remarked, however, that space extended in length, makes not so strong an impression as height or depth."

B. endless numbers
C. eternal duration

**II. Great power and strength** -- "Nothing is more sublime than mighty power and strength."

**III. The awful, the terrible.**

A. darkness
B. solitude
C. silence

**IV. Obscurity** -- i.e. the unknown, the complex, the impenetrable.

**V. Disorder** -- "Few things that are strictly regular and methodical, appear sublime."

**VI. Moral sublimity** -- "High virtue is the most natural and fertile source of this moral sublimity. . . . yet if extraordinary vigour and force of mind be discovered, we are not insensible to a degree of grandeur in the character."

A. magnanimity
B. heroism

No one would accuse Blair of originality in this designation of the sources of the sublime. This list is hardly more than a synthesis of what had already been written on the sublime. We must not look here for any affinity
with Longinus, for Blair in this chapter is analyzing the sublimity in objects, not in writing. We would expect, however, some affinity with the authors that Blair had named in a footnote—Burke, Kames, Gerard. And indeed we find Kames analyzing in the Elements of Criticism "greatness or magnitude" (Chap. IV), "irregularity" (disorder?) (Chap. IV), and "motion and force" (Chap. V) as sources of the sublime. In the Essay on the Sublime and the Beautiful, Burke treated as sources of the sublime, Terror, Obscurity, Power, Vastness, and Privation ("Vacuity, Darkness, Solitude, and Silence"). The seeds of Blair's sixth source of the sublime may be found in the section that Burke entitled "Ambition": "Hence proceeds what Longinus has observed of that gloriing and sense of inward greatness, that always fills the reader of such passages in poets and orators as are sublime; it is what every man must have felt in himself upon such occasions."

Blair owes his notions about the "moral sublime" to Gerard immediately, but the idea of the connection of grandeur with goodness may have filtered down to Blair from such critics as Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Akenside. Gerard held that amplitude, simplicity, and vastness contributed to the sublime effect, but he made no mention of terror as a source of the sublime.

Blair's most distinctive contribution to the doctrine of the sublime is his insistence that the major source of the sublime is "great power and strength." He realizes that he is taking issue with Burke, who had nominated

53 Edmund Burke, Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, New York, 1885, Sec. xvii, 46. It should be pointed out that in the last paragraph of Lecture III, Blair acknowledges a special debt to Burke: "to whom we are indebted for several ingenious and original thoughts upon this subject" and "many of whose sentiments on that head I have adopted."

54 See Gerard, Essay on Taste, 17.
terror as the chief element in the sublime. It might be well to consider Blair's argument against Burke's tenet:

It is indeed true, that many terrible objects are highly sublime; and that grandeur does not refuse an alliance with the idea of danger. But though this is very properly illustrated by the author, ... yet he seems to stretch his theory too far, when he represents the sublime as consisting wholly in modes of danger, or of pain. For the proper sensation of sublimity appears to be distinguishable from the sensation of either of these; and on several occasions, to be entirely separated from them. In many grand objects, there is no coincidence with terror at all; as in the magnificent prospect of wide extended plains, and of the starry firmament; or in the moral dispositions and sentiments, which we view with high admiration; and in many painful and terrible objects also, it is clear there is no sort of grandeur. The amputation of a limb, or the bite of a snake are exceedingly terrible; but are destitute of all claim whatever to sublimity. ... after the review which we have taken, there does not occur to me any sublime object, into the idea of which, power, strength, or force, either enter not directly, or are not at least intimately associated with the idea, by leading our thoughts to some astonishing power as concerned in the production of the object.

By examining closely the psychology of one's reaction to the sublime, Blair takes the edge over Burke. Burke seems to have mistaken the effect for the cause. If we look back upon our own experiences with the sublime, we must admit that if our reaction was one of dread, that dread was engendered by the power and strength implicit in the object of our contemplation. But what about our reaction to the unknown or obscure? Is the terror inspired by the unknown due to our subconscious realization of the power and strength in the unknown? Because the object is obscure or unknown, we cannot be sure that it is powerful or weak. The answer to such an objection (and we can presume that this would be Blair's answer too) is that the unknown terrifies us because we anticipate the

55 "Indeed terror is in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently, the ruling principle of the sublime." Burke, *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*, Part II, Sec. 11, 51.
harm which the putative strength or power of the unknown can work on us. As soon as we learn that the creaking on the staircase in the haunted house has been produced by a mouse, we lose all sense of dread.

If Blair's designation of mighty power as the common element in the sublime was his most distinctive contribution to the eighteenth-century discussion of sublimity, his pronouncements on the effects of the awful would seem to have been his most influential contribution. As we have seen, Burke classified darkness, solitude, and silence not under Terror but under Privation. He did recognize, however, that "privations are great, because they are all terrible."56 Whereas Burke merely named this principle and illustrated it with a quotation from Virgil,57 Blair elaborates on the principle by giving instances of "privations" in the natural scene:

What are the scenes of nature that elevate the mind in the highest degree, and produce the sublime sensation? Not the gay landscape, the flowery field, or the flourishing city; but the hoary mountain, and the solitary lake; the aged forest, and the torrent falling over the rock. Hence, too, night-scenes are commonly the most sublime. The firmament when filled with stars, scattered in such vast numbers, and with such magnificent profusion, strikes the imagination with a more awful grandeur, than when we view it enlightened by all the splendour of the sun. The deep sound of a great bell, or the striking of a great clock, are at any time grand; but when heard amid the silence and stillness of the night, they become doubly so.

Blair is here reflecting the re-orientation of men's attitude toward nature. At the time Blair launched his Lectures, Rousseau's back-to-Nature movement was be-

56 Ibid., Sec. vi, 65.

57 That Blair was following Burke very closely in this whole discussion of the sublime is confirmed by the fact that Blair quotes the same passage from Virgil and the same translations that Burke used. Blair, however, adds illustrations from Milton and Lucretius.
ginning to gain adherents. Professor Moore has demonstrated quite convincingly that among English philosophers Shaftesbury was largely responsible for directing the attention of eighteenth-century poets to "the matchless beauty and harmony inherent in all creation." Shaftesbury's rhapsody on Nature in The Moralists struck a responsive chord in the breasts of such poets as Thomson, Collins, and Akenside. Shaftesbury also encouraged his readers to see in Nature the reflection of the Creator. "All Nature's wonders," he says, "serve to excite and perfect this idea of their author. How glorious it is to contemplate him in this noblest of his works apparent to us, the system of the bigger world." What this all eventuated in was the practice of finding aesthetic pleasure and spiritual nourishment even in the sternest aspects of nature. Shaftesbury adumbrated this changed attitude in his apology for the frozen North and in his defense of desert places: "ghastly and hideous as they appear, they want not their peculiar beauties." The wildness pleases," he goes on to say. "We seem to live along with Nature. We view her in her inmost recesses, and contemplate her with more delight in these original wilds than in the artificial labyrinths and feigned wildernesses of the palace." Thomas Gray, in writing his friend Richard West on November 16, 1739 about his trip through the Alps, shows


60 Characteristics, ed. Robertson, II, 112.

61 Ibid., 122.
how his own eyes have been opened to the grandeur of wild, uncouth nature:

Not a precipice, not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion and poetry. There are certain scenes that would awe an atheist into belief, without the help of argument. One need not have a very fantastic imagination, to see spirits there at noonday.62

When Blair then finds the sublime not in the "gay landscape" but in the "hoary mountain," he shows himself to be in perfect accord with the Zeitgeist. Conscious of his lack of compelling proof, the present writer nevertheless contends that Wordsworth read the passage quoted above from Blair. The Lectures was published while Wordsworth was still a student at Hawkshead school, and was almost immediately adopted by many of the English schools. In arguing the influence of Blair's theories of pastoral poetry on Wordsworth's bucolic verse, E. C. Knowlton concludes,63 after examining all the evidence, that while it is uncertain whether Wordsworth knew Blair's Lectures it is very probable. Anyone who has read the Prelude and recalls the unusual preoccupation of that poem with scenes of "silence, solitude, and darkness" will not regard as farfetched the suggestion that Wordsworth had read or had heard about Blair's observations on sublimity in objects. The following passage, so typical of the "spots of time" in the Prelude, is almost a verse rendering of Blair's prose description of "the scenes of nature that elevate the mind in the highest degree":

62 The Letters of Thomas Gray, ed. D. C. Tovey, 3 vols., Cambridge, 1903-1912, I, 44.

and lo! as I looked up

The Moon hung naked in a firmament
Of azure without cloud, and at my feet
Rested a silent sea of hoary mist.
A hundred hills their dusky back upheaved
All over this still ocean; . . . . . .
. . . . . . . . only the inferior stars
Had disappeared, or shed a fainter light
In the clear presence of the full-orbed Moon,
Who, from her sovereign elevation, gazed
Upon the billowy ocean, as it lay
All meek and silent, save that through a rift--
Not distant from the shore whereon we stood,
A fixed, abysmal, gloomy, breathing-place--
Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams
Innumerable, roaring with one voice!

(Prelude, Bk. XIV, ll. 39-60)

Only one other of Blair's observations on the sources of the sublime
in objects need detain us. In discussing obscurity as a source of the sublime,
Blair seems not to go the whole way with Burke, who held that "a clear idea is
therefore another name for a little idea." Blair is certainly referring to
Burke when he says, "... for as an ingenious author has well observed, it is
one thing to make an idea clear, and another to make it affecting to the imagi-
ation; and the imagination may be strongly affected, and, in fact, often is so,
by objects of which we have no clear conception." Blair admits with Burke that
obscurity does contribute to the sublime; but there is a reluctance, implicitly
indicated, to concede that a clear idea is necessarily a little idea. And in-
deed we would be surprised to get such an admission from a man who placed such
a high premium on perspicuity. In the very next lecture, in fact, Blair says
that one of the requisites for sublime writing is that the object be set forth in
such a way as to give us "a clear and full impression of it."

64 Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, Sec. iv, 56.
The mention of sublime writing leads us to the subject of Lecture IV. As might be expected, Longinus's name figures prominently in the discussion. Blair probably read Longinus in the original Greek in Professor Stevenson's class at Edinburgh, but Schmitz asserts that in preparing his lectures Blair relied heavily "upon Boileau's preface to Longinus and all that Boileau implied in shifting the center from language to thought."66

About Longinus's contribution to the theory of the sublime style, Blair had some reservations:

I know no critic, ancient or modern, that discovers a more lively relish of the beauties of fine writing, than Longinus; . . . But as his work has been generally considered as a standard on this subject, it was incumbent on me to give my opinion concerning the benefit to be derived from it. It deserves to be consulted, not so much for distinct instruction concerning the sublime, as for excellent general ideas concerning beauty in writing.

It is well for us to investigate Blair's difference with Longinus, for in this difference lies Blair's distinctive contribution to the subject of the sublime style. About Longinus's five sources of the sublime—"boldness or grandeur in the thoughts"; "the pathetic"; "the use of tropes and beautiful figures"; "musical structure and arrangement of words"—Blair says that "only the first two have any peculiar relation to the sublime"; the remaining three, Blair says, "have no more relation to the sublime, than to any other species whatever; because it requires less the assistance of ornament." Blair thought it inconsistent on the part of Longinus to offer Moses's "God said let there be light; and there was light" as a supreme example of the sublime style and then to lay down

65 See the account of a typical class day with Stevenson in Alexander Carlyle's Autobiography, Edinburgh, 1860, 36.

66 Hugh Blair, 101.
prescriptions for the kind of ornament that Moses studiously avoids.

This is the heart of Blair's difference with Longinus. How does he defend his own position? First of all, he cites from the Bible, from Homer, and from Ossian\textsuperscript{67} several examples of sublime writing, all of which are marked by simplicity and conciseness. Then he explains why the sublime requires conciseness and simplicity:

The emotion occasioned in the mind by some great or noble object, raises it considerably above its ordinary pitch. A sort of enthusiasm is produced, extremely agreeable while it lasts; but from which the mind is tending every moment to fall down into its ordinary situation. Now, when an author has brought us, or is attempting to bring us, into this state; if he multiplies words unnecessarily; if he decks the sublime object which he presents to us, round and round, with glittering ornaments; nay, if he throws in any decoration that sinks in the least below the capital image, that moment he alters the key; he relaxes the tension of the mind; the strength of the feeling is emasculated, the beautiful may remain, but the sublime is gone.

Characteristically, Blair makes the psychology of the reader's response the basis of his demur. In reviewing Samuel H. Monk's The Sublime: a Study of Critical Theories in XVIII-century England (New York, 1935), R. S. Crane says that men like Hume, Akenside, Burke, Gerard, and Blair were "psychologists inquiring about the emotions, not critics investigating the sources of high excellence in art."\textsuperscript{68} Crane felt that this "degraded kind of Longinianism" was responsible for a great deal of bad criticism in the eighteenth century. The approach of this group was not strictly Longinian, but that his approach was foredoomed to

\textsuperscript{67} Ossian appears here in the august company of Homer and the Bible because it was in the autumn of 1759, when Blair was preparing his lectures, that Macpherson first showed Blair his "translations" of Ossian. Blair was immediately enthralled by the sublimity of the poems and became the most fervent champion of the authenticity of the poems.—See Schmitz, Hugh Blair, 44-53.

\textsuperscript{68} Philological Quarterly, XV, April, 1936, 166.
produce bad criticism does not win ready assent. In effect, this group was shifting the emphasis from words to thoughts. This shift was of a piece with the growing feeling that the sublime was produced more by nature than by art. Blair says later on in this same lecture, "It is not by hunting after tropes, and figures, and rhetorical assistances, that we can expect to produce it \[the sublime\]... . It must come unsought, if it comes at all; and be the natural offspring of a strong imagination." Blair goes on to say:

In judging of any striking beauty in composition, ... we must attend to the nature of the emotion which it raises; and only, if it be of that elevating, solemn, and awful kind, which distinguishes this feeling, we can pronounce it sublime.

The investigation of the emotions is admittedly different from Longinus's approach (we need not be reminded that Longinus made no attempt to analyze the ecstacy produced by the sublime), and it may not produce observations as provocative and significant as those produced by the Longinian approach; but we are surprised that Professor Crane, who has constantly defended the need for a "pluralistic" approach in criticism, should deny the validity of the "psychological" method.

In judging the validity of Blair's defense of "conciseness and simplicity" as requisites for the sublime, we must resort to the empirical test. Has it not been our own experience that such things as bombast, turgidity, and prolixity tend to dissipate the sublime effect? The question is phrased in such a way, perhaps, as to permit only an affirmative answer. It would be fairer to ask whether all ornament is hostile to the sublime. Blair's feeling was that "when the thought is truly noble, it will for the most part, clothe itself in a native dignity of language" and that "wherever you find a writer, who affects a
more than ordinary pomp and parade of words, and is always endeavoring to magnify his subjects by epithets, there you may immediately suspect, that feeble in sentiment, he is studying to support himself by mere expression." "The main secret of being sublime," Blair maintains, "is to say great things in few and plain words." Blair's dicta are in line with the general feeling of his time that the sublime was best secured by suggestiveness rather than by explicitness. For Blair then it is only "more than ordinary" ornament that destroys sublimity. The matter of too much, of course, is relative, and where to draw the line between the amount of ornament that is consonant with sublimity and the amount that is detrimental will always remain a matter of opinion.

With the shift of interest from words to thoughts and objects, we should expect a marked reduction of attention paid to tropes and figures. As we have noted above, however, Blair devoted most of his lectures to style and a good many of those lectures to figures. Blair was not one to accept the Royal Society program which advocated the excluding of all ornament. Figures and tropes did contribute to eloquence, and we shall see later just what scope Blair allows to the rhetorical figures. All that Blair is saying here is that tropes and figures do not contribute to the sublime if they are not the natural concomitant of sublime thought.

Only two other observations in Lecture IV bear mentioning. One of these observations is that rhyme weakens the effect of the sublime. The premise for this dictum is that conciseness and naturalness are important for the sub-

69 For a discussion of the value that was placed on suggestiveness, see Bate, From Classic to Romantic, 154-159.
lime effect. The "constrained elegance" and "studied smoothness" of rhymed verse, Blair says, diminishes the force of the sublime; in addition, "the superfluous words which the poet is often obliged to introduce in order to fill up the rhyme, tend farther to enfeeble it." Accordingly, blank verse is a more favorable medium for the sublime. The other point that Blair makes (and no other writer on the sublime seems to have made this point) is that the sublime effect should not (in fact, cannot) be too long sustained. The mind cannot be held at a high pitch for any considerable length of time, and no writer can "furnish a long continuation of uninterrupted sublime ideas." Although this is a truism, there were a surprising number of poets who ignored, if they ever knew, the precept. Coleridge may have been proposing just such a precept when he said in Chapter XIV of the Biographia Literaria that "a poem of any length neither can be, nor ought to be, all poetry."

In Lecture V, the final lecture of the first division, Blair discusses Beauty and other pleasures of Taste. There is no difficulty here in determining the sources of Blair's doctrines. In a footnote, Blair refers to Francis Hutcheson's Inquiry concerning Beauty and Virtue (1725), Gerard's Essay on Taste (Chap. III), Burke's Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, Kames's Elements of Criticism (Chap. III), and Addison's Spectator essays on "The Pleasures of Imagination"; in the text itself he refers to Hogarth's Analysis of Beauty. In 1734 at the University of Edinburgh Blair wrote an essay On the Beautiful for Professor John Stevenson, who was so pleased with the young man's performance that he asked him to read the paper publicly at the end of the term.70 All during the

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70 John Hill, An Account of the Life and Writings of Hugh Blair, Philadelphia, 1808, 16-17.
eighteenth century there was a healthy current of discussion about the Beautiful. Bosker says that Addison was the first critic to distinguish between the sublime (Addison called it "the great") and the beautiful. Mark Akenside popularized this differentiation when he spoke of the "Three sister graces... the sublime, the wonderful, the fair." Henceforth beauty is co-ordinate with the sublime and becomes one of the key terms in the critical and aesthetical writings of the eighteenth century. It will be interesting to see what Blair contributed to the discussion.

"Beauty, next to sublimity, affords, beyond doubt, the highest pleasure to the imagination." Blair was certainly following Kames in setting up a hierarchy of pleasures. For both men, the pleasures of imagination or sensibility occupied the middle place between the pleasures of the senses and the pleasures of the intellect, and within each of these major classifications there was a further ranking of the pleasures. Blair does not employ the classification that Addison and Akenside used when they spoke of the "primary" and "secondary" pleasures of imagination.

Blair finds that Beauty produces a calmer kind of pleasure than the Sublime does; and because it raises a less violent feeling than the Sublime does

71 Literary Criticism in the Age of Johnson, 167.

72 The Spectator, No. 412: "I shall first consider those Pleasures of the Imagination, which arise from the actual View and Survey of outward Objects: And these, I think, all proceed from the Sight of what is Great, Uncommon, or Beautiful."

73 The Pleasures of Imagination, Bk. I, 144-146. Addison's and Akenside's classifications correspond to Longinus's To σπάζοντον, μεγαλυτερον, καλλιέργειαν -- On the Sublime, Sec. xxxv.
it is capable of longer duration. "It extends also," he says, "to a much greater
variety of objects than sublimity; to a variety indeed so great, that the feel-
ings which beautiful objects produce, differ considerably, not in degree only,
but also in kind, from one another."

In the search for the fundamental quality of beauty, one of the most
common theories was that the fundamental quality was "uniformity amidst varie-
ty." Blair rejects this notion because he finds many beautiful objects in
which "uniformity amidst variety" plays no part. Laying such systems aside, he
proposes "to give an enumeration of several of those classes of objects in which
beauty most remarkably appears; and to point out, . . . the separate principles
of beauty in each of them."

For Blair, beauty resided in (1) color, (2) figure, (3) motion, and
(4) the adaptation of means to an end. In discussing the first of these prin-ciples of beauty, Blair finds that the pleasure we receive from color depends upon
two circumstances: the structure of the eye itself, which "determines us to re-
ceive certain modifications of the rays of light with more pleasure than others"; and the associations that certain colors have for us. The notion that beauty is
in the "see-er" seems to be an echo of Hume's argument that "Beauty is no quali-
ity in things themselves: It exists merely in the mind which contemplates them;
. . . According to the disposition of the organs, the same object may be both

74 Perhaps the most prominent advocate of this doctrine was Francis
Hutcheson. See his An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Vir-
tue, Treatise I, Section II, iii-viii.
sweet and bitter." 75 Kames in his chapter on Beauty 76 adopts this view also.

Kames distinguishes primary qualities of matter from secondary qualities by positing that primary qualities inhere in the subject whereas secondary qualities owe their existence to the perceiver. "Heat and cold, smell and taste," Kames says, "though seeming to exist in bodies, are discovered to be effects caused by these bodies in a sensitive being: color, which appears to the eye as spread upon a substance, has no existence but in the mind of the spectator." Students of literature know how vigorously Ruskin impugned this notion in his essay on "The Peculiar Fallacy."

This is not the place to decide the argument between the "idealistic" philosophers and the "realist" philosophers, but this does seem to be the place to point out that Blair spent an entire lecture demonstrating that sublimity, the first of the pleasures of imagination, did exist in objects. Blair, curiously enough, makes no attempt to explain why sublimity can exist in objects but beauty—at least beauty of color—cannot. The answer of course lay in Blair's acceptance, perhaps through the medium of Addison, of Locke's tenet that "primary" qualities—density, extension, figure, and motion—reside in the object but "secondary" qualities, like colors, sounds, or odors, exist only in the mind of the perceiver. 77

In making the pleasure derived from beauty partly depend on associa-

75 Hume, "Of the Standard of Taste," Criticism, ed. Schorer, Miles, McKenzie, 441.

76 Elements of Criticism, Chapter III.

77 See Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Bk. II, ch. ix, sec. 2.
tion, Blair was certainly following his friend Kames. There seems to be little need to demur with, or to dwell on, Blair's proposition that some of the pleasure we experience from the color green, for instance, derives from our association of green with "rural prospects and scenes." The associational psychology of Locke and Hartley had caught fire with the Scottish School and greatly influenced their philosophy of aesthetics.

In discussing beauty of figure, Blair is ready to concede that regularity of conformation does contribute to the pleasure we derive from some objects. He warns his readers, however, that they should not conclude "that all figures please in proportion to their regularity; or that regularity is the sole, or the chief, foundation of beauty of figure." Variety, Blair finds, is a more powerful principle of beauty. In the preference for variety over regularity, Blair shows his strong leaning toward the philosophy of romanticism. He sees that Nature has "pursued variety with an apparent neglect of regularity." Nature in the raw is more beautiful to him than Nature clipped and trimmed in the formal gardens of the period. Regularity is preferable where it contributes to the utility of the objects, as in doors, cabinets, and windows, but diversity should characterize those objects, like plants, flowers, and leaves, which are

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78 Elements of Criticism, Chapter III—especially where Kames makes the distinction between intrinsic beauty and relative beauty.

79 Blair probably adopted the distinction that his friend Kames made between variety and novelty. Kames pointed out that variety involves a "plural-ity of objects," whereas novelty may arise merely "from a circumstance found in a single object." Again, where objects, whether coexistent or in succession, are sufficiently diversified, the pleasure of variety is complete, though every single object of the train be familiar; but the pleasure of novelty, directly opposite to familiarity, requires no diversification." Elements of Criticism, ed. Boyd, Chapter VI, 165.
not made primarily for use. Blair acknowledges his agreement with Hogarth, who in The Analysis of Beauty (1753) had proposed that curved or serpentine lines were generally more beautiful than straight lines, and he notes with gratification that Hogarth too emphasized the importance of variety for creating beauty of figure.

About motion, Blair observes that bodies in motion are generally more pleasing than bodies at rest; that only gentle motion belongs to the beautiful (swift, forceful motion belongs to the sublime); and that motion in an undulating pattern is more beautiful than motion in a straight line. All of this is orthodox doctrine, and in fact Blair offers nothing original or unusual to the discussion of beauty of motion.

In talking about beauty of countenance, which unites the three elements, color, figure, and motion, Blair observes that "a certain conformation of features is connected in our idea with certain moral qualities." A good many modern novelists and short-story writers operate on this theory too. Physical descriptions, they believe, not only present a picture of their characters but also tell us something about the moral disposition of the characters. This theory is undoubtedly not original with Blair, but the present writer has been unable to discover Blair's source.

The fourth element in the beautiful is, according to Blair, the suit- ing of means to an end. Blair has adopted the functional or organic theory of art for which Coleridge in the next century was to be such a strong proponent. Blair objects to the purely ornamental. Twisted columns in a building displease us because, while they are ornamental, they create an impression of weakness. How high a premium he put on the functional is indicated in the following quota-
Our sense of fitness and design, therefore, is so powerful, and holds so high a rank among our perceptions, as to regulate, in a great measure, our other ideas of beauty: an observation which I the rather make, as it is of the utmost importance, that all who study composition should carefully attend to it. For, in an epic poem, a history, an oration, or any work of genius, we always require, as we do in other works, a fitness, or adjustment of means to the end which the author is supposed to have in view. Let his description be ever so rich, or his figures ever so elegant, yet, if they are out of place, if they are not proper parts of that whole, if they suit not the main design, they lose all their beauty, nay from beauties they are converted into deformities.

Such a statement prepares us for the stand that Blair is to take on figures and tropes in the lectures on Style.

Blair gives a very summary treatment of some of the other pleasures of imagination. There is, as Addison pointed out in his Spectator essay, the pleasure we receive from novelty and imitation. There are the pleasures we receive from melody, harmony, wit, humor, and ridicule. Blair declined to discuss these pleasures either because they seemed to be commonplaces or because he felt he had gone on long enough.

He closes the fifth lecture with a very provocative discussion of the difference between imitation and description. This distinction should be given in Blair's own words:

Imitation is performed by means of somewhat that has a natural likeness and resemblance to the thing imitated, and of consequence is understood by all: such are statues and pictures. Description, again, is the raising in the mind the conception of an object by means of some arbitrary or instituted symbols, understood only by those who agree in the institution of them; such are words and writing. Words have no natural resemblance to the ideas or objects which they are employed to signify; but a statue or a picture has a natural likeness to the original.

Blair's distinction is similar to the one that Johnson made in Idler No. 34 (1758) between poetry and painting, "which differ," Johnson says, "only as one
represents things by marks permanent and natural, the other by signs accidental and arbitrary." Imitation and description, Blair goes on to say, both employ external signs to represent things, but the similarity between the two ceases there. Only works that present persons actually speaking and acting can properly be called imitative. "Who," he asks rhetorically, "would call Virgil's description of a tempest, in the first Aeneid, an imitation of a storm?"

The most interesting part of this discussion Blair relegates to a long footnote. Here he says that though poetry is certainly descriptive rather than imitative there is a qualified sense in which poetry may be termed an imitative art. Blair's exposition of this "qualified sense" is puzzling. He says,

The subject of the poet (as Dr. Gerard has shown in the appendix to his Essay on Taste) is intended to be an imitation, not of things really existing, but of the course of nature: that is, a feigned representation of such events, or such scenes, as though they never had a being, yet might have existed; and which, therefore, by their probability, bear a resemblance to nature. It was probably in this sense, that Aristotle termed poetry a mimetic art.

Blair attempts to clear up the ambiguity of the phrase "the course of nature" in the appositional member; but the apposition also presents some difficulties. Setting aside the equivocal nature of the expression feigned representation, we must still question what Blair means by saying that the poet imitates only what might have existed. The poet, he seems to be saying, does not hold the mirror up to Nature. Does he mean then what Reynolds was saying in the Discourses which the latter had been delivering concurrently with Blair's lectures: that the poet idealizes Nature? That is what Gerard said in the appendix that Blair cites. Aristotle seems to have made allowance for this construction being put upon his use of the term imitation, when he says, "It is, moreover, evident from what has been said, that it is not the function of the poet to relate what has
happened, but what may happen—what is possible according to the law of probability or necessity”; and again, “The poet being an imitator, like a painter or any other artist, must of necessity imitate one of three objects—things as they were or are, things as they are said or thought to be, or things as they ought to be.”

Idealized nature must be the "qualified sense" in which Blair, despite his inept phraseology, understands poetry to be an imitative art. In holding this concept of imitation, Blair is certainly in august company. It has already been remarked that Blair’s theory was in accord with that of Reynolds, who was upholding Claude Lorrain’s idealized art over Hogarth’s literal art. As early as 1695 Dryden in his Parallel of Poetry and Painting encouraged painters to represent perfect nature, "thereby correcting Nature from what actually she is in individuals, to what she ought to be and what she was created"; and from the discussion that follows this recommendation, it is clear that Dryden expected the poet to work in the same manner. In the Life of Waller, Dr. Johnson said, “Poetry pleases by exhibiting an idea more grateful to the mind than things themselves afford”; and this theory was the basis for the famous "streaks of the tulip" passage in Rasselas. Goldsmith in the essay on Cultivation of Taste maintained that art should attempt to surpass Nature. "It is the business of art," Goldsmith says, "to imitate nature, but not with a servile pencil."

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80 Poetics, IX and XXV. Butcher’s translation.
81 See especially Discourse III.
James Beattie's Essay on Poetry and Music (1776) proposed that "Poetry exhibits a system of nature somewhat different from the reality of things." The difference was that the poet portrayed a more pleasing, a more picturesque view of nature than reality did.

How profound an effect this view of imitation had on Wordsworth and Coleridge is known to anyone who has read their poetical and critical works. Wordsworth urged the poet "to look steadily" at his object so that there would be "little falsehood of description," but believing with Aristotle that poetry was more philosophical than history, he recommended that the poet throw over his subject "a certain coloring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect." Coleridge too, with his conception of the imagination as being a synthetic, transforming faculty, advocated "creation rather than painting."

In the second half of the long footnote that concludes Lecture V, Blair comments on another subject very rife in the latter part of the eighteenth century; the superiority of literary art over the plastic and pictorial arts. In addition to Reynolds's Discourses and Beattie's Essay on Poetry and Music, there were, on this comparative study of the arts, Jonathan Richardson's Two Discourses on the Art of Criticism (1719), Charles Lamotte's Essay upon Poetry and Painting (1730), James Harris's Dialogue on Music, Painting, and Poetry (1744), and Joseph Spence's Polymetis (1747) and Crito, a Dialogue on Beauty (1752). It was Lessing, who in his abortive essay, Laokoön (1766), synthesized the discussion and showed that the difference in function between the arts was
determined by the difference in medium. Blair was certainly aware of the active
discussion, if he was not acquainted with all of these essays. He had read
Kames's chapter on "Beauty of Language" in the Elements of Criticism, and he
makes special mention here of Harris's Dialogue. He agrees with the general
sentiment that literary art enjoyed a distinct advantage over the plastic and
pictorial arts in that literary discourse was not confined to a single point of
time or to the representation merely of what met the eye. Taking her lead from
Ernst Cassirer, Susanne Langer in her Philosophy in a New Key has in our own
century fully developed these notions of the differences between, to use her own
terms, "discursive" and "presentational" arts.36

Anxious to assure his audience that this long discussion on Taste,
Sublimity, and Beauty has some pertinence to rhetoric, Blair provides a bridge
to his next set of lectures by reminding his hearers that discourse derives its
power to represent objects elegantly from the "significance of words" and that
since this is so it is necessary to enter upon a consideration of language--its
origin, progress, and construction.

36 See especially Chapter IV of her Philosophy in a New Key.
CHAPTER III

HUGH BLAIR ON LANGUAGE

At the beginning of Lecture VI, entitled "Rise and Progress of Language," Blair reminds his readers that the study of style or eloquence is "the principal subject of these lectures." But just as he considered the discussion of taste a necessary prelude to the discussion of style, he feels that he should treat of language because it is "the foundation of the whole power of eloquence."

Interest in philology, paralleling the impetus given to historical criticism, flourished during the eighteenth century. The abortive efforts of the Royal Society, traced briefly in Chapter One, to establish a more "scientific" language had sparked interest in the problems of language. The success of the French Academy, established by Cardinal Richelieu in 1635, led some Englishmen to contemplate the establishment of some authoritative body in England which would regulate the scattered efforts to standardize, refine, and fix the English language. In 1691 Defoe devoted one chapter of his Essay Upon Projects to the need for an Academy of Language in England. "Such an Academy," he maintained, 1 "should be sufficient authority for the usage of words, and sufficient also to expose the innovations of other men's fancies; they should preside with a sort of judicature over the learning of the age, and have liberty to correct and cen-

sure the exorbitance of writers, especially of translators." In the Spectator No. 135 (1711), Addison declared that problems of usage "will never be decided till we have something like an Academy, that by the best Authorities and Rules drawn from the Analogy of Languages shall settle all Controversies between Grammar and Idiom." Swift's plea in a letter to the Earl of Oxford (published in 1712 under the title A Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue) was the last serious effort in England to establish an Academy. Dr. Johnson's strictures, in the Preface to his Dictionary, on the establishment of an Academy dealt the death blow to all programs to set up a Last Court of Appeals on matters of language. These efforts evince, however, the concern that men in the eighteenth century had for their language.

In addition to the attempts to found an Academy, there was a succession of English grammars. John Wallis in his Grammatica Linguae Anglicanae (1653) and William Loughton in his Practical Grammar of the English Tongue (1734) both inveighed against the practice of trying to fit Latin rules of grammar to the English language, and accordingly they advocated the compilation of a grammar that would better serve an analytic language like English. Professor Baugh finds that the great outburst of interest in English grammar came in the decade beginning in 1760—the date, incidentally, when Blair was beginning his lectures. The most notable of the grammars produced during this time were Joseph Priestley's The Rudiments of English Grammar (1761), Robert Lowth's Short Introduction to English Grammar (1762), James Buchanan's The British Grammar

(1762), John Ash's Grammatical Institutes (1763), and William Ward's Grammar of the English Language (1765). Popular as all of these grammars were, they were all superseded later on in the century by Lindley Murray's Grammar of the English Language (1795). In America, Noah Webster published his Plain and Comprehensive Grammar (Hartford, Connecticut, 1784).

Another facet of the eighteenth-century interest in philology was the speculation about the origin and rise of language. Professor Allen has shown\(^3\) that interest in the rise and progress of language sprang up in England as early as the second half of the seventeenth century. It was not, however, until the mid-eighteenth century that the origins of language began to be studied with anything approaching thoroughness and system. The impetus for this study seems to have come from France.\(^4\) The English pioneer in these studies was James Harris with his Hermès, or a Philosophical Inquiry concerning Universal Grammar (1751). Blair's close friend Adam Smith joined the discussion with two works, Dissertation on the Origin of Languages, appended to his Treatise on Moral Sentiments in 1759, and Treatise of the Origin and Progress of Language (1759). It is curious that Blair did not refer in this lecture to Lord Monboddo's influential Of the Origin and Progress of Language (1775-1792), especially since he did


\(^4\) In a footnote at the beginning of his lectures on language, Blair cites the following French works: Condillac, Essai sur l'Origine des Connaissances Humaines (1746); Du Marsais, Principes de Grammaire et Grammaire Générale et Naisonnée; De Brosses, Traité de la Formation Mécanique des Langues (1765); Rousseau, Discours sur l'Inégalité parmi les Hommes (1755); Beaumé, Grammaire Générale (1767); Batteux, Principes de la Traduction; l'Abbé Girard, Les Vrais Principes de la Langue Française (1747).
cite this work in Lecture XXXVIII, "On the Nature of Poetry." Blair was obviously unacquainted with the classic eighteenth-century work on this subject, Johann Gottfried Herder's *Origin of Language* (Ursprung der Sprache) (1772). Sections of such works as William Warburton's *Divine Legation of Moses* (1741), Joseph Priestley's *Course of Lectures on the Theory of Language* (1762), and Daniel Webb's *Observations on the Correspondence between Poetry and Music* (1789) also dealt with the problem of how language began and developed. Most of the above-mentioned works on the origin of language and many of the grammars listed above, Blair cited in his own lectures, either in footnotes or in the text of the lectures. He was well aware of the vigorous interest in language and, according to Schmitz, showed "an extraordinary interest" in the literature that had been produced during this time on the subject of language. This interest undoubtedly grew out of his even more lively interest in what later critics have termed "primitivism." To trace with any definiteness the sources of his pronouncements is not always possible. Only once in the text of the lectures does Blair refer specifically to any of the French linguists. Most frequently he mentions Harris and Smith. In most cases we shall have to fall back on that convenient recourse, "the general climate of opinion."

At the outset, Blair provides an outline of what he intends to do in the next four lectures (Lectures VI-IX):

I shall first give a history of the rise and progress of language in several particulars, from its early to its more advanced periods, which shall be followed by a similar history of the rise and progress of writing. I shall next give some account of the construction of language, on the principles of universal grammar; and shall, lastly, apply these observations more particularly to the English tongue.

5 Schmitz, Hugh Blair, 103.
"Language, in general," Blair says, "signifies the expression of our ideas by certain articulate sounds, which are used as the signs of those ideas."

Language, it should be noted, is in this lecture being considered only as sound; in the next lecture, language will be considered in its written character. In the definition, Blair speaks of the "expression of ideas"; but it is clear from the discussion that follows that the term ideas comprehends not only concepts but emotions. Blair will show later on in the lecture just how much natural connection there is between the ideas of the mind and the sounds emitted, but he announces at this point that by and large the connection between words and ideas is "arbitrary and conventional."

At the beginning of his speculations about the origin of language, Blair finds himself in a dilemma. On the one hand he finds it natural to suppose that men were first gathered into a society and then language developed; on the other hand, "there seems to have been an absolute necessity for speech, previous to the formation of society." This is one of those problems that tease us out of thought, like the problem of which came first, the chicken or the egg. One is tempted to employ the pun that Blair solved the problem by using a **deus ex machina**, for he advances the hypothesis that language had its origin in divine teaching or inspiration. But to belittle the divine origin of language is perhaps to be rashly supercilious, for this theory is, in the absence of historical evidence, no more implausible than the theory that men gradually emerged from a state of absolute mutism by inventing words to express each new concept that arose in their mind. Still and all, the divine-origin theory has some patent weaknesses. Professor Müller suggests one of the more obvious weaknesses when he says,
Theologians who claim for language a divine origin drift into the most dangerous anthropomorphism when they enter into any details as to the manner in which they suppose the Deity to have compiled a dictionary and grammar in order to teach them to the first man, as a schoolmaster teaches the deaf and dumb. And they do not see that, even if all their premisses were granted, they would have explained no more than how the first man might have learnt a language, if there was a language ready-made for him. How that language was made, would remain as great a mystery as ever.6

Professor Müller was perhaps not as ready to allow for the miraculous as Dr. Blair was.

Realizing the tenuousness of the grounds for his supposition, Blair decides not to dwell on the matter but to pass on to a discussion of how language developed. Primitive men, he speculates, first communicated with one another by "cries of passion." This is the theory that later philologists7 refer to as the "pooh-pooh" theory. According to this theory, the first significant sounds that men uttered were what grammarians call interjections. These emotional, involuntary explosions of sound come natural to men and are universally understood. There is no doubt that men instinctively resort to exclamations at moments of high emotion, but there is considerable doubt that interjections represent the earliest form of language. Language would seem to begin where interjections leave off. There is a great deal of difference between the natural cry of pain "Oh!" and the verbal expression "It hurts!" If interjections were the primitive form of language, why is it that animals, which also emit "cries of passion," have never developed a language? Although Blair makes no attempt to argue the reasonableness of his theory, he is unabashedly categorical in his as-


7 Professor Müller seems to have invented the term "pooh-pooh" and also the term "bow-wow." See his *Science of Language*, I, 494.
Men eventually found it necessary to advance beyond the interjctional stage. How did men go about assigning or inventing names for the objects about them? "Undoubtedly," Blair answers, "by imitating, as much as they could, the nature of the object which they named." This is the onomatopoetic theory, to which later philologists have assigned the name, "the bow-wow theory." It was to the natural tendency in men to imitate the sound which concrete objects made that Blair attributed the existence of such words as whistle, hiss, crash, buzz, and rattle. In every language, certainly, there are words which were formed by a mere imitation of sound, but such words constitute only a very small part of the vocabulary. Any attempt to trace the vast majority of words to an imitative root ends in failure. If there were any comprehensive validity to the "bow-wow" theory, we would expect to find that the word for dog in our language was bow-wow, that the word for lamb was baa, that the word for cow was moo-moo. True, children do use these onomatopoetic utterances to refer to familiar domestic animals, but this is only a temporary resort; as soon as the child learns the proper sign for these animals, he abandons the imitative sounds. The safest stand to take on the onomatopoetic and interjctional theories is perhaps the one that Professor Whitney assumes: "Each of them furnishes a good and sufficient explanation of a part of the facts for which we are seeking to account, since each suggests available means by which the first speakers should have arrived at mutually intelligible signs."8

Blair himself sees another of the shortcomings of the onomatopoetic theory: while this theory may account for words having to do with sound, it does not so easily account for words having to do with sight or for words describing abstract ideas. Reluctant to abandon the "bow-wow" theory altogether, he takes refuge in the explanations offered by Des Brosses in his *Traité de la Formation Mécanique des Langues* and by Dr. Wallis in his *Grammar of the English Language*. According to these men, terms referring to moral or intellectual ideas derived from the names of concrete objects to which these abstract ideas were thought to be analogous; terms referring to objects of sight have certain syllable and consonant combinations appropriate to the expression of them. The examples that Blair quotes from Des Brosses and Wallis in a footnote seem to lend plausibility to this interesting theory. Des Brosses, for instance, found that the consonant combination St usually appeared in words having to do with stability or rest; Fl, with fluency; Cl, with a gentle descent; R, with rapid motion; S, with cavity or hollowness. Some of the examples that Blair cites from Dr. Wallis, who wrote almost a century before Des Brosses, must be quoted here:

Thus, words formed upon St, always denote firmness and strength, analogous to the Latin stp: as, stand, stay, staff, stop, stout, steady, stake, stamp, stallion, stately, etc. Words beginning with Str intimate violent force and energy, . . . as, strive, strength, strike, strife, stress, struggle, stride, stretch, strip, etc. Th or implies forcible motion: as, throw, throb, thrust, through, threaten, thraldom. . . . Sw, silent agitation or lateral motion: as, sway, swing, swerve, sweep, swim. Sl, a gentle fall or less observable motion: as, slide, slip, sly, slit, slow, slack, sling. Sp, dissipation or expansion: as, spread, sprout, sprinkle, split, spill, spring.

Blair concludes from these examples and from many more found in Wallis that there is "no doubt, that the analogies of sound have had some influence on the formation of words." Blair's cautious concession is accompanied with the warning...
that since, in speculations of this kind, fancy can carry us away, we ought to be wary in formulating a rigid theory on the basis of these examples. The theory has enough cogency about it, however, to warrant someone's investigating it further. The New Critics, in studying tonal effects in verse, have given us some brilliant analyses of vowel combination, but very few critics have done much of anything with consonant combinations.

At this point in the lecture, Blair admits that the principle of a natural relation between words and objects, which is the basis for the interjunctional and onomatopoetic theories, can apply to language only in its primitive state. As man became familiar with more and more objects, his vocabulary expanded; and as his vocabulary expanded, the analogy between the sound and the sense grew dimmer. Words began to be more symbolic and less imitative. And as words became more symbolic, they became more arbitrary.

In discussing the second mark of primitive speech, "the manner in which words were at first pronounced," Blair has little that is new or provocative to offer. Because the stock of words was severely limited, primitive man relied on gesticulation and on variation in tone to convey his meaning. There was more action in speech, a wider range of voice inflections. Blair points out an interesting observation that William Warburton had made in The Divine Legation of Moses:

Upon this principle, Dr. Warburton accounts for so much speaking by action, as we find among the Old Testament prophets; as when Jeremiah breaks the potter's vessel, in sight of the people; throws a book into the Euphrates; puts on bonds and yokes; and carries out his household stuff; all which, he imagines, might be significant modes of expression, very natural in those ages, when men were accustomed to explain themselves so much by actions and gestures.

The fact that pantomime was once considered so eloquent accounts for the great
emphasis that classical rhetoricians placed on action in oratory. Blair finds that beginning with the time when the "more phlegmatic nations" (the Teutonic tribes, presumably) overran the Roman Empire variations in tone and accent and liberal use of gestures became less and less a feature of speech. The Latin races, however, principally the French and Italian, still retain some of the demonstrative modes of speaking that characterized ancient speech.

It is in discussing the third mark of primitive language, the style of speech in its early state, that Blair advances his most significant, albeit controversial, contention. "Mankind," Blair says, "never employed so many figures of speech, as when they had hardly any words for expressing their meaning." Two conclusions follow from this premise: 1) figurative language is a mode of expression natural to man; 2) primitive man was more poetic than civilized man—"Poetry is more ancient than prose," Blair says. In a later lecture in this series (Lecture XXXVIII, "Nature of Poetry"), he makes even more extravagant claims for the poetical propensities of primitive man. Since man is "both a poet and a musician by nature," it follows that "the first compositions which were recorded by writing, or transmitted by tradition, could be no other than poetical compositions." What is more, primitive man did not know any other mode of discourse than the poetic: "Cool reasoning and plain discourse had no power to attract savage tribes," he says. In fairness to Blair, however, it should be pointed out that his concept of poetry was much broader than what is usually meant by the term poetry. According to the definition that he gives at the beginning of this Thirty-Eighth Lecture, poetry "is the language of passion or of enlivened imagination," commonly, though not necessarily, "formed into regular numbers."
Such views stem, of course, from the admiration for primitivism that laid such a strong hold on many of Blair's contemporaries. The Scottish School was perhaps initially influenced by a teacher at Marischall College in Aberdeen, Thomas Blackwall, whose Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer (1735) was greatly admired by the intellectual coterie at Edinburgh. The eighteenth-century primitivists idealized the savage and exaggerated his virtues and powers beyond the bounds of historical reality. One of the ironies of their position was, as Professor Pearce points out, that "with all of their admiration for primitive or barbaric poetry, the Scottish writers had no longing to return to the society which had produced that poetry." Capable of imagining the hardship and cruelty of primitive life, they were careful not to advocate a return to the barbaric world. Although they regretted that man had become less poetic than he once was, they took consolation in the fact that civilized men could be more astute philosophers, more learned apologists for religion—in short, greater social beings.

It is interesting to investigate Blair's explanation of why primitive man was more poetic than civilized man. One reason offered by Blair is that since primitive man, with his poverty of vocabulary, had to make one word do the

9 The notion of primitivism was not, of course, peculiar to the eighteenth century. A number of passages from Greek and Latin writers on language origins have been conveniently brought together in Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity, ed. A. O. Lovejoy and others, Baltimore, 1935. See especially pages 207, 219-222, 245, 371-372. A summary of the notions of primitivism current in the seventeenth century can be found in Sir William Temple's "Of Poetry," in Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century, ed. Spingarn, III, 79-89.

work of several he was led to express himself "by comparisons, metaphors, allusions, and all those substituted forms of speech which render language figu-

tative." Another reason was that since the savage's vocabulary was made up almost entirely of words designating sensible objects, "it became of necessity extreme-

ly metaphorical." It was not necessity alone, however, that accounted for the cultivation of figurative language. Primitive man was much more under the do-

mination of imagination and fancy than modern man was. Primitive men, Blair says, "live scattered and dispersed; they are unacquainted with the course of things; they are, every day, meeting with new and strange objects. Fear and surprise, wonder and astonishment, are their most frequent passions. Their language will necessarily partake of this character of their minds." The passage that follows, in which Blair describes the intensified imaginative process as it existed in primitive men, will remind the reader of Wordsworth's spirited defense of his decision to use the language of humble and rustic life. Blair says:

They will be given to describe everything with the strongest colours, and most vehement expressions; infinitely more than men living in the advanced and cultivated periods of society, when their imaginations are more chastened, their passions are more tamed, and a wider experience has rendered the objects of life more familiar to them. Even the manner in which I before showed that the first tribes of men uttered their words would have considerable influence on their style. Wherever strong exclamations, tones, and gestures, enter much into conversation, the imagination is always more exercised; a greater effort of fancy and passion is excited. Consequently, the fancy kept awake, and rendered more sprightilly by this mode of utterance, operates upon style, and enlivens it more.

The rebuttal to Blair's contention might be found in Chapter VII of the Biog-

raphia Literaria, where Coleridge argues against Wordsworth's preference for the language of rustics "because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived." Coleridge argued, it may be remembered, that a rustic's language, purged of all provincialisms and
grossness would not differ from the language of any other man of commonsense, "except that the notions which the rustic has to convey are fewer and more indiscriminate"; and that the objects with which the rustic comes in daily contact "furnish a very scanty vocabulary." "The best part of human language," Coleridge maintained, "is derived from reflection on the acts of the mind itself."

The exaggerated claims that Blair and his contemporaries made for the poetic capacities of the noble savage stemmed largely from an inadequate historical knowledge of the real conditions of primitive life. Professor Abrams points out that the "Lucretian theory that language began as a spontaneous expression of feeling was bound sometime to merge with the concurrent belief that the first elaborated form of language was poetic" and that one of the continental critics who promoted this merger was Giambattista Vico in his Scienza Nuova (1725).11

But the notion that primitive societies were naturally more poetic than civilized societies died a lingering death. "In his famous essay on Milton (1825), Macaulay claimed "that, as civilisation advances, poetry almost necessarily declines."12 Apparently, Macaulay did not perceive the inconsistency of this view with the doctrine of progress that he preached in his History of England and in his essay on Southey. According to Thomas Love Peacock, the Four Ages of Poetry moved, chronologically, from iron to gold to silver to brass. The march of the poetic spirit was "like that of a crab, backward."13

There certainly is a measure of truth to the contention that uneducated people living close to nature do quite naturally fall into a picturesque, metaphorical way of speaking. One would have only to meet with a Tennessee hillbilly or a Georgia cracker to be convinced of that. Jespersen agrees that primitive language is naturally poetic and adds a reason that Blair did not propose:

But the better stocked a language is with those ex-metaphors which have become regular expressions for definite ideas, the less need there is for going out of one's way to find new metaphors. The expression of thought therefore tends to become more and more mechanical or prosaic.14

But even if we are willing to concede to primitive language all the virtues that Blair and others have granted to it, most of us would hesitate to make the further concession that rude peoples were capable of composing great poetry. The imaginative process is partly a cerebral one. Blair seems to have forgotten that a poet like Homer wrote many centuries after the barbaric period about which he was writing.

Blair has one more aspect of the progress of language to discuss, but having exceeded his time limit, he has to postpone the discussion of the order and arrangement of words until the next lecture. He devotes the first four pages of Lecture VII to observations on syntax before going on to the principal subject of this lecture, the rise and progress of writing.

How would a savage ask his neighbor for a piece of fruit? He would not, Blair says, use the English order of words, "give me fruit"; he would use the Latin order, "fructum da mihi." The Latin order of words would not, Blair maintains, be the logical (whatever he means by that!) order but it would be the

most natural order, "because it is the order suggested by imagination and desire, which always impel us to mention their object in the first place." Blair finds that this is the principle which prevails in the ancient language (but his knowledge of ancient languages, understandably enough, does not range any farther back than his reading knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew). There were other considerations, he observes, which determined word order in these languages. A regard for harmony, for perspicuity, for emphasis, and for climax sometimes dictated that the "natural" order be re-arranged. "But, in general, this was the genius and character of most of the ancient languages, to give such full liberty to the collocation of words, as allowed them to assume whatever order was most agreeable to the speaker's imagination." Hebrew he found to be an exception among ancient languages: generally it avoided inversions and assumed a construction that was more akin to the syntax of English than to that of Latin or Greek. It seems not to have suggested itself to Blair that if there was this one exception there might be others and that the exceptions might be so numerous as to invalidate his theory.

In modern languages, the order of words is dictated, he says, "not according to the degree of importance which the several objects carry in the imagination, but according to the order of nature and of time." Blair elucidates what he means by "the order of nature and of time" by analyzing a sentence he has translated into English from Cicero's Latin: "It is impossible for me to pass over in silence, such remarkable mildness, such singular and unheard of clemency, and such unusual moderation in the exercise of supreme power." 15

15 The Latin sentence from Cicero's Oratio pro Marcello (see the first paragraph of this essay in Cicero: the Speeches, trans. H. H. Watts,
Ideas is often less equivocal than it is in English. Since Blair has already admitted that the Latin order is the more natural order, the present writer must still confess that he does not understand what Blair means when he says that the English sentence is "more obvious and plain."

Blair now moves on to a discussion of writing—a subject that takes up the remainder of Lecture VII. He begins by dividing written characters into two main sorts: signs of things—pictures, hieroglyphics, and symbols; signs of words—alphabetical characters. Pictures, Blair proposes, were the first form of writing, but when men realized the inadequacy of pictures to represent abstract ideas and to exhibit the connections between ideas they looked for more pliable characters. To meet this need, men invented hieroglyphical characters.

"Hieroglyphics painted invisible objects by analogies taken from the external world." In tracing the development of the system of hieroglyphics Blair exhibits at least a superficial acquaintance with archeological findings in North America and Egypt and with the ideographic system of writing in China. His observations, as Wellek points out, give evidence of the general advance in linguistic theory in the eighteenth century that accompanied the progress being made in the science of aesthetics.

As civilization became more complex, men became more and more sensible of the imperfections and limitations of communicating by signs of things. It occurred to them that a language employing signs for words would be more serviceable. The first step in the new advance was not the invention of an alphabet.

but the invention of "an alphabet of syllables." Men observed that though there were an indefinite number of words in a language there was only a limited number of articulate sounds. "They bethought themselves, therefore, of inventing signs not for each word by itself, but for each of those simple sounds which we employ in forming our words; and, by joining together a few of those signs, they saw that it would be practicable to express, in writing, the whole combinations of sounds which our words require." Then "some happy genius arose, and tracing the sounds made by the human voice, to their most simple elements, reduced them to a very few vowels and consonants" and created the alphabet. Although remarking that Plato in the Phaedo attributed the invention of the alphabet to Theuth, the Egyptian, Blair affirms that we do not know, and perhaps will never know, who was responsible for the invention of letters, but he accepts the almost universal tradition among the ancients that it was Cadmus the Phoenician who transmitted the alphabet to the Western World. Although there are minor differences in the number and formation of letters among the Phoenician, Hebrew, Greek and Roman alphabets, Blair is willing to accept the hypothesis that all alphabets among Western languages had a common source.

Blair concludes Lecture VII with a comparison of the advantages of written and of spoken language. Written language enjoys the advantage over speech in that "writing is both the more extensive, and a more permanent method of communication." Communication by writing is not confined to those who can hear our words; we can propagate our words to the far corners of the earth. In addition, communication by writing is not confined to the present age; it can be recorded and passed on to posterity. What is more, the reader can review and reflect upon the writer's words. While granting these advantages to the written
word, Blair is by no means prepared to concede the victory to writing over speaking. Viva-voce communication has a force and energy which the written word can never attain. Tones, looks, and gestures serve to remove ambiguities and to strengthen impressions. Blair would certainly agree with Cardinal Newman, who almost a century later said in *The Rise and Progress of Universities* that "when ever men are really serious about getting what, in the language of trade, is called 'a good article,' when they aim at something precise, something refined, something really luminous, something really large, something choice, they go to another market; they avail themselves, in some shape or other, of the rival method, the ancient method, of oral instruction, of present communication between man and man." Certainly, if there is to be any excuse for the teacher in the classroom, if there is to be any justification for the kind of lecture that Blair was delivering to his students, there must be an acknowledgement that the living voice adds another dimension to the communication process. Anyone who has sat at a teacher's feet and heard him merely read aloud a passage that has been read silently in the privacy of one's study, perhaps even a dozen times, knows what extra meanings, what deeper, clearer meanings come to the fore. Blair concludes this lecture with a statement which lays some anticipatory justification for the ten lectures that he later devotes to oratory: "Hence, though writing may answer the purposes of mere instruction, yet all the great and high efforts of eloquence must be made by means of spoken, not of written language."

In Lecture VIII Blair proposes to treat of general grammar--i.e., those principles of grammar that are common to all languages. In the succeeding lecture he will make "some more particular remarks on the genius of the English language." Blair laments the fact that so little has been written on the sub-
ject of general grammar. The French alone, he says, have investigated, with something approaching thoroughness and precision, the principles of grammar. He invites English linguists to match the efforts of the French, for to the ignorance of grammar "must be attributed many of those fundamental defects which appear in writing." Judging from the number of references in the lecture, the English linguists upon whom Blair most relies are James Harris (Hermes, or a Philosophical Inquiry concerning Universal Grammar) and Adam Smith (Treatise on the Origin and Progress of Language).

The parts of speech, which are the same in all languages, can be comprehended under three main divisions: substantives, attributives, and connectives. Blair considers the division commonly used in the schools at the time—nouns, pronouns, verbs, participles, adverbs, prepositions, interjections, and conjunctions—not very logical, because "it comprehends, under the general term of noun, both substantives and adjectives, which are parts of speech generically and essentially distinct; while it makes a separate part of speech of participles, which are no other than verbal adjectives." It is indeed curious that the noun and adjective were ever considered in the same class, but we find

17 It is interesting to note that Sister Miriam Joseph, C.S.C., in the text that she prepared with a view to restoring the Freshman English course to a system akin to the practice in medieval schools, acknowledges that some of her material in Chapter III on General Grammar is derived from Harris's Hermes—Sister Miriam Joseph, The Trivium in College Composition and Reading, Third Edition, Minneapolis, 1947, iii.

18 Blair points out in a footnote that this is essentially the division that Quintilian made. Quintilian used the terms verba, nomina, and connexiones. Quintilian felt that connunctio was a more accurate translation of the Greek κοννςόμος than was the more common word conjunction—Institutio Oratoria, I, iv, 17-19.
that even Quintilian\textsuperscript{19} gave a place to the participle ("which holds a middle position," he says, "between the verb and the noun") but did not name the adjective.

Blair postulates that substantive nouns were the first words that men invented after the onomatopoetic and interjectional words.\textsuperscript{20} Although the formation of abstract terms is considered to be a difficult operation of the mind, Blair believes such formations to have been made early in the development of a language, for "if we except only the proper names of persons, such as Caesar, John, Peter, all the other substantive nouns which we employ in discourse are the names, not of individual objects, but of very extensive genera, or species of objects; as man, lion, house, river, etc." It is plain from these examples that Blair does not mean by the term abstract what we generally understand when we hear the term. Abstract for him seems to mean generic. So Blair is really not contradicting the theory of later linguists that abstract terms—i.e., words which name non-concrete realities—are a late development in any language.

Passing on then from the consideration of the noun, Blair illustrates very succinctly and cogently the contribution that articles make to clearness and precision. The function of the article is apparent in the three phrases, "The son of a king," "The son of the king," "A son of the king's." There is a subtle difference in meaning, Blair observes, among these phrases, which the

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{20} In a footnote Blair qualifies this statement by saying that this was not the case in all nations. He learns from Adam Smith's \textit{Treatise on the Origin and Progress of Language} that among several Indian tribes in America some of the first articulate sounds denoted a whole sentence or a substantive with all its attributes. We might find an instance of the latter in the Indian word that denotes "land of the sky blue waters."
Latin, lacking the article as it does, cannot intimate in the phrase filius regis.

Blair devotes the remainder of the lecture to a discussion of number, gender, and case of the noun. Since a good deal of what he says about these three aspects of the noun is commonplace, we might look at only those observations which are especially novel or illuminating. He says that because English observes natural gender we can more readily indicate (for instance, by personifying a neuter noun) that "we are passing from the strict and logical to the ornamented and rhetorical style." Blair inquires whether there is any rule by which we can determine whether our personification of an inanimate object should be masculine or feminine. He turns to Harris's Hermes for an answer. Harris had pointed out that

we commonly give the masculine gender to those substantive nouns used figuratively, which are conspicuous for the attributes of imparting, or communicating; which are by nature strong and efficacious, either to good or evil; of which have a claim to some eminence, whether laudable or not. Those again, he imagines, to be generally feminine, which are conspicuous for the attributes of containing, and of bringing forth; which have more of the passive in their nature, than of the active, which are peculiarly beautiful or amiable; or which have respect to such excesses as are rather feminine than masculine.

And so we usually make the sun masculine and the moon feminine. The earth, as being productive, is universally feminine. Ships are generally feminine because they are conceived of as containers or receivers. Time, "on account of its mighty efficacy," is invariably masculine. Blair finds Harris's principle sound as far as it goes, but he hesitates to elevate it to the stature of a general rule because in his experience language is nowhere more capricious "than in the imposition of gender upon things inanimate."

Inflection is a device for indicating the relationships of words in a
sentence. Having dropped inflections, modern languages express relationships by means of prepositions. Has the substitution of prepositions for cases been a gain or loss? In answering this question, Blair clarifies somewhat a claim that he made in the previous lecture but did not explain—namely, that the structure of the English sentence was simpler and more intelligible than Latin and Greek sentences. The abolition of case endings, Blair maintains, has made the structure of modern languages much simpler. "We have disembarassed it of all the intricacy which arose from the different forms of declension, of which the Romans had no fewer than five; and from all the irregularities in these several declensions." But even here Blair is not so much defending the simplicity of the English structure as saying that our language is much easier to learn. How we wish that Blair would come as close to an explanation as Otto Jespersen does when he says, "Words in English do not play at hide-and-seek, as they often do in Latin, for instance, or in German, where ideas that by right belong together are widely sundered in obedience to caprice, or more often to a rigorous grammatical rule."21

There are disadvantages to a non-inflected language also. The reliance on prepositions has encumbered our language with particles and thereby has enervated it; the lack of inflections has deprived our language of "that variety and sweetness, which arose from the length of words, and the change of terminations occasioned by the cases in Latin and Greek"; and the absence of case endings has robbed us of that liberty of transposition which the classical language enjoyed. The writer in modern languages may be compared, as George Campbell

points out, 22 to the carpenter who must splice his materials together by means of such external aids as nails and screws; the writer in an inflected language is like the artisan who joins his materials with dovetails, grooves, and mortises. Hence, the classical languages, Blair maintains, had "more brevity, more vivacity, more force."

Blair concludes this lecture by noting the curious fact that in the ancient languages the adjective was made to conform in its terminal part with the substantive. He finds this strange, because number, gender, and case, Blair observes, have nothing to do with mere qualities, such as good or great, soft or hard. The Greeks and the Romans, however, were loath to consider qualities apart from their substances; "they made the adjective depend on its substantive, and resemble it in termination, in number, and gender, in order that the two might coalesce the more intimately, and be joined in the form of expression, as they were in the nature of things."

Lecture IX, the final lecture in the second division, is a kind of catchall for the remaining observations that Blair has to make on language. He treats of the remaining parts of speech, gives a sketchy history of the English language, and compares the English language with other languages.

In discussing the verb, Blair merely relays what he learned from Harris and Smith. About the verb, he makes only two extraordinary observations. He believes with Adam Smith that the radical verb in all languages was what we have come to call the impersonal verb--e.g., it rains, it thunders, it agree-

22 See George Campbell, The Philosophy of Rhetoric, New York, 1853, Bk. III, Ch. IV, Sec. iii, 421.
able. This simplest form of the verb merely denotes the existence of an event or of a state of things. "By degrees," Blair says, "after pronouns were invented, such verbs became personal, and were branched out into all the variety of tenses and moods." The other noteworthy observation on the verb is that auxiliary verbs are to root verbs as prepositions are to substantives. When conjugations were dropped, it was necessary to use additional words to indicate changes of tense and voice. This practice, like the practice of using prepositions, "rendered language more simple and easy in its structure; but withal, more prolix and less graceful."

The connectives—prepositions and conjunctions—are of great use in pointing out the relations and transitions by which the mind passes from one idea to another. As language develops, Blair observes, its connectives become more numerous and subtle. Greek, the most perfect language ever devised by man, abounds in connectives. Blair sums up the importance of connectives in this fashion:

In every language, much of the beauty and strength of it depends on the proper use of conjunctions, prepositions, and those relative pronouns, which also serve the same purpose of connecting the different parts of discourse. It is the right or wrong management of these, which chiefly makes discourse appear firm and compacted, or disjointed and loose; which carries it on its progress with a smooth and even pace, or renders its march irregular and desultory.

Anyone who has studied a foreign language knows that it is the prepositions and conjunctions which are hardest to learn and translate. And of all parts of speech, the connectives most depend on context for their meaning. Almost all mistakes in idiom and logic in students' themes result from careless choice of prepositions and conjunctions. Blair has done well to warn those who have come to him for instruction in the art of discourse that careful attention must be
paid to these little but important words.

Blair disposes of the history of the language in four short paragraphs. Although this review is sketchy, it is a remarkably accurate epitome of the history of language, to which linguistic historians like Baugh and Jespersen have accorded book-length treatment. Blair slights the Middle English period, however, and as a result we are left in the dark as to how our language developed from the Norman French period to the Modern English period.

Because our language is a hybrid of many other languages, we can expect it to be irregular in its grammar and syntax. "We cannot expect from it," Blair says, "that correspondence of parts, that complete analogy in structure, which may be found in those simpler languages, which have been formed in a manner within themselves, and built on one foundation." But the hybrid nature of our language has produced a virtue to match this shortcoming. Because it is a compound of several languages, English has been enriched with a great number and variety of words. "In all grave subjects especially, historical, critical, political, and moral, no writer has the least reason to complain of the barrenness of our tongue." As an example of the richness of the English vocabulary, Blair quotes, from the Preface to Greenwood's Grammar, some thirty words which express all the varieties of the passion of anger. Blair concedes that English lacks the gayety and vivacity that makes French such an ideal language for social intercourse, but then English has a considerable edge on French in dealing with graver, more thoughtful subjects.

The flexibility of a language—that is, "its power of accommodation to different styles and manners"—depends, Blair proposes, on three things:
1) the copiousness of a language
2) the different arrangements of which words are susceptible
3) the variety and beauty of the sound of words

The Greek language possessed all these qualities and in addition enjoyed the advantages attending the "graceful variety of its dialects." Among modern languages, the Italian has the most flexibility; English, Blair thinks, would rank second for flexibility. He bases this claim on the evidence of the great diversity of styles among the English classics. Look, he says, at the great difference in manner between Lord Shaftesbury and Dean Swift. Yes, one might say, and look at the even greater difference between a writer like Joseph Addison and a writer like Sir Thomas Browne. But how does English manage this diversity of style? It certainly lacks one of the requisites that Blair sets down—the freedom of word arrangement. Blair makes no defense of English on this score, for there is no defense. On this score, however, none of the modern languages enjoys this freedom and for this reason can never match inflected languages like Latin and Greek for flexibility. But English does possess a copious vocabulary, and it is not as deficient in harmony of sound as some critics have charged. He quotes Thomas Sheridan, the foremost authority on elocution in the late eighteenth century, to the effect that English has a greater variety of vowel and diphthong sounds than most languages and that consonant combinations, of which English makes such liberal use, often produce very pleasing sounds. Even the sound in our words, to which objection has frequently been made, often loses its harsh sibilance by being softened into a soft sound, as in such words as has, these, those, loves, hears. Withal, however, one could never make out a strong case for English being a language distinguished for smoothness and beauty of sound. Strength and expressiveness, rather than grace, Blair says, is the forte
of our language. English has acquired this strength and expressiveness by greatly shortening the quantity of its vowels and by giving more freedom to the regressive accent than any other language has allowed. Whereas Latin and Greek never throw an accent farther back than the third syllable from the end, English will throw an accent back as far as the fourth or even fifth syllable, as in such words as memorable, convenience, ambulatory, profitableness. These somewhat superficial attempts to analyze the sound of our language show that Blair was aware of the awakening interest in the phonetics of our language—an interest that had been sparked by men like Thomas Sheridan, who were promoting the revival of academic training in the pronunciation aspect of rhetoric.

Blair closes Lecture IX with a strong plea for the study of our language. English-speaking people, he says, tend to take their language for granted. As a result, they speak and write their language loosely and inaccurately. Blair is at one with George Campbell in holding usage as the paramount standard of correctness. "Established custom in speaking and writing," he says, "is the standard to which we must at last resort for determining every controverted point in language and style." But even in saying this, Blair is not disposed to abandoning the prescriptive grammarians altogether. The fundamental rules of grammar and syntax are essentially the same in all languages, and a defiance of those rules will inevitably impair communication. "Let the matter of an author be ever so good and useful," he says, "his compositions will always suffer in the public esteem if his expression be deficient in purity and propriety." A correct and elegant style cannot be acquired solely by ear; there must be some knowledge of the rules. And in closing, he recommends to his students Robert Lowth's Short Introduction to English Grammar, Joseph Priestley's The
Having discoursed at some length on taste and language, Blair now feels that his students are ready for his lectures on Style. He is now ready to move into the realm of rhetoric proper.
CHAPTER IV

HUGH BLAIR ON STYLE

That Blair devoted fifteen lectures to style indicates the importance he attached to the elocutio part of rhetoric. These lectures on style were certainly the most practical of the entire course of lectures that he delivered at Edinburgh and for that reason were probably the most popular with the students. Here was something more than philosophical, historical, and psychological studies of such nebulous concepts as beauty, taste, the sublime; here were principles, observations, and suggestions which besides being scribbled into notebooks could be put into practice. The student who practiced Blair's teachings on style would have the feeling that the course of lectures had borne tangible fruit. If Blair was no profound or original thinker--and by this time the reader has been exposed enough to Blair to know that he was not that--he was a successful teacher, a teacher whose disquisitions were elementary enough to remain within the grasp of his students, whose advice was always sensible enough to win ready credence, and whose suggestions were sometimes provocative enough to be stimulating.

One question that suggests itself as one reads the lectures on style is whether the students in the rhetoric class at the University of Edinburgh were required to write and submit themes. Although Bower and Grant in their histories of the University of Edinburgh frequently give detailed accounts of
the curricula of studies, neither of them reveals whether the students had to submit written exercises. Although contemporaries like Hill, Finlayson, and Alexander Carlyle have given us intimate accounts of Blair's professorial practices, they are silent about this matter of "homework." The lectures themselves provide some internal evidence that certain "exercises" were submitted by the students, but the evidence is not full enough to allow one to decide whether these exercises were obligatory and regular and whether they involved writing themes. The fact that Blair's students copied, bought, or borrowed the notes to his lectures suggests that interest centered on precept rather than on practice. Whether themes were required or not, conscientious students would not have been able to resist the challenge of Blair's suggestions on how to acquire a good style, and undoubtedly in the quiet of their cubicles they wrote out probative paragraphs for their own if not their teacher's edification.

That there were such conscientious students in Blair's classes rests wholly on presumption, but that a high level of education was expected of students in his rhetoric class can be legitimately inferred from the nature and tone of the lectures. The frequent allusions and the casual name-dropping indicate that the professor credited his students with at least a superficial acquaintance with classical and contemporary literature. What is even more illuminating about the quality of Blair's students is that Blair frequently quoted long Latin passages without translating them for his audience. While it was not uncommon for university students to read Latin with great facility, it was uncommon for them to comprehend Latin quoted at them. When Blair printed the lectures, he placed translations of the Latin passages in footnotes. Did he come to learn that he had been over-estimating the powers of his students? Or were
the translations a condescending gesture made to the general public for whom the printed lectures were intended? Because Blair nowhere in the lectures adopts a condescending tone, it seems more likely that the translations were rather a concession made to the inferior capacities of the public than a convenience for his students.

Many of Blair's observations will strike the reader as being vapidly commonplace. And, indeed, only blind adulation would attempt to defend Blair against the charge that he was merely repeating "what oft was thought." What is more, Blair often communicates his commonplaces in a most commonplace way. But all this admitted, how grave is the offense that we can lay to Blair: It is the fate of truth to wear a familiar face. And Blair was never one to present an old face in a new dress. His primary concern for perspicuity often led him to express the very obvious in the most obvious way. Obviousness, especially in one concerned with exposition, may prove tedious, but it can scarcely be considered reprehensible.

One wonders, however, whether Blair's pronouncements on style will appear commonplace to the uninitiate. Ours is an age which finds even the terminology of rhetoric strange. Our students are so preoccupied with the struggle to achieve mere grammatical correctness that they have little time and less inclination to seek for the graces of style. It is conceivable that to the ordinary student today Blair's lucubrations on style will appear novel, mysterious, and even fascinating. We must not rule out, either, the possibility of the pleasure that is derived when the unknown is made to appear as something that was merely forgotten and when the familiar is presented as something met for the first time.

Blair's fifteen lectures on style can be divided into five main parts:
1) A consideration of style in regard to single words (Lecture X); 2) A consideration of style in regard to sentences (Lectures XI-XIII); 3) A consideration of figurative language (Lectures XIV-XVII); 4) A consideration of the characters of style according to three different classifications (Lectures XVIII-XIX); 5) A stylistic analysis of prose essays from Addison and Swift (Lectures XX-XXIV).

Each of these main parts has numerous divisions and subdivisions, which shall appear when the parts are considered in detail.

Blair's method throughout these lectures is to give definitions (wherever definitions are deemed necessary), to lay down principles, to substantiate those principles by citing the authority of, or quoting pertinent passages from, other rhetoricians, to give illustrations of the principles, and to analyze some of the illustrations for their stylistic excellences or defects. Usually, at the beginning of each new section, he will indicate in a footnote the authors he has found most helpful on the subject he is about to treat. Quintilian is his avowed favorite. So frequent are his quotations from Quintilian and so similar to the Roman rhetorician's is his own philosophy of style that it would be not far from the truth to say that here is an English adaptation of those chapters of the Institutes which deal with elocutio, supplemented occasionally with material from Cicero, Demetrius, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, from two or three French rhetoricians, and from Kames and Campbell among the Scottish rhetoricians. How much of the English rhetorical tradition traced in the first chapter of this study Blair had absorbed has been difficult to determine with any definiteness, but that he was heavily indebted to Quintilian and Cicero among the classical rhetoricians and to a few contemporary French and Scottish rhetoricians is unmistakable.
How to present the great mass of detail in these fifteen lectures poses something of a problem. To follow each step in Blair's exposition would be impractical and unwise. And yet although some kind of severe selection seems mandatory, it has not been easy to decide on a suitable principle of selection. To select only those pronouncements which seem to be peculiar to Blair would be to reduce this chapter to a half-dozen pages and to give a wholly inadequate notion of Blair's contribution to the teaching of rhetoric. To restrict the study to Blair's doctrines on some one or two aspects of style would also give the reader a limited view of the content, flavor, and approach of these lectures. It has seemed best to select those observations which, whether original or derivative, have a special importance, cogency, or usefulness. Such a principle of selection, obviously, leaves the reader to the mercy of the writer's judgment; it demands of the reader, certainly, a willing suspension of distrust.

Blair begins Lecture X with a definition of style. Style is "the peculiar manner in which a man expresses his conceptions by means of language," and again, "Style is nothing else than that sort of expression which our thoughts most readily assume." Style is such a subtle, individual thing that it is probably best to render a definition of it in the broadest possible terms. Such famous definitions of style as Swift's "Proper words in proper places," Buffon's "The style is the man," and Cardinal Newman's "Style is thinking out into language" have all been couched in broad terms. Blair's definition carries the note of individuality ("the peculiar manner") and also the suggestion that style is a combination of res and verba. Blair took great care to inculcate the point that style is not just sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. Despite the great attention he paid to style as expression, he stressed the point repeatedly that
the matter was more important than the manner. At the end of Lecture XII, for instance, he reminds his readers that all his rules have tended to support the fundamental aim of all composition, namely the communication of ideas or feelings. "Logic and rhetoric," he says in the final sentence of Lecture XII, "have here, as in many other cases, a strict connexion; and he that is learning to arrange his sentences with accuracy and order is learning, at the same time, to think with accuracy and order; an observation which alone will justify all the care and attention we have bestowed on this subject." Blair would not have said of his rhetoric course what had frequently been said of other rhetoric courses, that it was a training in propagating nonsense in flashy trappings.

"All the qualities of good style," Blair says, "may be ranged under two heads, perspicuity and ornament." Since the prime end of discourse, according to Blair, is communication, we are not surprised to find him rating perspicuity as the more important of these two qualities. In this, he was following the lead of Quintilian, who had said, "I regard clearness (perspicuitas) as the first essential of a good style." Therefore, our aim, Quintilian goes on to say, should be "not to put the reader or listener in a position to understand our argument, but to force him to understand it." The pre-eminence of clarity colors all of Blair's observations on style. All other elements of style—euphony, rhythm, figures of speech—must be sacrificed where the clarity of a sen-

1 Institut., VIII, ii, 2. All quotations from Quintilian will be cited in this fashion: the abbreviation Institut. stands for Institutio Oratoria; the capital Roman numeral refers to the Book, the lower-case Roman numeral to the chapter, the Arabic number to the section. The edition and translation used is that by H. E. Butler for the Loeb Classical Library, 4 vols., London, 1920-1922.
tence is in jeopardy. And if there is any quality which characterizes Blair's own delightful prose style more than any other quality it is perspicuity.

Perhaps the most original point that Blair makes in connection with perspicuity is that a man cannot write clearly unless he thinks clearly. This observation raises some interesting questions about so-called "difficult" writing. Blair himself attributed the obscurity of the "metaphysical" writers (Cowley is for him the chief offender) to the indistinctness of their conceptions. If it could be demonstrated that obscure writing is due solely or even principally to confused or indistinct thinking the stature of many of our modern poets would be considerably reduced. Is T. S. Eliot a difficult poet to read because his thinking is fuzzy or because he chooses to communicate in the dense, many-leveled medium of symbol and myth? Is a poet like Eliot interested primarily in communication, or is he interested primarily in expression? In the essay "The Three Voices of Poetry," Eliot suggests that one voice of the poet seeks only to express itself, much like Shelley's nightingale singing for itself in the wood. The debate, if a debate were necessary to decide the matter, would focus on the question whether the fundamental aim of art is, as Blair maintains, to communicate.

These considerations aside, there is still a good deal of commonsense to Blair's proposition. Perhaps his proposition should be given greater currency in our own teaching of composition. How often has one heard the student's plaint, "Why should there be so much concern about my expression; it's my ideas that are important?" Blair's reply to such bleating would be, "Young man, your

2 Atlantic Monthly, CXCIII, April, 1954, 38-44.
muddled sentences are an index of your muddled thinking. Do you really have ideas?" Not only are lucid sentences an indication that the ideas are clearly conceived, but, according to Blair, when ideas are distinctly conceived they will almost inevitably be articulated in a lucid manner. Blair is enough of a realist to recognize that some ideas are so complex that they cannot be adequately grasped; "but still," he adds, "as far as they go, they ought to be clear." That a close connection between logic and rhetoric had been traditionally held is evident from the fact that most classical rhetoricians assigned the first two parts of rhetoric, inventio and dispositio, to the province of logic. But it remained to Blair to show the significance of this connection for the cultivation of a good style.

Like Quintilian,5 Blair approaches the study of style first through single words, secondly through sentences. He devotes the major portion of Lecture X to a study of perspicuity in regard to single words.

Perspicuity will result when words are selected for three qualities: purity, propriety, and precision. Those words are "pure" which "belong to the idiom of the language which we speak." In the choice of words then the writer will avoid all foreign importations, obsolete words, and neologisms. Propriety will result from "the selection of such words in the language as the best and most established usage has appropriated to those ideas which we intend to express by them." The doctrine of usage was gaining currency in the latter part of the eighteenth century, and Blair's standard of good usage is much like that

5 See Institut., VIII, i, 1: "Style is revealed in individual words and in groups of words (verbis aut singulis aut coniunctis)."
of his friend George Campbell. Where Campbell set forth the triple criteria of present, national, and reputable, Blair held up as the standard "the practice of the best writers and speakers in the country." Typically, Blair does not make a complete break with the prescriptive grammarians, but he was moving in the direction of the via media best represented today by such grammarians as Fowler and Perrin.

Blair spends the last six pages of Lecture X discussing precision in language. He sees the etymology of the word precision in the Latin praecidere (or praesaeedere), to cut off. Precision then implies "retrenching all superfluities and pruning the expression so as to exhibit neither more nor less than an exact copy of his idea who uses it." Words can fail in precision in three ways: 1) they may fail to convey the meaning the author intends; 2) they may convey the idea, but not fully and completely; 3) they may convey the idea, but together with something more than the author intended. A loose style, which usually results from carelessly chosen words or from the use of "a superfluity of words," is the natural enemy of precision. A multitude of words more often obscures meaning than illuminates it. The human mind is so constituted, Blair observes in a paragraph in which he nicely analyzes the psychology of the delight we derive from precision, that it can view clearly and distinctly only one object at a time. Words which convey more than the idea intended will obfuscate the meaning. It is curious that nowhere in Blair's discussion of words is there any consideration of the connotations of words. One wonders whether words heavily freighted with connotations would offend against precision. Some words set up such a chain reaction of associations that they would certainly convey more than the meaning intended. One cannot believe that Blair was calling for that kind
of mathematically denotative language that certain members of the Royal Society had advocated in the seventeenth century. Blair was too keenly sensitive to the beauties of words to be suspected of favoring a coldly scientific language. Precision pushed to the extreme, however, would produce just such a language.

By way of illustrating the care that must be taken in order to achieve precision, Blair draws distinctions between several groups of synonyms, much in the manner of the modern Merriam-Webster dictionary of synonyms and antonyms. He distinguishes between such groups as the following: to abhor, to detest; tranquillity, peace, calm; surprised, astonished, amazed, confounded; enough, sufficient; with, by. One of these passages should be quoted to exhibit Blair's method:

Equivocal, ambiguous. An equivocal expression is one which has one sense open and designed to be understood; another sense concealed and understood only by the person who uses it. An ambiguous expression is one which has apparently two senses and leaves us at a loss which of them to give it. An equivocal expression is used with an intention to deceive; an ambiguous one, when it is used with design, is with an intention not to give full information. An honest man will never employ an equivocal expression; a confused man may often utter ambiguous ones, without any design.

Blair is anxious to show that synonyms cannot be used indiscriminately; there are subtle nuances among synonyms that a precise writer will take pains to discover. In a footnote, Blair recommends to his readers a book that he found very useful and from which he has taken some of his examples—Abbe Gabriel Girard's *Synonymes Françoises* (1736), a classic work on synonyms by a distinguished member of the French Academy.

Archbishop Tillotson, William Temple, and Joseph Addison are cited as examples of perspicacious writers, but writers who are not particularly remarkable for precision. One of the worst offenders against precision is Lord Shaftesbury,
whose style is marked by "perpetual affectation," "pomp and parade of language," "perpetual circumlocutions," and "redundancy of words." The mention of redundancy leads Blair into a brief discussion of the wordy style. Blair seems generally to disapprove of the copious style. A "superfluity of words" disgusts readers of good taste and "serves no purpose but to embarrass and perplex the sense." He cites the authority of Quintilian, who condemned writers for introducing "a whole host of useless words (turba inanum verborum)" into their discourses and for clothing all their thoughts in "a multitude of words (copiosa loquacitate) simply and solely because they are unwilling to make a direct and simple statement of the facts." Blair does allow, however, that some subjects require a greater degree of copiousness than others. Too great a concern for precision, he acknowledges, will often lead to a "dry and barren style," a fault that can frequently be marked in Swift's writings. The ideal is "to unite copiousness and precision, to be flowing and graceful, and at the same time correct and exact in the choice of every word."

Having said all he has to say about style in regard to words, Blair devotes the next three lectures to a discussion of style with respect to the structure of sentences. He divides this discussion of sentences into four main parts:

I. Clearness and precision (half of Lecture XI).

II. Unity (second half of Lecture XI).

III. Strength (all of Lecture XII).

IV. Harmony (all of Lecture XIII).

4 Instit., VIII, ii, 17.
The first three of these parts are a study of sentences with respect to their meaning; the fourth part, with respect to one of the ornaments of sentences. At the end of Lecture XII, Blair explains why he treated sentences at such great length: "First, because it is a subject which, by its nature, can be rendered more didactic and subjected more to precise rule than many other subjects of criticism; and next, because it appears to me to considerable importance and use." In a footnote, he points out that on this subject of the structure of sentences Demetrius's peri ἔρμωνειας, Dionysius's peri συνθέσεως ὄνομάτων, Chapter XVIII of Kames's Elements of Criticism, and the second volume of George Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric are especially instructive. He does not, of course, abandon his reliance on Quintilian and Cicero.

Acknowledging the difficulty of formulating his own definition of a sentence, Blair accepts, with some reservations, Aristotle's definition of a sentence: "A form of speech which hath a beginning and an end within itself, and is of such a length as to be easily comprehended at once." While accepting this definition, Blair reminds us that "a sentence or period consists always of component parts, which are called members; and as these members may be either few or many, and may be connected in several different ways, the same thought or mental proposition may often be either brought into one sentence or split into

5 Rhetoric, Bk. III, ch. 9. Aristotle is frequently mentioned in the Lectures but rarely quoted. That Blair knew and admired Aristotle's Rhetoric is evident from the tribute that Blair pays to this work at the end of Lecture LXXIV: "Aristotle appears to have been the first who took rhetoric out of the hands of sophists and introduced reasoning and good sense into the art. Some of the profoundest things which have been written on the passions and manners of men are to be found in his treatise on Rhetoric; though in this, as in all his writings, his great brevity often renders him obscure."
two or three, without the material breach of any rule." It seems that what Blair is cautious about in the definition is Aristotle's limitation on the length of the sentence.

Bipartite classifications of sentences can be made according to length ("long and short") and according to construction (what the French critics call the "style périodique" and the "style coupé"). The style périodique and the style coupé correspond, respectively, to those rhetorical types of sentences that are known in English as the periodic and the loose. George Williamson discloses that the "general names for these extremes Blair borrowed from the French, who had borrowed them from Cicero... This is the background for the terms to which Blair gives a place in English rhetoric."\(^6\) Cicero's term for the periodic structure was continuatio verborum\(^7\) and one of his terms for the style coupé was angusta et concisa oratio.\(^8\) Periodic sentences, Blair observes, are best fitted for grave, dignified subjects; loose sentences are appropriate for lively, spirited subjects. "But in almost every kind of composition," Blair says, "the great rule is to intermix them."

After these brief general observations about the sentence, Blair is ready to descend to a more particular consideration of sentences. He first studies sentences in regard to clearness and precision.

Ambiguity in sentences results either from wrong choice of words (a fault that he considered in the previous lecture) or from the wrong collocation

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\(^6\) Williamson, The Senecan Amble, 354.

\(^7\) De Oratore, III, xliii, 171.

\(^8\) Orator, lvi, 187.
of words. The chief rule to observe in the arrangement of words in an English sentence is that words closely related should be placed as close together as possible. Blair quotes several sentences whose meaning is obscured by the improper placing of words—e.g., misplaced relative pronouns and misplaced adverbs like only, wholly, at least. After pointing out the source of the ambiguity in each sentence and revising the sentence to remove the ambiguity, he urges his listeners to take care that

adverbs shall always be made to adhere closely to the words which they are intended to qualify; that where circumstance\(^9\) is thrown in it shall never hang loose in the midst of a period but be determined by its place to one or other member of it;\(^10\) and that every relative word which is used shall instantly present its antecedent to the mind of the reader without the least obscurity. I have mentioned these three cases because I think they are the most frequent occasions of ambiguity creeping into sentences.

Blair's observation here is nothing more than one of the basic rules of English grammar, and although this rule about the proper placing of words in a sentence is a very simple one, any teacher of composition can sing you countless tales of woe about the constant disregard of the rule. Nor is it neophytes only who disregard the rule. Blair is able to cite examples of the fault from Addison and Swift, two of the most accomplished writers of the eighteenth century. Because

\(^9\) An idea of what Blair means by circumstance can be gained from the example he quotes from Lord Bolingbroke: "Are these designs, which any man, who is born a Briton, in any circumstances, in any situation, ought to be ashamed or afraid to avow?" The fault here is that the two prepositional phrases are in between two elements that they can grammatically modify. Modern grammar books term this fault the "squinting modifier."

\(^10\) Note Blair's careless use of the neuter pronoun in this clause. The first it ("it shall") and the its ("its place") refer to circumstance; the antecedent of the third it ("member of it") is period. It is just this kind of careless use of pronouns that Blair is cautioning against in this section. William Cobbett in his famous Grammar pointed out several other grammatical lapses in Blair's Rhetoric. An instructive example of the maître manque.
correctness is the *sine qua non* of elegant writing, Blair frequently throughout the lectures urges his students to learn the rules of grammar thoroughly.

The general rule for the achievement of *unity*, the second quality of a well-arranged sentence, is that only one proposition be expressed in each sentence. A sentence consists of parts, of course, but, as Blair says, "these parts must be so closely bound together as to make the impression upon the mind, of one object, not of many." He lays down four rules for the unified sentence: 1) avoid needless shifts of subject; 2) avoid the cluttered sentence (or what modern teachers sometimes refer to as "the rag-bag sentence"); 3) avoid parentheses within the sentence; 4) avoid unfinished sentences (i.e., the *Sentence Fragment*) and "trailing sentences."

Blair is especially illuminating in his treatment of the "rag-bag" sentence. He quotes several sentences from contemporary writers and analyzes the source of the disunity. Blair's fine gift for close analysis can be illustrated by a quotation of his observations on one sample sentence. He quotes this sentence from Middleton's *Life of Cicero*: "In his uneasy state, both of his public and private life, Cicero was oppressed by a new and cruel affliction, the death of his beloved daughter Tullia; which happened soon after her divorce from Dolabella; whose manners and humours were entirely disagreeable to her."

This is followed by Blair's analysis of the unity of the sentence:

The principal object in this sentence is the death of Tullia, which was the cause of her father's affliction; the date of it, as happening soon after her divorce from Dolabella, may enter into the sentence with propriety, but the subjunction of Dolabella's character is foreign to the main object; and breaks the unity and compactness of the sentence totally by setting a new picture before the reader.

A brief digression on the general matter of illustrations seems in or-
der here. Blair must have read illustrative sentences slowly enough to allow his students to copy them down. His analyses were probably not taken down verbatim but were recorded in summary form. That this was the situation that prevailed in Blair's classroom seems likely from the fact that Heads of the Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the University of Edinburgh was published after the course had been given for several years. (Editions of this text appeared in 1767, 1771, and 1777.) In the bibliography appended to his biography of Blair, Robert Schmitz says of this publication (p. 141), "This is a printed synopsis, interleaved, of Blair's university lectures. Blair prepared the booklet as a functional part of his course." Blair undoubtedly prepared the booklet at the request of students who wanted to be spared some of the labor of taking down dictation.

Although Blair concedes that parentheses have, on occasion, a certain merit, "as prompted by a certain vivacity of thought, which can glance happily aside," he cautions against their use. This "sort of wheels within wheels" is a "perplexed method of disposing of some thought which a writer wants art to introduce in its proper place." One wonders how George Saintsbury, who occupied the Chair of Rhetoric in the University of Edinburgh in the nineteenth century, reacted to this stricture. Saintsbury's sentences, especially in his later writings, are so densely convoluted with qualifying and parenthetical members that one has frequently to re-read his sentences in order to unravel the meaning. Something of Saintsbury's qualified admiration for Blair can be gained from the subordinate clause that Saintsbury allots to Blair in The Peace of the Augustans:

"... while on the other hand I do not commend my respectable predecessor Blair, except to experts at once in criticism, skipping, and the exercise of
Strength is a quality of a sentence that Blair is able to expatiate on for an entire lecture (Lecture XII). Blair defines strength as "a disposition of the several words and members as shall bring out the sense to the best advantage; as shall render the impression which the period is designed to make most full and complete; and give every word and every member their due weight and force." Strength would seem to be that quality which modern students of composition would study under the head of Emphasis. Blair's discussion of strength involves consideration of the following points: 1) redundant words and members; 2) attention to connectives; 3) proper placing of words for maximum emphasis; 4) climactic arrangement of members in a series; 5) ending sentences with such "inconsiderable words" as adverbs and prepositions; 6) parallel structure for co-ordinate ideas.

Blair's observations on all these points are conventional and obvious. His great commonsense does not fail him throughout the discussion, and his dogmatic tone manages to be persuasive rather than offensive. So persuasive and sound is Blair's teaching in this section that modern teachers of composition would find very little with which they could disagree.

Who today would demur with the advice, "All that can be easily supplied in the mind is better left out in the expression"? The reader has seen what a high premium Blair places on succinctness and what reluctant concession he made to copiousness of style. In this regard he is thoroughly modern. He calls for revision that will lop off circumlocutions and "useless escrescences."

Sentences so retrenched will have greater vigor and energy. There is a "due me-
dium" to be observed, however, in this process of pruning. "Some regard, though
not the principal, must be had to fulness and swelling of sound. Some leaves
must be left to surround and shelter the fruit." 12

Great care must be taken with all particles used for the purpose of
transition and connection. Blair's infallible instinct tells him that copula-
tives are frequently "the most important words in a sentence," for such words
are "the joints and hinges upon which all sentences turn" and upon which the
gracefulness and strength of a sentence often depends. He directs his students
to Dr. Lowth's Introduction to English Grammar (1762), where such niceties of
language are amply treated.

Only a few of Blair's observations on the particles merit mention here.
Blair sanctions the omission of the relative pronoun (e.g., "The man I love") in
conversation and epistolary writing but finds such omission ungraceful in formal
writing. He maintains that the repetition of the conjunction and tends to en-
feeble style. He prejudices the case, perhaps, by quoting a sentence from Sir
William Temple which has eight and's in it. Any number of his students might
have quoted him a series of sentences from the King James Bible, which, despite
a multiplication of and's, have grace and strength. In the main, however, Blair
is right. A plethora of conjunctions does tend to put a drag on a sentence, and
the heavily compounded sentence is usually the mark of amateur writing. The

12 This is one of the rare instances in the Lectures where Blair uses
a figure of speech. Although Blair frequently employed figures in his sermons
and even in his Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian, he obviously felt that figu-
urative language had very little place in expository writing.
nicely subordinated sentence and the asyndetic structure usually characterize
the refined style. Blair's observation about the effect of the conjunction is
generally sound: "the omission of it is used to denote rapidity; and the repe-
tition of it is designed to retard and to aggravate." The retarding and aggra-
vating effect is not necessarily to be lamented; it can be used with finesse
when the occasion demands. He asks his students to observe "what additional
weight and distinctness is given to each particular" by the repetition of the
conjunction in this sentence from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans:

I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principali-
ties, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor
depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love
of God.

About the placing of words for the purpose of emphasis and climax
Blair has nothing new or striking to offer. Important words are to be placed at
the beginning of a sentence. Because English does not enjoy as great a liberty
of inversion as the classical languages, placing of words in emphatic positions
is not always possible or advisable. Forced constructions will often lead to
obscurity, and since lucidity is the prime quality in a sentence, emphasis will
sometimes have to be sacrificed in the interest of clearness. The principle
governing climax, which is a structural mode of achieving emphasis, is that the
members should "go on rising and growing in their importance above one another." We have a natural love, Blair maintains, of ascending to what is more and more
beautiful; the retrograde order is aesthetically painful to us.

Blair shares Dryden's aversion for concluding sentences with such

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"inconsiderable words" as adverbs and prepositions. The rule against ending a sentence with a preposition is generally looked upon today as one of those senseless prescriptions imposed on us by obstinately narrow "school-maids." Winston Churchill's famous reductio ad absurdum, "That is a bit of nonsense up with which I will not put," has been thought to have exploded this rule once for all. It is true that a rigid adherence to this rule would seriously hobble the idiomatic ease of our language. But the reason behind the legislation is fundamentally sound. Blair sets forth the reason with persuasive cogency:

For besides the want of dignity which arises from those monosyllables at the end, the imagination cannot avoid resting, for a little, on the import of the word which closes the sentence: and as those prepositions have no import of their own but only serve to point out the relations of other words, it is disagreeable for the mind to be left pausing on a word which does not, by itself, produce any idea nor form any picture in the fancy.

The reader may have observed how often Blair's justification of a principle rests on the psychology of the human reaction.

Blair objects also to ending sentences with prepositions which form part of the verb, as in such Germanic verb-compounds as bring about, lay hold of, clear up. "A simple verb," he observes, "always terminates the sentence with more strength." While acknowledging the soundness of the reason for the rule, one would be happier with Blair if he would concede that there are occasions when the rule must be relaxed. But there is no evidence in the text that Blair was willing to loosen the bonds. Never was the categorical word he used.

Blair concludes the lecture on strength with some observations on the use of parallel structure. "Where two things are compared or contrasted to each other . . . some resemblance, in the language and construction, should be preserved," he says. Blair may very well have had in mind his famed rival, Dr.
Johnson, when he pronounced that the too frequent use of balanced and antithetical sentences "tires the ear" and "discovers affectation." We shall see later that Blair suppressed a parody of Johnsonese that he had originally included in his lectures.

Harmony, considered in regard both to words and to sentences, is a quality of style to which Blair devotes a twelve-page lecture (Lecture XIII). An outline of this lecture might run something like this:

I. Agreeable sound or modulation in general.
   A. Choice of words.
      1. Smooth and liquid sound.
      2. Proper intermixture of vowels and consonants.
   B. Arrangement of words and members.
      1. Proper distribution of the parts.
      2. Close or cadence of the sentence.

II. Sound adapted to sense.
   A. Current of sound adapted to tenor of discourse.
   B. Particular resemblance between object represented and sound.

Although sound is inferior to sense, we must recognize, Blair says, that "there will be always a very considerable connection between the idea which is conveyed and the nature of the sound which conveys it." "Nihil," says Quintilian, "intrare potest in affectus, quod in aure velut quodam vestibulo statim offendit."14 The classical rhetoricians, especially Cicero, Quintilian, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, paid considerable attention to harmony. Blair, however, will not follow the ancient rhetoricians on this subject, first of all,

14 Instit., IX, iv, 10. "Nothing can penetrate to the emotions that stumbles at the portals of the ear."
because the Greek and Latin languages were more susceptible than English to the graces and powers of melody; secondly, because the Greeks and Romans were by nature more musical than the English; thirdly, because "in consequence of their languages and of manner of pronouncing them, the musical arrangement of sentences did, in fact, produce a greater effect in public speaking among them than it could possibly do in any modern oration." Although Blair sees that it would be vain to bestow the same attention to musical arrangement that the ancients did, he does not want to intimate that this quality should be neglected altogether in English composition. Due care for harmony must be taken by the writer or orator if he hopes to gain and keep an audience. The difference will be that among modern writers and speakers the ear, rather than the rules, must be the chief guide to harmony.

Not wishing to descend into "tedious and frivolous detail concerning the powers of the several letters or simple sounds," Blair disposes of harmony of single words with a few pointed generalizations. Those words are most agreeable to the ear—and this is an observation which he seems to have taken directly from Cicero—which do not have too many harsh consonants "rubbing against each other" or too many open vowels in succession "to cause a hiatus, or disagreeable aperture of the mouth." Usually, words difficult to pronounce will be harsh and painful to the ear. He observes, "Vowels give softness; consonants, strength to the sound of words." Generally, long words are more agreeable to the ear than short words. Those long words are most musical which have a proper mixture of long and short syllables. Blair's catalogue of "pretty" words would

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15 See De Oratore, III, xliii, 171 and Orator, xxiii, 77.
include repent, produce, velocity, celerity, independent, impetuosity. (Impetuosity, to the best of the present writer's knowledge, has never appeared on anyone else's list, but it is certainly one of the most sonorous words in our language.) Blair's observations on harmony of words are safe enough to be acceptable and yet not particular enough to be helpful.

Cicero, according to Blair, is the rhetorician who has written most abundantly on "plena ac numerosa oratio." Milton, among English writers, frequently wrote the musical type of Ciceronian sentence. There is this sentence from Milton's Treatise on Education: "We shall conduct you to a hill-side, laborious indeed at the first ascent; but else, so smooth, so green, so full of goodly prospects and melodious sounds on every side that the harp of Orpheus was not more charming." It is always a delight to quote Blair's analyses of stylistic effects, but it is especially so in this instance because his analysis gives us a general idea of the qualities that, in his opinion, made for an harmonious period. Blair says of Milton's sentence,

Everything in this sentence conspires to promote harmony. The words are happily chosen; full of liquid and soft sounds; laborious, smooth, green, goodly, melodious, charming; and these words so artfully arranged that were we to alter the collocation of any one of them, we should, presently, be sensible of the melody suffering. For, let us observe, how finely the members of the period swell one above another. "So smooth, so green"--"so full of goodly prospects and melodious sounds on every side"--till the ear, prepared by this gradual rise, is conducted to the full close on which it rests with pleasure--"that the harp of Orpheus was not more charming."

This kind of analysis of prose sentences, particular without being highly technical, is rare in our own day and sorely needed. Blair's technique of analysis, more of which we shall see later, may well prove to be the most valuable lesson that the modern age can learn from the Lectures on Rhetoric.

Having encountered a sentence like Milton's, the sensitive reader is
led to inquire "how this melodic structure is formed, what are the principles of it, and by what laws it is regulated." The general answer to these questions (they are really one and the same question) is that the music of a sentence depends chiefly on "the proper distribution of the several members" and "the close or cadence of the whole." The end of a member provides for a natural pause or rest in the period. These pauses should be so distributed that breathing will be easy and that a certain musical proportion will exist among the several members. Blair does not tell his students what a "musical proportion" is. Presumably one must have an instinct for "musical proportion," and one must rely on one's ear rather than on syllable-counting. Blair's implicit recommendation throughout this section is that sentences be read aloud to test them for harmony.

The close or cadence of the sentence is, according to Quintilian, the most important position rhythmically. Accordingly, all abruptness and harshness must be avoided in the "fall" of the sentence. The great rule here, Blair says, is that since the sound must be made to grow "the longest members of the period and the fullest and most sonorous words should be reserved to the conclusion."

As Blair observed in speaking about strength of sentences, little words--pronouns, adverbs, prepositions--must not fall at the end of the sentence; so too the melody of sentences suffers if little words are allowed to conclude the sentence. Blair sees a mutual influence between sound and sense. "That which hurts the ear," he says, "seems to mar the strength of the meaning; and that which degrades the sense, in consequence of this primary effect, appears also to have a bad sound." An ending then that is weak musically will not effectively

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16 Instit., IX, iv, 62.
convey the meaning. Blair also finds that words consisting only of short syllables, like contrary, particular, retrospect, seldom conclude the sentence harmoniously. In Blair's experience those sentences will have the most musical close in which the last syllable or the penultimate syllable is long.

Before leaving this first part of his discussion of harmony, Blair lays down some caveats. An unbroken succession of sentences in which the sound grows toward the end will produce a monotonous effect. The great rule is to vary the measures. "Even discords, properly introduced, abrupt sounds, departures from regular cadence, have sometimes a good effect." This is a perfectly obvious observation, but Blair felt he had to make it, lest his students, misled by the high premium he put on the swelling type of sentence, think that all sentences should be constructed in the round tone. The second caution is that an author should not let his efforts to achieve harmony become too obvious or too labored. Some authors are so bent on achieving harmony that they will introduce "meaningless words" in order to round the period. Cicero sometimes offends on this score, and accordingly "the pomp of his numbers sometimes detracts from his strength." Blair's experience has been that harmony needs only a moderate attention. Harmony is something that will come naturally when the sentence is well written: "where the sense of a period is expressed with clearness, force, and dignity, it will seldom happen but the words will strike the ear agreeably."

In the second section of his discussion of harmony, Blair prescribes that the sound of a sentence be consonant with the mood, the occasion, and the subject. Sentences of Ciceronian fullness and cadence are suited to the magnificent and the sedate, but they will not suit "violent passion, eager reasoning, and familiar address," all of which require a brisker, lighter, more abrupt mod-
ulation of sound. A sense for the appropriate sound is more of an instinct than a cultivated power, and consequently no practical directions can be given.

Sounds of words can represent motion, emotions, and other sounds. In representing other sounds, the writer will take care to choose words whose literal texture will be suited to the sound. Thus, words representing soft, smooth sounds will be composed of liquid consonants and long vowels; words describing harsh sounds will be made up of clashing combinations of consonants and vowels. Murmur is a word that sounds as agreeable as the thing it represents; crash has the proper literal texture to represent obstreperous sound.

There is no natural affinity between sound and motion, Blair observes astutely, and yet in the imagination a very strong affinity exists, as witness, he says, the connection between music and dancing. Because of the association, in our imaginations, of sound and motion, the writer can make the sound of words consonant with the motion being represented. Generally, long syllables will give the impression of slow motion; a series of short syllables suggests brisk motion. Homer, Virgil, and, among the English poets, John Dyer are cited as masters of this kind of beauty. Curiously enough, although Pope is quoted at least a score of times throughout the lectures, Blair does not even mention, here or anywhere else in the lectures, the famous "sound to sense" passage in An Essay on Criticism.

Discussions about the connection between sound and the emotions have often veered off into purely fanciful speculations, but that some connection between sound and emotion does exist is evident from the power that music has to arouse or quiet certain emotions and passions. Dryden's "Ode for St. Cecilia's Day" furnishes sterling examples of the power of music over emotions. Long and
short syllables have no natural resemblance to any thought or passion, Blair maintains, but, as he goes on to say, "if the arrangement of syllables, by their sound alone, recall one set of ideas more readily than another and dispose the mind for entering into that affection which the poet means to raise, such arrangement may, justly enough, be said to resemble the sense or be similar and correspondent to it." One wishes that Blair had examined more closely the psychology of the associational affinity between sound and the passions. Perhaps he felt he would be treading too brazenly over the territory staked out by his friend Lord Kames, who in the Eighteenth Chapter of The Elements of Criticism delved into the psychology behind the beauties and effects of sound. As it is, all we get from Blair is such generalizations as these: "a poet describing pleasure, joy, and agreeable objects . . . naturally runs into smooth, liquid, and flowing numbers"; "brisk and lively sensations exact quicker and more animated numbers"; "melancholy and gloomy subjects naturally express themselves in slow measures and long words."

"And with this I finish the discussion of the structure of sentences, having fully considered them under all the heads I mentioned: of perspicuity, unity, strength, and musical arrangement." Thus Blair terminates the section devoted to a study of style in regard to the structure of sentences. How much finish Blair has given to the discussion must be left for the reader to decide for himself. That what has been said is sound and sensible, that what was said needed to be said, most readers will agree. If readers remain dissatisfied with the discussion it will be mainly because of what Blair left unsaid. But then allowances must be made for the circumstances prevailing at the time. The students were neophytes; the rhetoric traditions were only then being revived in
England and had been introduced for the first time in the University of Edinburgh; the time allotted for each lecture was limited; and the audience for the lectures was a listening audience, not a reading audience. Considering these circumstances, one might be less disposed to upbraid Blair for his shortcomings.

Blair had appointed perspicuity and ornament as the two chief qualities of style. Under the head of perspicuity he has treated of precision, unity, and strength; under the head of ornament he has treated of harmony. He has now to treat of one more source of ornament, figurative language—what the Ad Herennium called the exornationes verborum, what Cicero called the lumina verborum, and what Quintilian called simply figurae. Remarkable at the beginning of Lecture XIV that most writers on rhetoric and composition have paid considerable attention to figures of speech, Blair sees that it would be an endless task to acknowledge in each case his debt to previous rhetoricians. His observations on the figures will derive from the rhetorical tradition and will be presented without accompanying references, except in a few instances, to the authorities who have discoursed at large on these figures. At the outset he acknowledges a special debt to Cesar-Chesneau Du Marsais's Traité des Tropes pour Servir d'Introduction à la Rhetorique et à la Logique for the discussion of the foundations of figurative language and to Lord Kames's Elements of Criticism for observations on particular figures.

The discussion of figurative language is divided into two main parts. After some brief introductory remarks, Blair discusses 1) the origin, nature, effects, and divisions of the figures; and 2) some of the principal figures—metaphor, allegory, hyperbole, personification, apostrophe, comparison, antithesis, interrogation, exclamation, amplification, and vision.
Figures of speech, which are prompted either by the imagination or by the passions, involve some deviation from the simple mode of speech with a view to rendering the impression more strong and vivid. When Blair speaks of figures as being a departure from the simple mode of speech, he does not mean to imply that there is anything uncommon or unnatural about figures. On the contrary, when the occasion is right, figures are "the most common and most natural method of uttering our sentiments." All peoples, learned and illiterate alike, speak in figures when the imagination or the passions so prompt. Figures of speech give our ideas a special form or shape, and to this fact figures perhaps owe their name. "As the figure or shape of one body distinguishes it from another, so these forms of speech have, each of them, a cast or turn peculiar to itself, which both distinguishes it from the rest and distinguishes it from simple expression."

Rhetoricians have commonly divided the figures into two classes: figures of words and figures of thought. Figures of words or, as they are sometimes called, tropes "consist in a word's being employed to signify something that is different from its original and primitive meaning; so that if you alter the word, you destroy the figure." Figures of thought "suppose the words to be used in their proper and literal meaning, and the figure to consist in the turn of the thought." In figures of thought, the words may be altered or translated into another language without destroying the figure. Quintilian discussed at great length the distinction between these two kinds of figures in the first chapter of Book IX of the Institutes, and it may be he who suggested to Blair the idea that we need not be too concerned about whether a particular mode of expression should be classified as a figure of words or a figure of thought.
Blair agrees with Quintilian that the line of demarcation between these two kinds of figures is sometimes so fine that it is impossible to decide which class can claim the figure. This attitude is characteristic of Blair throughout the section on figures. Nomenclature is not important—at least, not important enough to bother one's head about. The proper use of figures is the important thing.

Before launching into the body of the discussion, Blair feels that he must premise two general observations. First of all, he cannot agree with those who say that, because people speak in figures without even knowing the names of the figures, the rules about the use of figures are useless. "Practice has always gone before method and rule," he says; "but method and rule have afterwards improved and perfected practice in every art." Some people can sing very well without being able to read a note of music, but it would be ridiculous, Blair says, to maintain "that the art is of no advantage because the practice is founded in nature." A sense for figures, even though inherited, can be cultivated and improved. Blair—or any other rhetorician for that matter—must establish that fact if he is to justify all the attention he will pay to the figures. At the same time, he is careful not to establish a premise that will later prove prejudicial to his doctrine that primitive peoples are natively poetic.

Blair's second preliminary remark is that we should not over-estimate the importance or efficacy of figures. Despite the fact that most rhetorical systems have given considerable attention to figures, the beauty of composition does not depend solely or even chiefly on figurative language. The sentiment or thought constitutes the substance of a discourse. "The figure," Blair says, "is only the dress." This designation of figures as being the mere "dress" intro-
duces a disturbing notion. The whole tenor of the lectures has seemed to support the principle that matter and form are integrally related. Now we come face to face with the suggestion that figurative language is merely a superadded charm—an ornament, in the usual sense of that word. Professor Sprott has pointed out recently\(^\text{17}\) that Cicero, who held strongly to the integral relationship of res and verba, has sometimes been misunderstood to suggest an independent relationship, because "he occasionally used the metaphor of clothing \(\text{vestire}\) the matter with the oration."\(^\text{18}\) So too Blair may be misunderstood. The context of Blair's remark suggests that dress is being used in a judicial rather than a descriptive sense. What Blair is saying in effect is that the way in which something is said is less important than what is said; in comparison with the substance, the expression is merely a frill. Blair has consistently valued res above verba, and in this section he is certainly rating matter above manner. Two statements made here will substantiate this interpretation of Blair's pronouncement on figures as dress. Blair says, "For it is, in truth, the sentiment or passion which lies under the figured expression that gives it any merit"; and again, in commenting on a quotation from the Tenth Book of Virgil's Aeneid, he says, "A single stroke of this kind, drawn as by the very pencil of nature, is worth a thousand figures." He likewise observes that sublime writing not only depends very little on figures of speech but generally rejects them. As a final confirmation that Blair is not rejecting the notion of an integral relation be-


\(^{18}\) See De Oratore, I, xxxi, 142: "... tum ea denique vestire atque ornare oratione."
tween matter and form, we have only to look at what he says at the end of this passage. Figures of speech will be used successfully, he says, when three conditions prevail: "when there is a basis of solid thought and natural sentiment; when they are inserted in their proper place; and when they rise, of themselves, from the subject without being sought after." This is nothing more than the doctrine of decorum, and decorum is the substratum for the doctrine of the organic relationship between matter and form.

Blair is now ready to discuss the origin and nature of figures, and much of the most interesting and important things he has to say about figures is said in the remaining section of this lecture.

A great deal of what Blair says on the origin of figures hearkens back to what he said in his lectures on language. Because no language was copious enough to supply a distinct word for every object, men were constrained to make one word do service for several ideas. Even a preposition like in, which originally expressed the circumstance of place, eventually took on a tropical significance, as in expressions like "being in health," "being in doubt," "being in danger." Words denoting abstract ideas were usually taken from the names for sensible objects, and as a result we have such tropes as "a piercing judgment," "a soft heart," "inflamed by anger," "melted into grief."

The barrenness of languages was not, however, the sole or even the principal cause for the rise of figurative language. "Tropes have arisen more frequently and spread themselves wider," Blair maintains, "from the influence which

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19 Observe that Blair violates his own rule about not ending sentences with "inconsiderable" words.
imagination possesses over language." In expounding this doctrine, Blair reveals the influence that the associationist school has had on him. Every object which presents itself to our view, Blair says, is accompanied "with certain circumstances and relations that strike us at the same time." (Blair certainly must mean "every object of which we have some memory or pre-knowledge," for a wholly new object could have no associations for us.) These accessory ideas, as Blair terms them, frequently have more appeal to the imagination than do the objects which suggested them. As a result, the imagination uses the name of the accessory or correspondent idea instead of the name of the object itself. As illustrations of this process Blair cites the following:

Thus, when we design to intimate the period at which a state enjoyed most reputation or glory, it were easy to employ the proper words for expressing this; but as this is readily connected, in our imagination, with the flourishishly period of a plant or a tree, we lay hold of this correspondent idea and say, "The Roman empire flourished most under Augustus." The leader of a faction is plain language: but because the head is the principal part of the human body and is supposed to direct all the animal operations, resting upon this resemblance, we say, "Catiline was the head of the party."

"Hence," Blair concludes, "a vast variety of tropical or figurative words obtain currency in all languages through choice, not necessity; and men of lively imaginations are every day adding to their number." Blair credits Cicero\(^{20}\) as the inspiration for his own account of the origin of tropes, but he obviously has drawn on the work by Du Marsais which he mentioned at the beginning of the lecture, and for the associational value of words he must certainly have had in mind the first chapter of the Elements of Criticism, where Lord Kames discoursed at some length on "Perceptions and Ideas in a Train."

\(^{20}\) Blair must be referring to De Oratore, III, xxxviii, 155.
It was in Lecture VI that Blair first introduced his theory that primitive peoples were more poetical than civilized peoples. Blair mentions the theory again in this lecture, and he attempts to account for the fact that all languages are most figurative in their early state by referring to the two causes he has just expounded. Language in its early state is most barren of words, and the imaginations of primitive men are most active. These are the ideal conditions for the formation of figures of speech. Such conditions prevail, he finds, among the Indians of North America. As a result, Blair says, arguing in a kind of post hoc propter hoc way, the speech of the Indians is "bold, picturesque, and metaphorical," is "full of stronger metaphors than an European would use in an epic poem." This theory about the poetical facility of rude peoples is, as was remarked previously, Blair's most notable contribution to the doctrine of primitivism, and the theory is not easy to refute. Indeed, if Blair's analysis of the causes for the formation of figurative language is correct, the theory cannot be refuted at all. That civilized people continue to invent figurative language even after the ideal conditions no longer exist can be accounted for by saying that men now do by art and by imitation what men once did naturally. We have to admit that as language develops each object acquires its proper name and that expressions which were once figurative begin to lose their figurative power. Only a man steeped in the science and history of languages would dare come to the debating rostrum to challenge this theory.

Blair now discusses four effects of tropes and figures: 1) they enrich the language; 2) they give dignity to style; 3) they give us "the pleasure of enjoying two objects presented together to our view without confusion"; 4) they give a clearer and more vivid view of the object. This discussion leads
Blair into singing a rhapsody about the wonders of language. As a kind of antithesis to his own rhapsody, Blair quotes a passage from Spectator Papers, No. 413, in which Addison extols the aesthetic pleasure to be derived from embellished language.

Blair is now on the threshold of a particular discussion of some of the figures. He considers it useless and tedious to attempt an exhaustive division of the figures such as the "scholastic writers on rhetoric" attempted. The tone in which Blair uses the term "scholastic writers" indicates that the influence of such seventeenth-century opponents of figurative language as Bacon, Hobbes, and Sprat had told on this eighteenth-century rhetorician. As late as the third decade of the eighteenth century, John Stirling in his A System of Rhetoric had treated of ninety-seven figures, and John Holmes in his Art of Rhetoric had treated of eighty-three figures. But these men were the exceptions. Most of the eighteenth-century rhetoricians were highly selective, and Anthony Blackwaller may have set the pattern in his Introduction to the Classics (1718), where he treated of only eight tropes and twenty-eight figures. This reduction in the number of figures to be considered is consistent too with the observation made in Chapter Two of this thesis, namely, that in the analysis of the sublime the center of interest shifted from words to thoughts.

What Blair proposes to do is to give "a general view of the several sources whence the tropical meaning of words is derived" and then in the subsequent lectures to give particular consideration to the more capital figures (i.e. those figures which are most commonly used).

The last six paragraphs of Lecture XIV are given over to a discussion of the sources of tropical meaning. "All tropes," Blair asserts, "are founded
on the relation which one object bears to another." The genus under which the various figures may be classified will be determined by the kind of relationship that exists between the objects. One of the relationships is that which exists between cause and effect. Sometimes the effect is put for the cause, as when "shade" is made to stand for trees or "gray hairs" is made to stand for old age. Other relationships exist between container and thing contained (e.g. "He drank his cup") and between an established sign and the thing signified (e.g. the toga standing for the civilian professions or the sceptre standing for the royal authority). "To tropes founded on these several relations, of cause and effect, container and contained, sign and thing signified, is given the name of Metonymy," Blair says.

Metalepsis is the trope founded on the relationship between antecedent and consequent,\(^\text{21}\) as is illustrated by the Latin sentence, "Fuit Ilium et ingens gloria Dardanidum," where the verb fuit is used to signify that the glory of Troy has passed away. Synecdoche is founded on the relationship between a lesser and a greater, as a part for the whole, the species for the genus, a singular for a plural.

Blair declines to continue this investigation of the various relationships upon which tropes are founded and passes on to the most common trope, the Metaphor, which is founded on a relationship of resemblance. The consideration

\(^{21}\) The Oxford English Dictionary observes under the entry metalepsis, "In many English examples and Blair is one of the English writers quoted the use appears to be vague or incorrect." Metalepsis comes from the Greek verb μεταλάμβανειν which means "to substitute." Quintilian was certainly closer to the Greek sense when he defined metalepsis or transumption as a metonymical substitution of one word for another which is itself figurative. See Instit., VIII, vii, 37.
of this trope is the main subject of the next lecture (Lecture XV).

It were futile to pursue in any detail the consideration of particular figures in Lectures XV, XVI, and XVII. Blair's discussion in these lectures is highly detailed without being unduly technical, and his exposition of the various figures is extremely elementary. Blair does not presume any previous knowledge of figures among his students. His method in general is to define the figure, to report variations in theory and practice among older rhetoricians, to quote and analyze illustrations of the figures, to give rules for the proper use of the figures, and to point out the sources of abuses. If the students did not already possess a set of abridged notes, these lectures must have kept them scribbling at a furious rate. It is lectures like these, with sharp definitions, neat categories, and short illustrations that students delight in transcribing. Blair reduced the manual labor of his students and rendered a real service to the teaching of rhetoric by limiting the number of figures that he would consider. If figures of speech are considered at all in composition courses today, those figures which Blair considered constitute the list.

A summary, in the very broadest terms, of just one of these lectures will give the reader some idea of Blair's procedure in treating of the figures. Lecture XV on the Metaphor provides an excellent example. Blair defines a metaphor as "a comparison expressed in an abridged form." He reports some of the disputes among older rhetoricians about whether a metaphor should be classified as a figure of thought or a figure of words, reminds his audience that Aristotle used metaphor in an extended sense to refer to any figurative meaning imposed on a word, and concludes by saying that he will waive any subtlety of definition in favor of the very general definition which includes the idea of a resemblance
between two objects. Blair then sets down seven rules for the proper use of metaphor: 1) metaphors must be suited to the subject, "neither too many, nor too gay, nor too elevated for it"; 2) those comparisons must be avoided which suggest "disagreeable, mean, vulgar, or dirty" ideas; 3) the resemblance should be "clear and perspicuous, not far fetched nor difficult to discover"; 4) care must be taken not to mix metaphorical with literal language; 5) care must be taken to avoid mixed metaphors; 6) metaphors must not be crowded together on the same object; 7) metaphors must not be pursued too far. The discussion of each of these rules occupies two, three, in some instances even four, paragraphs.

Examples are quoted to illustrate the successful use of the figures and also the abuses of them. A mere catalogue of the authors from whom Blair quotes will indicate the wide range of his reading and will suggest too what a task it must have been merely to collect the examples. There are quotations from Lord Bolingbroke, Cicero, Smollett (History of England), Swift, Archbishop Tillotson, Shakespeare, Cowley, Pope, Homer, Ossian, Quintilian, Addison, Horace, Edward Young, the Old Testament, and Matthew Prior. A cataloguing of the authors quoted in the next two lectures would extend the above list to three times its length.

Blair concludes Lecture XV with a brief discussion of Allegory, which he conceives of as being a "continued metaphor."

The entire discussion of figures is conducted in a perfectly lucid style and in a sober, dogmatic tone. What amazes the reader is that Blair's judgments on particular passages are so seldom myopic. Even modern readers, who in certain instances could be presumed to have different standards of taste, will find little to demur with in Blair's judgments. Blair is perhaps most unfair to Abraham Cowley. Cowley is often cited as providing examples of "forced
and obscure" metaphors. That Blair shared some of Dr. Johnson's critical premises is evident from the fact that he commends very highly Johnson's strictures on the metaphysical poets in The Life of Cowley. Since Blair puts such a high premium on perspicuity, we are not at all surprised that he was inimical to the metaphysical conceits. While most readers would agree that the examples quoted from Cowley do illustrate "forced and obscure" conceits, they are moved to suspect that Blair is deliberately "stacking the cards." Blair frequently does that throughout the lectures. His antipathy for the religious and philosophical views of men like Bolingbroke and Shaftesbury, for instance, sometimes leads him to select passages which cannot fail to put those authors in the worst possible light. But just when one is prepared to accuse Blair of a mean intolerance, Blair generously concedes some virtue to the writer he has been depreciating and thereby disarms suspicion that he is inexorably prejudiced.

In the first three pages of Lecture XVIII Blair concludes his discussion of figurative language with some general observations on the proper use of figures. These observations merely repeat or summarize what he has already said in the course of his discussion of figures. He reminds his readers again that the beauties of composition do not depend solely or even chiefly on tropes and figures. The last three observations are 1) that figures must grow naturally from the subject, 2) that figures must not be used too frequently, and 3) that "without a genius for figurative language none should attempt it." The ideal for which the students should strive is "to study and to know our own genius well, to follow nature, to seek to improve but not to force it."

In beginning the next major section of his discussion, namely, the discussion of the general characters of style, Blair says,
When I entered upon the consideration of style, I observed that words being
the copies of our ideas, there must always be a very intimate connexion be-
tween the manner in which every writer employs words and his manner of
thinking; and that from the peculiarity of thought and expression which be-
longs to him, there is a certain character imprinted on his style, which
may be denominated his manner.

Blair is recalling here his definition of style as the peculiar manner in which
a man expresses his thoughts. *Le style est l'homme.* Style is as characteristic
of a man as his fingerprints, and traditionally a man's characteristic style has
been described by such general epithets as "strong," "weak," "dry," "simple,"
"affected." Blair recognises that different subjects and even different parts
of the same subject require different styles, but what Blair seeks to find in
this variety of styles is "some predominant character of style" which shall mark
a man's "particular genius and turn of mind."

Most of the ancient rhetoricians had something to say on the general
characters of style.22 Blair mentions Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who had di-
vided style into the austere, the florid, and the middle,23 and Cicero24 and

22 The most thorough study of the ancient characters of style is
found in G. L. Hendrickson's two excellent articles, "The Peripatetic Mean of
Style and the Three Stylistic Characters," American Journal of Philology, Balti-
more, XXV, 1904, 125-143 and "The Origin and Meaning of the Ancient Characters
of Style," American Journal of Philology, XXVI, 1905, 249-290. In the first of
these articles Professor Hendrickson successfully refutes what had been commonly
believed, i.e. that it was Theophrastus who first divided style into three types
or characters. In the second article, he points out (p. 267), among other
things, that the first occurrence of the threefold division of style is that in
the _Ad Herennium_ (IV, viii, 11).

23_ De Compositione Verborum_, ch. xxv.

24 See _De Oratore_, III, xlv, 177; lxi, 199; lv, 212 and _Orator_, xxix-
Quintilian\textsuperscript{25}, who had designated the three styles with such terms as 1) \textit{simplex}, tenus, or subtilis; 2) \textit{grave} or \textit{vehemens}; 3) \textit{medium} or \textit{temperatum} genus dicendi.\textsuperscript{26} Blair is dissatisfied with these divisions because the terms are too "loose and general." He will seek to be "a little more particular."

Blair analyses the characters of style according to three bases of classification:

I. "With respect to its expressiveness of an author's meaning"--concise, diffuse, nervous, feeble.

II. "With respect to the degree of ornament employed to beautify it"--dry, plain, neat, elegant, florid.

III. "With respect to naturalness and affectation"--simple, affected.\textsuperscript{27}

The shortcomings of such divisions must be immediately apparent. For one thing, there seems to be a great deal of overlapping. Neither is it apparent why, in the first class for instance, there should be four subdivisions and not two or five or seven. Again, it is difficult to comprehend why some of the epithets fall under the classification into which they are put. In the first division, for instance, one must strain to find any common denominator between concise and diffuse on the one hand and feeble and nervous on the other. This confusion is ironic in light of the fact that Blair rejected the classical divisions because they were too "loose and general." Morley May's observation on Blair's classifications is especially perceptive:

\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Instit.}, XII, x, especially 58-65.

\textsuperscript{26} Hendrickson demonstrates that the three styles derived from the threefold analysis of the \textit{officia oratoris}--docere, delectare, movere ("The Origin and Meaning of the Ancient Characters of Style," \textit{AJP}, XXVI, 1905, 267.

\textsuperscript{27} Schmitz (\textit{Hugh Blair}, 106-107) provides a much more detailed outline of these three classifications.
It is obvious that Blair's categories of style are not exhaustive but only functional. It would be impossible to isolate all the available degrees of style in all three classifications. The discussion is profitable in enabling us to see writers in relative terms.\(^{28}\)

For all the virtues that one might assign to Blair as a teacher and a writer, one could never laud him for that kind of philosophical mind which can penetrate to the heart of a definition or classification. Whenever he does define or classify sharply, he is usually borrowing what others have done before him.

The diffuse style and the concise style correspond roughly to those two kinds of style that Blair mentioned in an earlier lecture, le style périodique and le style coupé respectively. The concise writer "compresses his thoughts into the fewest possible words," whereas the diffuse writer "unfolds his thought fully." Carried to an extreme, conciseness becomes annoyingly abrupt and obscure; diffuseness, on the other hand, can become so weak and languid as to tire the reader. The two most remarkable examples of conciseness are, in Blair's opinion, Tacitus, the historian, and Montesquieu, the author of L'Esprit de Loix. Among didactic writers, Aristotle is notable for conciseness, but his frugality of expression often resulted in obscurity. Cicero is cited as the most illustrious example of diffuseness. "Addison also and Sir William Temple come in some degree under this class."

Neither of these styles can be said to be better than the other. The nature of the composition will determine which of these two styles is the more appropriate. Speeches generally require a more copious style than written discourse. Description requires conciseness. Delineations of passions too demand

a brief style, for "it is very difficult to support proper warmth for any length of time." Discourses having to do with explication or instruction lend themselves to the diffuse style. (Incidentally, Blair's lectures, which are examples of exposition, are written in a diffuse style.) Blair's general rule in regard to the use of these two styles is this: "When you are to strike the fancy or to move the heart, be concise; when you are to inform the understanding, which moves more slowly and requires the assistance of a guide, it is better to be full."

The next style that Blair considers is the nervous style. Since Blair is using nervous in the eighteenth-century sense of "vigorous, powerful, forcible" (OED), the nervous style is the perfect antithesis of the feeble or weak style. But despite Blair's assertion that the nervous and the feeble "are generally held to be characters of style of the same import with the concise and the diffuse," it is difficult to detect the basis of classification that unites these four styles under one head. Indeed, according to Blair's explication, nervous and feeble are attributes of the diffuse and concise style rather than distinct categories. "Diffuse writers have, for the most part, some degree of feebleness," he observes; "and nervous writers will generally be inclined to a concise expression." But the opposite can be true also. Livy and Dr. Isaac Barrow are examples of writers who combine strength with a "full and ample style." A writer's mode of thinking usually determines whether his style will be nervous or feeble. "If he conceives an object strongly," Blair maintains, "he will express it with energy; but if he has only an indistinct view of his subject... the marks of all this will clearly appear in his style." The nervous writer, on the other hand, whether he writes in the diffuse or concise style, will al-
ways give us a strong impression of his meaning. Since communication is the primary aim of discourse, there is no doubt which of these two styles Blair prefers. The diffuse style and the concise style were both commendable when employed in the proper place, but in proportion as an author approaches feeble
ness, he becomes a bad writer. This is not to say, however, that the nervous style does not have its own faulty extremes. In the course of illustrating the extreme of the nervous style, Blair draws an extended comparison between the Elizabethan prose writers and Augustan prose writers. This bit of literary history is particularly interesting because it represents one of the few instances in which Blair even mentions Elizabethan writers. Saintsbury, 29 among others, was implacably peevd with Blair for having neglected all Elizabethan writers except Shakespeare. Schmitz reveals 30 that Blair had very little knowledge of Elizabethan literature and finds it very strange that Blair never once mentions Spenser, even though he owned a six-volume edition of Spenser's Works. Schmitz goes on to say, however, that there was "ample precedent for a division of modern literature under the two heads of the Renaissance and the 'Age of Louis XIV and Queen Anne.'" It is notable too that of the writers Blair names in this section--Raleigh, Bacon, Hooker, Chillingworth, Milton, Harrington, and Cudworth--the majority were "religious" writers.

The main point that Blair makes about these early prose writers is that their preoccupation with strength of expression often betrayed them into a certain harshness of style. This harshness arose "from unusual words, from

29 History of English Criticism, 197.

30 Hugh Blair, 112.
forced inversions in the construction of a sentence, and from too much neglect of smoothness and ease." Blair has not decided whether we have gained or lost by having abandoned this style of writing, but he does pronounce that this style is now obsolete and can be adopted only at the risk of a severe censure for affectation. The prevailing style, the style which had its beginning after the Restoration with such writers as Clarendon, Temple, and Dryden, has sacrificed strength for perspicuity and ease. As a result, "it is elegance, rather than strength, that forms the distinguishing quality of most of the good English writers." From this statement one can infer that two of the qualities of the style Blair designates as elegant are perspicuity and ease.

With respect to the degree of ornament, style may be characterized as dry, plain, neat, elegant, or flowery. Since these styles involve merely a varying degree of ornament, there is no need to seek for a definition of each one. The reader can perhaps derive a notion of these five styles by being presented with the authors who, in Blair's opinion, best exemplify each style. 31 Aristotle is cited as the best example of the dry style; Swift and Locke, of the plain style; Addison, Dryden, Pope, Temple, Bolingbroke, and Atterbury, of the elegant style; James Hervey, a prominent Methodist preacher who flourished in the first half of the eighteenth century, of the florid style. Blair does not name an example of the neat style, but judging from Blair's characterization of this style and from observations he will make in the next lecture, one might

31 It is here, in connection with these general characters of style and with the English authors classified under them, that Blair acknowledges his debt to an unpublished treatment of style by Dr. Adam Smith. Smith's manuscript has never been recovered.
propose Archbishop Tillotson as a good example of this style. Although these five epithets are arranged in olímatic order with re-
spect to the degree of ornament, they do not indicate in their order the hier-
archy with respect to excellence. Each of these styles has its own merits and
advantages, but there is no doubt that Blair would place the elegant style at
the top of the list. For the elegant style unites perspicuity and propriety
with harmonious arrangement of words. "In a word," says Blair, "an elegant writ-
er is one who pleases the fancy and the ear, while he informs the understanding,
and who gives us his ideas clothed with all the beauty of expression, but not
overcharged with any of its misplaced finery." Perhaps the most illuminating
statement about Blair's aim in these lectures is contained in the last sentence
of this lecture (Lecture XVIII):

I conceive nothing more incumbent on me in this course of lectures than to
take every opportunity of cautioning my readers against the affected and
frivolous use of ornament; and instead of that slight and superficial taste
in writing, which I apprehend to be at present too fashionable, to intro-
duce, as far as my endeavours can avail, a taste for more solid thought and
more manly simplicity in style. (italics added)

There it is—more solid thought and more manly simplicity in style. Those are
the two objects that Blair has kept consistently before him throughout the en-
tire course of lectures, and those are the two objects which have been, and will
in the remaining lectures continue to be, the bases for his rules and judgments.

Lecture XIX deals with the third classification of characters of style
and gives practical instructions on the formation of a proper style. Under the
third classification Blair treats of the simple or natural style and the affect-
ed style. Because the term simplicity has had such a variety of meanings, Blair
feels that is incumbent upon him to distinguish these various senses in order to
discover which of the senses is especially applicable to style.

The first meaning of **simplicity** is that implied in Horace’s line,

> "Denique sit quod vis simplex duntaxat et unum." 

This is simplicity of composition, the opposite of a composition in which there are a number of parts; and in this sense, "simplicity is the same with unity." The second sense is simplicity of thought, as opposed to the recherché, the complex, the subtle. "Simple thoughts," Blair says, "are what arise naturally; what the occasion or the subject suggest unsought; and what, when once suggested, are easily apprehended by all." In this respect, Parnell, for instance, would be a simpler poet than Cowley; Cicero’s thought would be simpler than Seneca’s. Neither of these two senses of simplicity, according to Blair, has any proper relation to style.

The third sense of **simplicity** respects the degree of ornament, is much the same as what Cicero and Quintilian meant by *simplex*, tenue, or subtile *genus dicendi*, and corresponds with the plain or neat style that Blair considered in the previous lecture.

The fourth sense of **simplicity** respects "the easy and natural manner in which our language expresses our thoughts." **Simplicity** in this sense is not incompatible with a high degree of ornament. Homer, for instance, has a style that is simple in this sense, and yet his writing is marked by a great deal of ornament. As Blair says, "This simplicity, which is what we are now to consider, stands opposed, not to ornament, but to affectation of ornament or appearance of

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32 *Ars Poetica*, l. 23. "In short, be the work what you will, let it at least be simple and uniform." The translation is that by H. Rushton Fairclough in *Horace: Satires, Epistles, and Ars Poetica*, Loeb Classical Edition, London, 1926, 453.
labour about our style; and it is a distinguishing excellency in writing." It is in this sense that Blair uses the term simple style. This kind of simplicity, which is deceptively easy, seems to be the kind of writing that Horace refers to in the lines,

Ex noto fictum carmen sequar, ut sibi quivis
Speret idem, sude mutum frustraque laboret
A ausus idem. 33

This kind of simplicity may even carry a certain air of negligence, the sort of negligence that Cicero meant when he said, speaking of the "Attic" style,

It should be loose but not rambling; so that it may seem to move freely but not to wander without restraint. He should also avoid, so to speak, cementing his words together too smoothly, for the hiatus and clash of vowels has something agreeable about it and shows a not unpleasant carelessness (non ingratam negligentiam) on the part of a man who is paying more attention to thought than to words. 34

The highest degree of this kind of simplicity is expressed in the French word naïveté. English has no exact equivalent for this word, and Blair finds the best explanation of the word in the French critic M. Marmontel, whom he paraphrases in this fashion; 35

That sort of amiable ingenuity or undisguised openness, which seems to give us some degree of superiority over the person who shows it; a certain in-

33 Ars Poetica, 11. 240-242. "My aim shall be poetry, so moulded from the familiar that anybody may hope for the same success, may sweat much and yet toil in vain when attempting the same."—trans. Fairclough, Horace, 471.


35 Blair does not indicate from what work of Jean-François Marmontel (1723-1799) he is paraphrasing. It may have been "De l'autorité de l'usage sur la langue," (1784) one of the articles Marmontel wrote for l'Encyclopédie. According to Biographie Universelle, Marmontel later published all the articles he wrote for l'Encyclopédie under the title d'Eléments de littérature, 6 vols., Paris, 1787.
fantine simplicity, which we love in our hearts, but which displays some features of the character that we think we could have art enough to hide; and which, therefore, always leads us to smile at the person who discovers this character.

M. Marmontel cited the La Fontaine of the Fables as the supreme example of this species of simplicity.

Blair goes on to cite some exemplars of the simple style. He finds that in general "the ancient original writers are always the most eminent for it," for these men wrote "from the dictates of natural genius and were not formed upon the labours and writings of others." (It is little wonder that Blair was so taken with Macpherson's translations of Ossian.) Among the Greeks, Homer, Hesiod, Anacreon, Theocritus, Herodotus, and Xenophon are distinguished for simplicity of style; Terence, Lucretius, Phaedrus, and Julius Caesar, among the Romans. Among the English writers, Archbishop Tillotson, Sir William Temple, and Joseph Addison are examples of the simple style. Of these authors, Addison is "the most perfect example," and Blair will spend the next four lectures analyzing Addison's style in detail.

Blair's analysis here of Tillotson's style throws some additional light on the characteristics of the simple style. Although Tillotson enjoys a high reputation for eloquence, Blair says, his eloquence does not consist in vehemence or strength, in picturesque descriptions, in sparkling figures, or in correct arrangement of sentences, for in all these particulars the eminent preacher is extremely deficient. Tillotson's reputation rests on a style that is natural, pure, and lucid. His style is often "careless and remiss," but this very carelessness somehow produces an effect of naturalness, which, combined with the note of good sense and piety that runs through all his sermons, consti-
tures the secret of his appeal. Negligence of manner, however, must not be thought of as a virtue in itself. Carried to an excess, as it sometimes is even in Tillotson's writings, the negligent manner can destroy the beauty of simplicity. This observation must be borne in mind when Blair proceeds to an analysis of Addison's prose; otherwise one might find it difficult to account for some of Blair's condemnations of careless writing in Addison's essays.

The keynote of all Blair's observations on the simple style is naturalness—the sort of naturalness that does not strain after startling effects in diction, construction, harmony, or figures of speech. This was the kind of naturalness that Dryden was calling for when he recommended "easy language" put together in the order that men use "in ordinary speaking." This kind of simplicity does not shy away from idiomatic expressions; and yet, it does not descend to the vulgar level. There is ease and familiarity to this manner, an artlessness that belies the skill and genius required to bring off this manner successfully.

Blair does not discourse on the affected style. He does not need to; the affected style is just the obverse of the simple. All of his observations on this style are implicit in his analysis of Lord Shaftesbury's style. Blair grants considerable merit to Shaftesbury as a writer. Few authors have taken more care in the construction of their sentences, "both with respect to propriety and with respect to cadence." His style has a polish to it that invariably commands attention. But Shaftesbury's style is marred by stiffness and affectation. "His lordship can express nothing with simplicity." Considering it be-

36 See Dryden, Essays, ed. Ker, I, 7 and 52.
neath the dignity of a lord to speak like other men, "he is ever in buskins," displaying glittering ornaments of every kind. His fondness for wit and raillery concurred with this penchant for ornament to produce that "artificial and stately manner" which characterizes his writings. In short, there is "nothing of that ease which expresses a sentiment coming natural and warm from the heart." There is too much art to this style. For an example of limae labor carried to an inordinate length, Blair bids his readers compare the corrected edition of Shaftesbury's Inquiry into Virtue with the original edition of 1699.

Blair has one other character of style to discuss, a character different, he says, from any that he has yet spoken of. This style has some of the qualities of the simple style and some of the qualities of the nervous style, and yet it is distinguishable from either of them. It is a style which has a "peculiar ardour" about it, a style which employs the "language of a man whose imagination and passions are heated" and who pours forth his words with "the rapidity and fullness of a torrent." The vehement style, as he calls it, is more suited to speaking than to writing, and the best exemplar of this style among the ancients is Demosthenes. Blair undoubtedly took this type from Demetrius, who alone of the classical rhetoricians named four styles, the vehement being the fourth type. Among English writers, the one most notable for the vehement style is Lord Bolingbroke, whose political writings create the impression of "one declaiming with heat rather than writing with deliberation." The "great impetuosity" of his manner gives vent to an abundance of rhetorical figures and a

37 See Demetrius, On Style, ed. W. Rhys Roberts, Cambridge, 1902, Chapter V, especially pages 131-135. Demetrius also names Demosthenes as the chief exemplar of the vehement style.
copious torrent of words. Blair remarks that Bolingbroke would have been a
great writer if his matter had equalled his style. But his reasoning was "flimsy and false," his political writings "factious," and his philosophical works
"irreligious and sophistical" to a high degree.

After one reads Blair's long discourse on the characters of style, one
wonders what purpose it has served. There does seem to be some justification
for a detailed investigation of the various rhetorical figures, for although it
is true that an author can employ figures without knowing their names or deﬁni-
tions, an author is preserved from errors, if he does not actually write better,
for understanding the figures. But what gain is it to know that an author's
style is plain or simple or vehement? There would seem to be very little gain.
The character of style is an a posteriori consideration. It is the impress that
a style bears after it appears on paper. An author does not sit down at his
desk and say to himself, "Today I will employ the neat style." If he did do
this, there would be some value in knowing what the neat style is. A good writ-
er instinctively suits his style to the occasion or the subject matter, but
aside from this ad hoc adjustment of his predominant manner he makes no a priori
decisions about his style. He writes as he is. "Style is the man." Blair ex-
hibits some awareness of this when he says, "I am sensible that it is very dif-
cult to separate such general considerations of the style of authors from
their peculiar turn of sentiment." "Room must be left here for genius," he says,
"for that particular determination which every one receives from nature to one
manner of expression more than another."

But if the character of style is something we determine a posteriori,
there is some advantage to being able to distinguish the various characters.
Anyone who has taught prose literature knows how frustrated he has frequently been in searching for some general label to describe the style of the author under consideration. Teachers often use such epithets as "forceful," "simple," "urbane," "laconic," "flowing," "grandiloquent" to characterize an author's style, but while they may have some notion of what, for instance, an "urbane style" is, the students have no notion at all. If teachers of literature would determine and formulate, as Blair did, what they mean by the various general labels they use, they would give to their technique of prose analysis a direction and a definiteness which it does not now have and would provide their students with a useful tool for criticism. While Blair did not—perhaps could not—draw the line sharply between the species of style under each classification, he did have the differentia firmly enough in his own mind to be able to say that this author belonged in this category and that author belonged in that category. He was wise enough too to recognize that these various styles rarely exist pure and simple; while some one manner predominates, there is usually a medley of several styles. This fact increases the difficulty of classifying styles, but the recognition of this fact certainly indicates that Blair had a realistic attitude about the kinds of style.

Much the most interesting of the sections on style is the section at the end of Lecture XIX where Blair gives some general directions concerning the proper method of attaining a good style. Here we see the pedagogue descending from the theoretical level to the practical. Most of his instructions in regard to the formation of style are commonplace enough, but there is one direction concerning imitation that may very well be an original contribution.

His first direction is that we must conceive our ideas clearly before
we begin to write or speak. That there is an intimate connection between style and thought many rhetoricians before Blair had maintained, but that other rhetoricians held Blair's view that "what we conceive clearly and feel strongly we shall naturally express with clearness and with strength" this writer has been unable to discover. The closest approximation to this statement is the statement made by John Wilkins of the Royal Society in his Ecclesiastes: "The more clearly we understand anything our selves, the more easily can we expound it to others." Whether the idea is original or derivative, however, is of little moment in comparison with the soundness and utility of the principle. If we accept the validity of this principle, we can view loose, vague writing as an indication both that the rules of good writing have not been thoroughly learned and that the thought has not been sharply conceived.

The second direction for the formation of a good style is to practice writing, frequently and assiduously. This is the same bit of advice as that found so often in modern textbooks of creative writing: "If you want to learn to write, then write, write, write." In the absence of any explicit evidence, one is tempted to infer from such a direction that Blair did require his students to write and submit themes. In drawing such an inference, however, the American is ignoring the fact that the practice of daily assignments or "homework" did not prevail in the British universities of the eighteenth century. It would be safer to conclude that this was a suggestion thrown out to mature, conscientious students. This was an assignment for the cubicles, not for the classroom.

38 John Wilkins, Ecclesiastes, London, 1679, 199.
Blair emphasizes the caution that careless, hasty composition during this period of exercise may do more harm than good. "In the beginning, therefore," he says, "we ought to write slowly and with much care." That Blair in this section on composing and revising was drawing heavily on Quintilian's Tenth Book is evident from the fact that he quotes the passage in which occurs that cogent aphorism, "Cito scribendo non fit ut bene scribatur, bene scribendo, fit ut cito." Carefulness, however, can be pushed to an extreme. "We must not retard the course of thought," Blair warns, "nor cool the heat of imagination by pausing too long on every word we employ." At times, a certain "glow of composition" will produce felicitous expressions that no amount of conscious effort could produce. Although Blair does not quote Quintilian in connection with this inordinate concern for the mot juste, he had undoubtedly read what Quintilian said on this matter:

The usual result of over-attention to the niceties of style is the deterioration of our eloquence. For those words which are obviously the result of careful search and even seem to parade their self-conscious art, fail to attain the grace at which they aim and lose all appearance of sincerity because they darken the sense and choke the good seed by their own luxuriant overgrowth.

The application of polish to our composition must be postponed until we come to

39 Conclusive evidence that he consulted the Tenth Book is found at the end of this lecture where he directs his students to consult Quintilian: "On these heads of composing, correcting, reading, and imitating, I advise every student of oratory to consult what Quintilian has delivered in the tenth book of his Institutions, where he will find a variety of excellent observations and directions that well deserve attention."

40 Instit., X, iii, 10. "Write quickly and you will never write well, write well and you will soon write quickly."

the revision. It is best to put our writing aside until the "ardour of composition" has cooled and we can look at our writing with a critically objective eye. The lime labor is a necessary process, but again, as he has so often done throughout the lectures, Blair invokes the Aristotelian "Nothing too much" as the guiding principle.

The advice Blair has given so far is the kind of advice any teacher of composition might have given. Blair's system of imitation, however, may well have been of his own devising. Learning by imitation was of course strongly recommended by the English humanists, but the only system of imitation akin to Blair's is Roger Ascham's practice of "double translating." This bit of advice from Blair merits full quotation:

I know no exercise that will be found more useful for acquiring a proper style than to translate some passages from an eminent English author into our own words. What I mean is to take, for instance, some page of one of Mr. Addison's Spectators and read it 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.

There seems to be no exact analogue for this system of imitation in any of the other rhetoricians. Did this system originate with Blair? Readers of Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography will recall this familiar passage:

About this time I met with an odd volume of the Spectator. It was the third. I had never before seen any of them. I bought it, read it over and over, and was much delighted with it. I thought the writing excellent, and wished, if possible, to imitate it. With this view 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 compleat the papers again, by expressing each hinted sentiment at length, and as fully as it had been expressed before, in any suitable words that should come to

42 See Ascham, The Scholemaster, ed. Wright, 244-245.
hand. Then I compared my Spectator with the original, discovered some of my faults, and corrected them.23

Except for the slight variation that Franklin wrote down "hints" while he was reading Addison, this system is essentially the same as Blair's. Did Blair derive the system from Franklin?44 Something in Blair's character, his pride in his own abilities and his firm integrity, would seem to impugn the suggestion that Blair adopted this unique system from Franklin and incorporated it into his own lectures without any acknowledgment of its source. The question of indebtedness aside, however, there is no doubt that it was Blair who gave currency to this system in the rhetorical practice of English and American schools during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Blair strongly deprecated the practice of imitating authors too closely. Servile imitation of any author hampers the development of one's own style and is likely "to produce a stiff manner." Above all, the apprentice writer must beware of "adopting any author's noted phrases or transcribing passages from him." It is better to produce something of our own, Blair says, than "to shine in borrowed ornaments."

Blair's advice about avoiding servile imitation is undeniably sound, but one wonders whether his proscription of the practice of copying passages verbatim from other authors, a practice that has had a long honorable tradition,
was not too severe. Fledgling writers can derive a good deal of instruction, as
the experience of that "sedulous ape" Robert Louis Stevenson testifies, from the
practice of copying passages from admired authors. If nothing else, such a
practice gives the apprentice writer a sense for mature sentence structure. The
variation on this method, taught for many years by the Jesuit teacher, Father
Francis Patrick Donnelly, in his text *Imitation and Analysis: English Exercises*
Based on Irving's *Sketch Book* (Boston, 1902), proved wonderfully successful.
According to the Donnelly method, students were set to composing sentences on
the grammatical and rhetorical pattern of some sentences by an accomplished
writer. Students did learn "sentence sense" from this practice, and if aban-
donned after its tutelary purpose had been served, this system did produce stu-
dents who could write neat, mature sentences. If one were to follow Blair's
constantly reiterated advice of not indulging in any practice to excess, such a
system of imitation could do little harm and might do a great deal of good. The
charge that such a practice kills originality can perhaps best be answered by
Robert Louis Stevenson's own reply to a similar charge:

Perhaps I hear someone cry out: But this is not the way to be original! It
is not; nor is there any way but to be born so. Nor yet, if you are
born original, is there anything in this training that shall clip the wings
of your originality.45

Blair's last two directions for acquiring a good style are perfectly
commonplace and need only to be mentioned. We must take care always to adapt

45 This quotation and Stevenson's account of how he played "the sedu-
lous ape" appeared in an essay called "A College Magazine." This essay and oth-
ers on the practice of writing are conveniently gathered together in *Learning to
our style to the subject, for "nothing merits the name of eloquent or beautiful which is not suited to the occasion and to the persons to whom it is addressed."

The final direction repeats what Blair has consistently preached in these lectures on style: "attention to style must not engross us so much as to detract from a higher degree of attention to the thoughts." Blair supports this prescription with a sentence from that Roman rhetorician whom he has cited more often than any other rhetorician: "Curam ergo verborum, rerum volo esse sollicitudinem."46

Blair devotes the next five lectures, "Lectures XX-XXV, to a minute analysis of prose essays by Addison and Swift. That fully one-third of the fifteen lectures on style were allotted to this analysis is evidence of the importance that Blair attached to this kind of examination. As Blair said at the beginning of Lecture XXIV, "The proper application of rules respecting style will always be best learned by means of the illustration which examples afford."

The content of these five lectures is quite certainly fuller in the printed form than in the original spoken form. In a footnote at the beginning of Lecture XXI, Blair informs us of the genesis of these lectures on Addison's style. Blair directed his students to examine the first four of Addison's eleven Spectator essays on "The Pleasures of the Imagination" and to submit their analyses of the style. From time to time, Blair incorporated some of these analyses with his own observations. By the time the lectures came to be printed in 1783, they must have differed considerably, quantitatively anyway, from what they were when Blair first started to deliver the lectures.

46 Institut., VIII, pr., 20. "Therefore I would have the orator, while careful in his choice of words, be even more concerned about his subject matter."
One of Blair's reasons for directing his students to the study of Addison was that he hoped to correct "peculiarities of dialect" in the speech and writing of his Scottish students. In the literary renaissance that took place in Edinburgh in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the leaders of the movement in "the Athens of the North" were extremely self-conscious of the provincialisms that marked the speech of the Scotch. In his position as *arbitr* *elegi* *t* *arum*, Blair felt it to be especially incumbent on him to purify the speech of the educated classes, and he discerned that there was no better way to effect that mission than to direct his students to a study of that "safest model" of good English, Joseph Addison. In Lecture XXIII, he characterizes Addison's style as "not strictly accurate, but agreeable, easy, and unaffected, enlivened too with a slight personification of the imagination, which gives a gayety to the period."47 Addison's style is obviously the ideal that he wants to inculcate, and accordingly he would agree with Dr. Johnson that students must give their nights and days to a study of Addison.

As he tells us in the Preface to the Lectures, Blair has been moved to publish the lectures because they had been circulating in manuscript and because some of them had already appeared in print. Some of his observations on Addison's style had appeared without his permission in the article on Addison in the *Biographia Britannica*. Further evidence that Blair's observations on style had captured the attention of contemporaries is found in the fact that Blair's is one of the four commentaries that Nathan Drake has brought together in his essay

47 A more detailed description of Addison's style, much too long to be quoted here, may be found in the middle of Lecture XIX.
"On the Progress and Merits of English Style and on the Style of Addison in Particular."48

Blair conducts a sentence-by-sentence examination of Nos. 411, 412, 413, and 414 of the Spectator Papers. In general his method is to quote each sentence in turn, to point out the beauties and blemishes of the sentence, and, where the sentence is radically faulty, to suggest a revised version of the sentence. At certain points in the analyses, he reveals a certain self-consciousness about his method. His minute analysis of whole essays is certainly the first of its kind in English criticism. Other critics, Lord Kames prominent among them, had taken isolated sentences, analyzed them, and proposed revisions, but no English critics before Blair (the French of course had already devised their explication de texte method) had subjected entire essays to a detailed analysis of style. Conscious that his approach is unique, Blair frequently feels constrained to apologize for, or at least to justify, his method. "To some," he says at the beginning of Lecture XXI, "my remarks may seem tedious and minute"—such is the tenor of several asides throughout these five lectures. He is constantly worried, too, lest his corrections of Addison's sentences will lead some readers to think that he is seeking to disparage Addison. Frequently throughout these lectures he will make a remark like the one at the beginning of Lecture XX: "From the freedom which I use in criticizing Mr. Addison's style, none can imagine that I mean to depreciate his writings, after having re-

48 This essay is published in Essays, Biographical, Critical, and Historical, Illustrative of the Tatler, Spectator, and Guardian, London, 1805, II, 1-116. The other three commentaries that Drake has brought together are those by Dr. Johnson, William Melmoth, and Vicesimus Knox.
peatedly declared the high opinion which I entertain of them." In the lecture devoted to an analysis of an essay by Swift, he manifests the same eagerness to forestall any notion that he is seeking to discredit Swift as a writer.

Blair feels that if this group of lectures is to have any pedagogical value faults as well as excellences must be pointed out. "Without a free, impartial discussion of both the faults and beauties, it is evident this piece of criticism would be of no service." That Blair is thoroughly Longinian in his attitude about beauties and blemishes is evident from his remarks at the end of Lecture XXV. It would be unfair, he says, "to estimate an author's style on the whole by some passage in his writings which chances to be composed in a careless manner." The merit of a writer must be judged by "the general cast or complexion of the style." Occasional flaws will not mar the beauty of the whole. On the other hand, parts might be flawless, and yet the whole might be inferior. He cites the example of some contemporary writing in which he would be hard put to it to discover any errors in language but in which the style, on the whole, does not command admiration. He concludes by saying that

the only proper use to be made of the blemishes which occur in the writings of such authors is to point out to those who apply themselves to the study of composition some of the rules which they ought to observe for avoiding such errors and to render them sensible of the necessity of strict attention to language and to style.

At two or three places in the lectures, he urges those who do not stand in need of the instruction that can be gained from a study of faults to pass over these lectures entirely. These analyses are designed for the benefit of those who do not yet have a correct style and want to acquire one.

The nature of these five lectures renders impossible anything like a thorough exposition. To gain a real knowledge of their scope, method, and fla-
vor, one must read the lectures themselves. What can be done here is to men-
tion a few salient points and then with one or two extended quotations to at-
tempt to give the reader some inkling of Blair's method of analysis.

Addison's chief shortcoming, according to Blair, lies in his occasion-
al lapses from correctness. The reader is not surprised therefore to discover
that most of Blair's strictures on Addison's style concern solecisms. He points
out instances of misplaced modifiers, faulty comparisons, imprecise diction.
One of the most curious of Blair's objections is his disapproval of Addison's
partiality for the relative that instead of which. Blair has a strange reason
for preferring which: "Which is a more definitive word than that, being never
employed in any other way than as a relative; whereas that is a word of many
senses—sometimes a demonstrative pronoun, often a conjunction." Blair will al-
low the use of that only in instances where one wants to avoid "the ungraceful
repetition of which in the same sentence." The validity of Blair's objection
to that is diminished by the consideration that although this word can serve as
three different parts of speech no one ever mistakes what function it is serv-
ing in any particular instance. Because conscientious writers have always wor-
rried about when to use which and when to use that, F. W. Fowler has written a
long article in Modern English Usage on these two relatives. His observations
on which and that are much more discriminating and reasonable than Blair's.
Fowler is able to demonstrate, for instance, that that is usually preferable
for restrictive clauses. We must remember, however, that Blair was writing at
a time when some of the niceties of grammar had not yet been fixed either by
grammarians or by usage.

Blair is at his best in his comments on the use of particles. Observe
what he has to say on the use of the article in the sentence, "Our sight is
the most perfect and most delightful of all our senses";

He might have said, "Our sight is the most perfect and the most delight-
ful." But he has judged better in omitting to repeat the article the. For
the repetition of it is proper chiefly when we intend to point out the ob-
jects of which we speak, as distinguishes from, or contrasted with, each
other, and when we want that the reader's attention should rest on that
distinction. For instance, had Mr. Addison intended to say that our sight
is at once the most delightful and the most useful of all our senses, the
article might then have been repeated with propriety, as a clear and strong
distinction would have been conveyed. But as between perfect and delight-
ful there is less contrast, there was no occasion for such repetition. It
would have had no other effect but to add a word unnecessarily to the sen-
tence. (Lecture XX)

Has anyone ever written more brilliantly on the use of the article?

It is a steadfast principle of Blair's that an introductory sentence
"should seldom be a long, and never an intricate, one." The sentence quoted
above, which is the first sentence of No. 411, is an instance of an excellent
introductory sentence--clear, precise, and simple. The introductory sentence of
No. 413, which contains 137 words, is an example of an exceedingly faulty lead-
ing sentence. Besides being "crowded and indistinct," it contains "three sepa-
rate propositions . . . which required separate sentences to have unfolded them."
A long and intricate introductory sentence fatigues and puzzles the reader, in
Blair's view, just at the point in the composition when it should attract and
arouse him.

It is interesting to consider a parody which Blair included in the
spoken lectures but which he excised when he published the lectures. Addison
had written in No. 411:

There are, indeed, but very few who know how to be idle and innocent, or
have a relish of any pleasures that are not criminal; every diversion they
take is at the expense of some one virtue or another, and their very first
step out of business is into vice and folly.
Blair rendered this sentence into the style of Dr. Johnson's Rambler:

There are indeed but very few who know how to join the Relaxations of Idle-
ness with the Salubriety of Innocence, or have a Relish for any Pleasures
that are not tainted with the Pollutions of Guilt. Every Diversion they
take is at the expense of some Virtue impaired, or evil Habit acquired, and
their very first Step out of the Regions of Business is into the Perturbations
of Vice or the Vacuity of Folly.49

When Boswell, who had been a student of Blair's reported this parody to Dr.
Johnson, the Great Cham retorted, "Sir, these are not the words I should have
used. No, Sir; the imitators of my style have not hit it."50 Blair must have
deleted this parody because he felt he had been unfair, perhaps even uncharita-
ble, to a man whom he respected very highly. Whenever Blair has mentioned Dr.
Johnson it has been to commend his critical judgment. Johnson is never proposed,
however, as a paragon of style. "Johnsonese," with its heavily Latinate diction,
its mannered, sometimes involved constructions, its air of verbosity, was a
style at the opposite pole to Blair's ideal. Curiously enough, however, both
of these critics concurred in their admiration of Addison's style. As Professor
Mays has said,

Both Blair and Johnson agreed, in more or less complex schemes of analysis,
that Addison's style was in some way to be identified as intermediate be-
tween other styles. Johnson saw the matter as a problem of words, Blair
as a problem of words with a psychological construction in the background.
In either case, it seems clear that they considered it as not merely a
style communicative of thought alone, but as a style heightened by imagery
and melody in a moderate degree.51

49 Reproduced in Schmitz, Hugh Blair, 108. Schmitz is quoting from
Lecture XX in MS. Lectures in the National Library of Scotland.


51 Mays, "Johnson and Blair on Addison's Prose Style," SP, XXXIX,
1942, 549.
Some intimation of the kind of comment that Blair made on the sentences in Addison's and Swift's essays can be communicated in a representative quotation. Any number of these commentaries might be cited, but this one from Lecture XXIII, since it is long enough to comprehend a good number of typical comments, will do as well as any other. Blair quotes the first sentence of No. 414:

If we consider the works of nature and art, as they are qualified to entertain the imagination, we shall find the last very defective in comparison of the former; for though they may sometimes appear as beautiful or strange, they can have nothing in them of that vastness and immensity which afford so great an entertainment to the mind of the beholder.

Then Blair launches into his commentary:

I had occasion formerly to observe that an introductory sentence should always be short and simple, and contain no more matter than is necessary for opening the subject. This sentence leads to a repetition of this observation, as it contains both an assertion and the proof of that assertion--two things which, for the most part, but especially at first setting out, are with more advantage kept separate. It would certainly have been better if this sentence had contained only the assertion, ending with the word former; and if a new one had then begun, entering on the proofs of nature's superiority over art, which is the subject continued to the end of the paragraph. The proper division of the period I shall point out after having first made a few observations which occur on different parts of it.

So much for a comment on the sentence in general. Then Blair proceeds to particulars:

If we consider the works. Perhaps it might have been preferable if our author had begun with saying, when we consider the works. Discourse ought always to begin, when it is possible, with a clear proposition. The if, which is here employed, converts the sentence into a supposition, which is always in some degree entangling, and proper to be used only when the course of reasoning renders it necessary. As this observation however may, perhaps, be considered as over-refined and as the sense would have remained the same in either form of expression, I do not mean to charge our author with any error on this account. We cannot absolve him from inaccuracy in what immediately follows--the works of nature and art. It is the scope of the author throughout this whole paper to compare nature and art together and to oppose them in several views to each other. Certainly, therefore,
in the beginning, he ought to have kept them as distinct as possible, by
interposing the preposition and saying, the works of nature and of art.
As the words stand at present, they would lead us to think that he is go-
ing to treat of these works, not as contrasted, but as connected, as united
in forming one whole. When I speak of body and soul as united in the hu-
man nature, I would interpose neither article nor preposition between them:
"Man is compounded of soul and body." But the case is altered if I mean
to distinguish them from each other; then I represent them as separate and
say, "I am to treat of the interests of the soul and of the body."

Though they may sometimes appear as beautiful or strange. I cannot
help considering this a loose member of the period. It does not clearly
appear at first what the antecedent is to them. In reading onwards, we
see the works of art to be meant; but from the structure of the sentence,
they might be understood to refer to the former, as well as to the last.
In what follows there is a greater ambiguity—may sometimes appear as beau-
tiful or strange. It is very doubtful in what sense we are to understand
as in this passage. For, according as it is accented in reading, it may
signify that they appear equally beautiful or strange, to wit, with the
works of nature; and then it has the force of the Latin tam; or it may sig-
nify no more than that they appear in the light of beautiful and strange;
and then it has the force of the Latin tamquam, without importing as com-
parison. An expression so ambiguous is always faulty; and it is doubly so
here, because, if the author intended the former sense and meant (as seems
most probable) to employ as for a mark of comparison, it was necessary to
have mentioned both the compared objects; whereas only one member of the
comparison is here mentioned, viz, the works of art; and if he intended the
latter sense, as was in that case superfluous and encumbering, and he had
better have said simply, appear beautiful or strange. The epithet strange,
which Mr. Addison applies to the works of art, cannot be praised. Strange
works appears not by any means a happy expression to signify what he here
intends, which is new or uncommon.

The sentence concludes with much harmony and dignity: they can have
nothing in them of that vastness and immensity which afford so great an en-
tertainment to the mind of the beholder. There is here a fulness and gran-
deur of expression well suited to the subject; though, perhaps, entertain-
ment is not quite the proper word for expressing the effect which vastness
and immensity have upon the mind.

Then Blair presents his own revision of the sentence:

Reviewing the observations that have been made on this period, it might, I
think, with advantage, be resolved into two sentences, somewhat after this
manner: "When we consider the works of nature and of art, as they are
qualified to entertain the imagination, we shall find the latter very de-
fective in comparison of the former. The works of art may sometimes appear
no less beautiful or uncommon than those of nature; but they can have noth-
ing of that vastness and immensity which so highly transport the mind of
the beholder."
This passage would be more representative of Blair's method if it had included analyses of harmony and figures of speech, but the reader has had an opportunity in earlier pages to form a judgment of Blair's powers of analyzing these stylistic elements. This a striking exhibition, however, of Blair's extraordinary gift for analyzing matters of correctness and precision. The exposition is lucid, sensible, and keen. There is none of the ingenious interpretations, none of the precious jargon, that mark the explications of many of the modern critics. All of the observations are marked by good sense, and none of them is made with the intention of ridiculing the author or of displaying the cleverness of the critic. Are not some of the observations picayunish? Someone might ask. They are picayunish if it is picayune to insist on that propriety of diction and syntax which contributes to clarity and accuracy. Blair is well aware that at times he is drawing a very thin line, as he felt he was in drawing the subtle distinction between if and when. When we encounter a man who has enough good sense and humility to acknowledge that he is sometimes straining at a gnat, we soon grow to trust his judgments.

Here is an admirable technique for the stylistic analysis of prose passages. The present writer first discovered Blair when he was searching in the library for a text which would provide a method of analyzing prose. When the Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres was removed from the shelf, it opened, fortuitously, at these lectures on Addison's style. The perusal of a few paragraphs convinced this writer that here was a rare find. Nothing like this had ever been done before. Here was a method of analysis that could be adapted to the examination of other prose texts. This method needs to be publicized and used in our classrooms.
A common enough reaction to Blair's strictures on Addison's sentences is "Could Blair do any better?" For one thing, such a query is beside the point. An artist's faults are not excusable because the critic himself cannot execute as well. The second answer to the query is that Blair can do better. The revised sentence alone shows that he can do better. And the style throughout the lectures is evidence that for lucidity, correctness, and grace, Blair is fully a match for Addison. If Blair had not expended all his literary talent on sermons and textbooks of rhetoric, both of which have lost their market in our day, he would be known today as one of the great stylists of the eighteenth century.

There is no need to investigate Blair's examination of Swift's style as exhibited in the essay "A Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue." The method is the same as in the examination of Addison's style. Swift is revealed to be a more correct writer than Addison. He has Addison's perspicuity and purity but lacks Addison's ornament and grace. Blair agrees with Dr. Johnson that Swift's style "aims at no more than giving his meaning in a clear and concise manner."

This chapter will conclude with a consideration of the charge that Blair's minute analysis tends to dissect the life out of a passage. Such a method might teach a student how to write, one might say, but it would destroy forever the literary vitality of the piece of literature. This is the sort of objection that the New Critics have met with repeatedly. There have been many defenders of this mode of analysis, but here Mr. Williams might be allowed to defend the method in general and Hugh Blair in particular:
What is aimed at then in the criticism of literary extracts is the development of a taste that will unconsciously select and enjoy the supremely good in literature; few reject so fastidiously and few find such exalted pleasure in literature as Matthew Arnold, while any great writer illustrates how much is gained by careful analysis of masterpieces. Nor is it necessary to admit that the selected passages themselves are sacrificed in order to obtain this appreciation; the intellectual attitude towards them is abandoned when its purpose is served, and there is no reason why the student should not, there is indeed all the more reason why he should, return to them with increased sensibility to their beauties.52

And as Hugh Blair himself said at the end of Lecture IV:

and I conceive that the method which I follow will contribute more to make the best authors be read with pleasure when one properly distinguishes their beauties from their faults and is led to imitate and admire only what is worthy of imitation and admiration.

Blair is now ready to consider the last main subject of the Rhetoric, Eloquence or Public Speaking.

CHAPTER V

HUGH BLAIR ON ORATORY

Having finished his discussion of Style, Blair says at the beginning of Lecture XXV that he will "ascend a step higher" and treat of one of the subjects upon which style is employed—"eloquence or public speaking." It is significant that Blair considers this discussion of eloquence to be "a step higher" and that he places the discussion of eloquence in a climactic position at the end of his lectures on rhetoric. His disquisitions on taste, on the sublime, on language, and on style were interesting per se and even had a certain practical value for the student. But for Blair all these disquisitions have been important as leading to a higher, utilitarian end, the formation of an accomplished orator.

The Scotch have always been an eminently practical people, and their penchant and talent for the practical has perhaps never been more pronounced than during the latter part of the eighteenth century. The Act of Union in 1707 had drawn Scotland out of its political insularity, and the vigorous literary revival that took place in mid-century had the double effect of making the Scotch proud of their cultural heritage and of prodding them to moderate their lingual provincialism. The law profession was beginning to attract some of Scotland's brightest young men. Lord Kames had been a resounding success at the bar, and Boswell, as readers of the London Journal have learned, had finally to
accede to his father's wish that he study law. Those Scotchmen who were admitted to the British Parliament after the Act of Union found that they had to perfect themselves in the art of deliberative oratory. The elevation of a native son, Lord Bute, to the prime ministership had spurred the political ambitions of the Scotch. The great age of British oratory, involving such names as Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, and Burke, was to spark a revival of interest in the art that brought preferment and prestige. Pulpit oratory too, dormant since the days of the great non-juring preachers, was awakening. Hugh Blair himself was to become the most famous preacher of his day. And books of sermons began to appear on the parlor tables of the cultivated people of Great Britain.

Clearly this was a time when the palm went to the man who had command of eloquence. Many young men came to Blair's classes to be instructed in the art of oratory. As Blair said in the Preface, the lectures were designed for those who were eager "to cultivate their taste, to form their style, or to prepare themselves for public speaking or composition." He was conscious that his own eminence as a speaker would lend weight to those precepts that he had appropriated from others or that he had formulated out of his own experience.

As might be expected, the name of Blair's great idol, Quintilian, continues to figure prominently in the discussion. Cicero's name occurs more frequently here than it did in any other section of the lectures. Although Blair does not wholeheartedly subscribe to Quintilian's nomination of Cicero as the prince of orators, he does recognize the value of Cicero's theory and practice. The names of famous French pulpit orators--Flechier, Fourdalous, Massillon,
Bossuet—and of French rhetoricians—Rollin, Batteux, Crevier, Patru, La Bruyère, Fénelon—figure prominently in the discussion. Of the British writers on eloquence, only David Hume, George Campbell, and Thomas Sheridan are cited.

Blair devotes ten lectures to oratory. The discussion falls into the following major divisions:

I. Nature of Eloquence in general (pp. 261-264)

II. History of Eloquence (pp. 265-284)

III. The different kinds of Eloquence (pp. 284-288)

IV. The proper manner for each of the several kinds (pp. 288-341)

1. Esprit Flechier (1632-1710), a priest of the Congregation of Christian Doctrine, Professor of rhetoric at Narbonne, noted for his funeral sermons; Louis Bourdaloue (1632-1704), Jesuit teacher of rhetoric in the provinces, famous preacher in the court of Louis XIV; Jean-Baptiste Massillon (1663-1742), an Oratorian father, a court preacher from 1699 to 1717, later, Bishop of Clermont; Jacques Pénigne Bossuet (1627-1704), court preacher, noted for the success of his controversy with Fénelon on the subject of Quietism, later, Bishop of Meaux. See the extensive treatment of these preachers in Histoire de la Langue et de la Littérature Française, ed. L. Petit de Julleville, Paris, 1898, V, 355-361; 361-373; 373-385; 260-343.

2. Charles Rollin (1661-1741), a professor rhetoric at the Royal College, author of Traité des études (1726-1728) 4 vols.; Abbe Charles Batteux (1713-1780), teacher of rhetoric in the colleges of Lixieux and Navarre, honorary canon of Rheims, member of the French Academy from 1761, author of Principes de la Littérature; Jean-Baptiste-Louis Crevier (1695-1765), pupil of Rollin's, Professor Rhetoric at the college of Beauvais, author of Rhetorique Française (Paris, 1765); Jean de la Bruyère (1645-1696), French ethical writer, author of Caractères ou mœurs de ce siècle (Paris, 1688); François de Salignac de LaMotte-Fénelon (1651-1715), French divine, tutor to the son of the Dauphin, Bishop of Cambrai, noted for his Télémaque (1699), his Dialogues sur l'éloquence (1718) mentioned by Blair. For general information on these authors consult Histoire de la Littérature, ed. L. Petit de Julleville, Paris, 1898, passim in volumes V and VI.

3. The page numbers, cited from the one-volume edition used by the present writer, will give the reader some idea of the extensiveness of Blair's treatment of these various parts.
V. The proper delivery (pp. 365-376)

VI. Means of improving in Eloquence (pp. 377-387)

What will become apparent, if it is not already clear from the outline, is that Blair does not follow the classical approach to oratory—a study, in order, of invention, disposition, elocution, memory, and delivery. He neglects memory entirely, slight invention, and having treated of style in the previous group of lectures omits any elaborate discussion of elocution. Blair's approach is to study, in turn, the three main types of orations, laying down the rules for the proper conduct of each kind and analyzing a quoted example of each kind. "Good sense" is the key term throughout the discussion. Blair's continual appeal to "good sense," as Schmitz has pointed out, "brought him within the school of Thomas Reid." Blair's observations in this section are not as particularized as they were in the lectures on style. Blair is content to lay down broad general principles.

The use of "Public Speaking" as an equivalent term for "Eloquence" indicates that Blair is using eloquence in the sense that, as the Oxford English Dictionary records, the word had in the eighteenth century: "The action, practice, or art of expressing thought with fluency, force, and appropriateness, so as to appeal to the reason or move the feelings." The OED further remarks that the word eloquence was used primarily with reference to oral utterance.

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4 Schmitz, Hugh Blair, III. Thomas Reid (1710-1796), Professor of Moral Philosophy at Marischal, is generally considered the leading representative of the "School of Common Sense." In 1762 he submitted the manuscript of his Inquiry into the Human Mind to Dr. Blair, who had the delicate task then of showing this attack on rational scepticism to his friend David Hume—See Schmitz, Hugh Blair, 87-88.
The term eloquence had fallen into general disrepute. For many men, the term had come to signify certain tricks of speech, a plausible varnishing given to weak or specious arguments. Blair maintains however that whatever eloquence has proven to be in practice it is not, in the ideal, anything like the popular conception of it. Blair defines eloquence as "the art of speaking in such a manner as to attain the end for which we speak." This definition is very close to that proposed by George Campbell: "that art or talent by which the discourse is adapted to its end."5 The end of eloquence, as assigned by Blair, is somewhat different from, and certainly more specific than, Quintilian's bene dicendum.6 The end that the speaker has in mind, says Blair, is "either to inform, or to amuse, or to persuade." This view of the threefold end of oratory goes back ultimately to Cicero, who said in his De Optimo Generis Oratorum (I, 3), "Optimus est orator qui dicendo animos audientium et docet, et delectat, et permovet." One apparent difference is that Blair thinks the orator will have only one of these ends in view at any one time, whereas Cicero, using and (et) instead of or, seems to imply that the orator will strive to do all three things (docet, delectat, permovet) in any speech that he gives.

After giving his definition of eloquence and assigning the proper end, Blair shifts his ground somewhat and remarks that since the ultimate intention of every orator is "to influence conduct and persuade to action" it might be best to conceive of eloquence simply as "the art of persuasion." "True eloquence," he says later in Lecture XXIX, "is the art of placing truth in the most

5 The Philosophy of Rhetoric, Bk. I, ch. 1, New York, 1853, 23.
6 Instit., II, xv, 34.
advantageous light for conviction and persuasion." This ambivalence between Cicero's view of rhetoric and Aristotle's can perhaps be reconciled by saying that the orator strives to "teach, delight, and move" in order to "influence conduct and persuade to action."

If the end of eloquence—the ultimate end, if you will—is to persuade, the prime requisites are "solid argument, clear method, a character of probity appearing in the speaker, joined with such graces of style and utterance as shall draw our attention." Blair is here leaving the way open, not only for logical proofs, but for those pathetic and ethical proofs which move and those stylistic graces which please. A distinction must be drawn, Blair feels, between convincing and persuading. "Conviction affects the understanding only," he says; "persuasion, the will and the practice." Blair is merely recognising a distinction that had been made as long ago as Aristotle; but because abuses had brought emotional appeals under suspicion Blair felt that he had to reaffirm the necessity of appeals to the heart.

What answer can be given to those who point out that eloquence has frequently been employed to persuade people to do evil? Blair's answer is an answer that can be used to checkmate all such objections:

There is no doubt that it may; and so reasoning may also be, and too often is, employed for leading men into error. But who would think of forming an argument from this against the cultivation of our reasoning powers? Reason, eloquence, and every art which has been studied among mankind may be abused and may prove dangerous in the hands of bad men; but it were perfectly childish to contend that, upon this account, they ought to be abolished.

To such a riposte one can only exclaim, "Touche!"

Consistent with Blair's tenet that poetry is the natural language of primitive men is his view that high eloquence is the spontaneous overflow of
powerful feelings. "Almost every man in passion," Blair says, "is eloquent."
And Blair considers this fact to be the foundation of Horace's famous prescription, "Si vis me flere, dolendum est primum ipsi tibi."

To the principle that "all high eloquence flows from passion" Blair assigns several corollaries. For one thing, most people would agree that it is an orator's warmth and enthusiasm which really moves an audience. On the other hand, most people remain cold to labored declamations, affected ornaments of style, studied "prettinesses in gesture and pronunciation." Most people too react phlegmatically to speeches that are read, because such speeches have "less the appearance of coming warm from the heart." Blair goes so far as to say that "to call a man cold is the same thing as to say that he is not eloquent." One finds it easy to agree with Blair if all he is demanding of the speaker is earnestness and sincerity. But one does not give such ready assent if what Blair demands is that the speaker always whip himself into a froth of passion before he composes or delivers a speech. Was Blair himself always deeply moved when he stepped into his pulpit at St. Giles?

Elocuence, in its lowest degree, demands only "soundness of understanding and considerable acquaintance with human nature." Elocuence, in its higher degrees, requires also "strong sensibility of mind, a warm and lively imagination, joined with correctness of judgment and an extensive command of the power of language to which must also be added the graces of pronunciation and delivery." These principles are to be the foundation of much of what Blair has to say on eloquence.

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7 Ars Poetica, lines 102-103. "If you would have me weep, you must first feel grief yourself."--Fairclough's translation, Loeb Classical Edition, 460.
Before he proceeds to a discussion of the various kinds of oratory, Blair traces the history of eloquence. This survey occupies the rest of Lecture XXV and the whole of Lecture XXVI. In presenting this survey, Blair is following the precedent set by Cicero and Quintilian, who in their rhetoric books had given a history of eloquence. But he is not motivated by precedent alone; he seems to have felt that his students should have some awareness of the tradition in which they were being trained. Blair's historical sense (singularly lacking at times in awareness of continuity) has been evident throughout the lectures on rhetoric, and it is even more evident in the lectures (Lectures XXXV-XLVII) that he devotes to Belles-Lettres. Although Blair has consistently cut away many of the hobbles imposed by the past, he cannot forget that his own training came from the ancients, nor can he renounce his admiration for the wisdom of the great masters. One of the things that should become evident from this study is that Blair is a preserver and purveyor of the tradition that in this age of "multitudinous change" was beginning to lose its authority over the minds of men.

Blair's survey concentrates on the great orators of the past, not on the rhetoricians as rhetoricians. He considers each of the major orators in a strictly chronological order. His method in general is to characterize the style of oratory peculiar to each orator, to point out the virtues and weaknesses of each orator, to compare one orator with another, and to quote the verdicts of other critics about these orators. Blair's range of acquaintance is, as was observed before, amazing. Sometimes, however, especially in dealing with minor figures, he gives the impression of mere name-dropping. Much of what he reports has been appropriated, not from first-hand contact with the orations but
from secondary sources. For his comments on some of the Greek orators he owes a special debt, he tells us, to Dionysius of Halicarnassus. The "full and regular treatise" to which he refers must be Dionysius's *On the Ancient Orators* (περὶ τῶν ἀριστῶν ἀγῶνιμων ομοσπονδίων), a work that Blair commends as "one of the most judicious pieces of ancient criticism extant."

Blair starts his survey with the Greek orators, passes on to the Roman orators, and then jumps to modern times, with special emphasis on the great French orators of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The lacunae in this survey are glaringly apparent. Where are the men of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance? Blair mentions three Latin Fathers—Lactantius, Minutius Felix, and St. Augustine—but cavalierly dismisses them with the statement that "none of the Fathers afford [sic] any just models of eloquence." The most distinguished of the Greek Fathers, he says, is St. Chrysostom, who exemplifies, on the credit side, purity of language and smoothness of style, and, on the debit side, the diffuseness and turgidity of Asiatic eloquence.

"As there is nothing more that occurs to me deserving particular attention in the middle ages, I pass now to the state of eloquence in modern times." This is surely one of the most supercilious dismissals ever made by a literary critic. A short paragraph of some two hundred words has been allotted to the Middle Ages, and the jump to modern times is a leap-frog jump, which passes over the Tudor Age, the most flourishing period of English rhetoric, and lands squarely in the late seventeenth century. Some excuse for this neglect of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance can be found in the fact that Blair is considering orators, not teachers of rhetoric. Certainly, none of the orators of these two periods can match the reputation and worth of the rhetoricians. But
Blair has neglected—more accurately, he has ignored—the Middle Ages and the
Renaissance throughout his lectures on rhetoric. The names of medieval and Tu-
dor rhetoricians are conspicuous by their absence. One does not wholly account
for this silence by simply pointing to Blair's distaste for "scholastic" rhet-
oric. Blair simply did not know anything about the rhetorical works of these two
periods. As a matter of fact, he was not even aware that men like Erasmus and
Thomas Wilson ever existed. It is indeed remarkable that Blair managed to
transmit the classical doctrines of rhetoric despite the fact that he had no
sense of the continuity of the rhetorical tradition.

At the beginning of his survey, Blair observes that several writers,
Longinus among them, have considered liberty to be a sine qua non of true elo-
quenoe. Blair feels that this proposition needs some qualification. "For under
arbitrary governments," he says, "if they be of the civilized kind and give en-
couragement to the arts, ornamented eloquence may flourish remarkably." He
points to the example of modern France, "where, since the reign of Louis XIV,
more of what may be justly called eloquence, within a certain sphere, is to be
found than perhaps in any other nation in Europe." He emphasizes, however, that
only eloquence of the ornamented kind, eloquence which is calculated "more to
please and soothe than to convince and persuade," can flourish under an arbitrary
government. Having made this point, he swings back to a qualified concordance
with Longinus. "Wherever man can acquire power over man by means of reason and
discourse, which certainly is under a free state of government, there we may
naturally expect that true eloquence will be best understood and carried to the
greatest height." Blair cannot be implying here that the ornamented brand of
oratory will not flourish in a democratical society too. If he were implying
that, we could put him to the lie merely by pointing to much of our political and ceremonial oratory today. What Blair does mean, apparently, is that under an arbitrary government reasoned discourse has no opportunity to exercise its influence. In an autocratic regime, the art of speaking cannot be, he says, "an instrument of ambition, business, and power, as it is in democratical states."

There is no need to review the details of Blair's historical survey. The information supplied can be found in any history of oratory before or after Blair. A few of his observations and judgments, however, deserve some attention.

Blair's comparison of Cicero and Demosthenes is of particular interest because it reveals the qualities that he considered of greatest value in eloquence. Let it be said at the outset that Blair has a proper respect for Cicero as a rhetorician and as an orator. Cicero's name occurs more often in this section of the Lectures than in any other section. Blair made a special point of recommending to his students Cicero's three treatises on oratory—the De Oratore, the Brutus, and the Orator. Cicero's virtues as an orator are as apparent as they are undeniable, Blair remarks. His method is always clear. Everything is always in its proper place. He "never attempts to move till he has endeavoured to convince." No one more than Cicero knew the power and force of words. His sentences are always unified, coherent, emphatic, and harmonious. Although Cicero's manner is on the whole diffuse, he can adapt his style to the subject and the occasion. When his indignation is unusually stirred, Cicero can even be "exceedingly cogent and vehement."

In the light of these undeniable merits, Blair finds no difficulty in acknowledging that Cicero is one of the princes of eloquence. When Cicero is weighed in the balance with Demosthenes, however, Blair awards the palm to the
Greek orator. The differences between these two orators is summed up in this passage:

The character of Demosthenes is vigour and austerity; that of Cicero is gentleness and insinuation. In the one, you find more manliness; in the other, more ornament. The one is harsh, but more spirited and elegant; the other more agreeable, but withal looser and weaker.

In preferring Demosthenes to Cicero, Blair repudiates the assessment made by his idol, Quintilian, and by most of the contemporary French critics. He agrees rather with his friend David Hume, who in his Essay upon Eloquence, appraised Demosthenes's orations as the models which approach closest to perfection.

"Manliness" and "vigor" are the keynotes of Demosthenes's manner, and for Blair these qualities carry greater weight than "ornament" and "smoothness." At the end of Lecture XVIII, the reader will recall, Blair declared that his persistent intention throughout the lectures would be to caution his readers against "the affected and frivolous use of ornament" and to cultivate a taste "for more solid thought and more manly simplicity of style." Having set these ends for himself, Blair springs no surprise on us with his preference for Demosthenes. But there is yet another ground for Blair's preference: Demosthenes's style of oratory would be more effective in a modern situation. It is Blair's opinion that were the state in danger or some great interest at stake which drew the serious attention of the public, an oration in the spirit and strain of Demosthenes would have more weight and produce greater effects than one in the Ciceronian manner... The rapid style, the vehement reasoning, the disdain, anger, boldness, freedom, which perpetually animate them, would render their success infallible over any modern assembly.

8 See Institut., XII, 1, 19-21.
9 Blair makes special mention of René Rapin.
10 "Of Eloquence," Essays, Literary, Moral, and Political, London, n.d., 55-63. "... the orations of Demosthenes present to us the models which approach the nearest to perfection." (60).
Cicero's predominantly declamatory manner, Blair decides, is too remote "from the manner in which we now expect to hear real business and causes of importance treated." Strength and ornament are, in Blair's view, incompatible elements. "The highest degree of strength is, I suspect, never found united with the highest degree of smoothness and ornament." Throughout the lectures, ornament has consistently taken an inferior position to such elements as force, warmth, simplicity, succinctness. In these lectures on the art of speaking there will be no shifting of values in this scale.

At the end of this historical survey in Lecture XXVI, Blair observes, with no little sadness, that in the art of speaking, the English are undoubtedly inferior, not only to the Greeks and Romans but also to the French. English philosophers, historians, and poets can stand with the best produced by other nations; but English orators have not yet made a conspicuous mark. It must be remembered that Blair was lecturing at a time when men like Burke, Pitt and Fox had not yet achieved their eminence on the rostrum. If Blair had not been so ignorant of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, he might have been chauvinistically proud of the oratorical competence of such divines as Launcelot Andrews, Jeremy Taylor, and Richard Hooker. In general, however, Blair is right. The English have not made their mark in oratory. For every Andrews, Burke, Macaulay, Churchill that the English can point to with pride, a dozen first-rate poets can be cited.

How does one account for England's lack of distinction in eloquence? Blair attempts to answer this provocative question. One of the reasons is that because of the advance of philosophy in modern times we have grown suspicious of "the flowers of elocution" and wary of being deceived by the wiles of the or-
ator. The warmth and vigor that once characterized ancient oratory has been chastened by "our phlegm and natural coldness." This appeal to ethnological traits for an explanation of the characteristics of a national literature adumbrates Taine and his school in the nineteenth century.

For an explanation of the decline of oratory in the three great scenes of British oratory--the parliament, the court, and the pulpit--Blair looks to the "peculiar circumstances" that prevail in modern times. The parliaments of Greece and Rome were popular assemblies--i.e., assemblies composed of ordinary citizens, whose voting could be influenced by the rhetorical skill of the public speaker. Legislation in modern times is directed by kings and ministers, neither of whom is as susceptible to rhetoric as were the common people.

Judicial eloquence flourished among the Greeks and Romans because "the judges were generally numerous; the laws were few and simple; the decision of causes was left, in a great measure, to equity and the sense of mankind." Those circumstances, so conducive to the cultivation of skill in oratory, do not prevail in modern times. The law has become so complicated that a lawyer must devote all of his schooling and most of his lifetime to learning the law and all its ramifications. As a result, the arts of composition and delivery have had to be neglected. Decisions in legal cases now depend more on nice interpretations of statutes and precedents than on oratory.

Blair recognizes two causes for the decline of pulpit eloquence. One of the causes is the practice of reading sermons. Swift lamented this practice in his "Letter to a Young Clergyman," and almost two centuries before Swift, Erasmus pointed out that this practice was lamentably prevalent among English
preachers. 11 The reading of sermons has increased the speaker's accuracy. Blair says, but it has also diminished his effectiveness. Blair does not attempt to demonstrate the truth of his assertion that "a discourse read is far inferior to an oration spoken." But perhaps no demonstration is necessary; maybe this is a self-evident truth. Our own experience will tell us that the effectiveness of a speech that is read will be in proportion to the illusion created by the speaker of delivering his talk from memory.

A second cause for the decline of pulpit oratory Blair finds in the reaction of ministers of the Established Church to the "warm, zealous, and popular manner of preaching" practiced by the sectaries and fanatics during the Commonwealth period. "The odium of these sects," Blair says, "drove the established church from that warmth which they [the sects] were judged to have carried too far into the opposite extreme of a studied coolness and composure of manner."

Blair concludes this analysis of the causes for the lapse of eloquence in modern times with this summary statement:

Hence, from the art of persuasion, which preaching ought always to be, it has passed, in England, into mere reasoning and instruction, which not only has brought down the eloquence of the pulpit to a lower tone than it might justly assume, but has produced this farther effect that by accustoming the public ear to such cool and dispassionate discourses, it has tended to fashion other kinds of public speaking upon the same model.

Some may object that Blair has not investigated all the reasons for the decline of English oratory or that he has not investigated the radical reasons; but

11 Erasmus reports that one of the charges brought by the Bishop of London against Colet was "quod sum in concione dixisset quasdam de charta consociati (id quod multi frigide fasulum in Anglia) oblique taliis esset Episcopum."--Opus Epistolorum Des. Erasmi Rotterdami, ed. F. S. Allen, Oxford, 1922, IV, 524.
these same people could not deny that the causes Blair does assign are credible enough. Blair's innate good sense may not have been a faculty perspicuous enough to lead him to the kind of analysis that is illuminating and conclusive, but it did prove a faculty that nine times out of ten preserved him from pronouncing insanities.

Having concluded his cursory history of eloquence, Blair is ready to discuss the different kinds of public speaking. In Lecture XXVII he designates the three kinds, discusses in detail the first of these kinds, and illustrates the excellence of this kind with extracts from Demosthenes.

Traditionally, orations were classified into three kinds: the demonstrative, which praises or blames; the deliberative, which seeks to advise or dissuade; the judicial, which accuses or defends. Blair has no fundamental objection to this division, but he thinks that it would be more to his purpose "to follow that division which the train of modern speaking naturally points out to us, taken from the three great scenes of eloquence, popular assemblies, the bar, and the pulpit." There is a partial correspondence between this division and the ancient division. The eloquence of the bar is nothing more than what the ancients designated as judicial or forensic oratory. The eloquence of popular assemblies coincides principally with the deliberative kind of oratory but admits also of the demonstrative. The eloquence of the pulpit, however, Blair finds to be "altogether of a distinct nature," with no analogue in the ancient rhetoricians. Blair's viewing pulpit oratory as an altogether distinct genre is rather strange. Pulpit oratory certainly partakes of the ceremonial tone that marked demonstrative or epideictic oratory. Earlier in the lecture Blair admitted that two of the species under the head of demonstrative oratory were
panegyrics and funeral orations. The preacher certainly delivers panegyrics and funeral orations on occasion. Many of the French preachers whom Blair discusses later, in the lecture on pulpit oratory, were famous principally, if not exclusively, for their funeral orations. While it is true that there is no strict analogue in ancient oratory for modern homiletic oratory, it is also true that sermons share the ends of demonstrative and deliberative oratory. For certainly the preacher praises or blames, advises or dissuades. Blair's statement is inexplicable.

The most august theater in Great Britain for the display of the eloquence of popular assemblies is the Parliament. Here in this concourse of lords and commoners the orator must exercise consummate skill in order to satisfy the interests, and to circumvent the prejudices, of divergent groups. The speaker must not suppose that because speeches before popular assemblies lend themselves so readily to the declamatory style he can neglect the appeal to the reason. He must proceed on the fundamental principle that "in all attempts to persuade men . . . it is necessary to convince their understanding." Mere declamation, "frothy and ostentatious harangue," unsupported by a substratum of solid sense and argument, will prove insipid and ineffective. Despite the fact that Blair felt himself to be a distinguished representative of the intellectual aristocracy, that his classes were composed mainly of sons of the nobility, that he was a preacher in the most fashionable church in Edinburgh, he did not entertain any preclusive disdain for the capacities of the common man. That Blair had been caught up by the democratic spirit of the times is evident from this statement:

Even the common people are better judges of argument and good sense than we sometimes think them; and upon any question of business, a plain man, who speaks to the point without art, will generally prevail over the most
artful speaker, who deals in flowers and ornament, rather than in reasoning.

Such a statement foreshadows the even more famous statements about the common man in Wordsworth's Preface.

The recurring terms throughout this lecture on the elocution of popular assemblies—throughout all the lectures on eloquence, for that matter—are good sense, decorum, manliness, sincerity. Blair seems bent on allaying the suspicions to which oratory had fallen heir.

According to Blair, good sense is the faculty which preserves decorum. Cicero had said in the Orator: 12 "Sed est eloquentiae siuit reliquarum rerum fundamentum sapientia. Ut enim in vita sic in oratione nihil est difficilis quam quid deceat videre. πρέπειον appellat hoo Graeci, no dicamus sans decorum." It is noteworthy that, in a footnote, Blair translates Cicero's sapientia by the term good sense and Cicero's deceat with the double terms, either proper and becoming or suitable and decent. Good sense for Blair then is not that intuitive commonsense which most people understand when they hear the term but is that wisdom which Cicero and Quintilian said was the heritage of the man trained in the litterae humaniores. And only a man possessed of this good sense would have an infallible instinct for what was decorous. An instinct for decorum will, in turn, insure the virtues of moderation, manliness, and sincerity. Good sense might well be considered the term that orients Blair's entire discussion of the arts of speaking and writing. Consistently throughout the lectures he has advo-

12 Orator, xx, 70. "For after all, the foundation of eloquence, as of everything else, is wisdom. In an oration, as in life, nothing is harder than to determine what is appropriate. The Greeks call it πρέπειον; let us call it decorum."
ated the principle of the *via media* and has stressed the relative superiority of *res* over *verba*. The fact that *good sense* is an acquisition rather than an endowment serves to justify Blair's devoting thirty-four formal and elaborate lectures to the art of spoken and written discourse.

From the succession of precepts for the proper conduct of political oratory it would be advisable to select only the more capital points.

*Declamation* is always used by Blair in a pejorative sense. The practice of declamation, which encourages the student to argue both sides of a question, has brought eloquence under suspicion, because it fosters "flimsy and trivial discourse" and produces insincerity in the speaker. Blair sees very little pedagogical value in such a practice. While such a practice exercises a student's powers of invention, it does little to generate that enthusiasm and sincerity so necessary for high eloquence. It is far better for students to speak only on that side of a question to which they are passionately committed. They will thereby acquire "the habit of reasoning closely and expressing themselves with warmth and force." Speaking on a subject without the full commitment of the head and heart "may fix an imputation on their characters before they are aware; and what they intended merely as amusement may be turned to the discredit, either of their principles or their understanding."

There is a prejudice in public assemblies, Blair observes, against set speeches. Set speeches want that natural air, and "though applauded as elegant, they are seldom so persuasive as more free and unconstrained discourses." Blair is not calling, however, for wholly extemporaneous speeches. There should be considerable premeditation about the subject in general. Where the matter has been thoroughly excogitated, the words and expression can be left with some as-
surance to the chance of extemporaneous effort. Young speakers, however, would be wise to memorize their speeches until they acquire that fluency and ease which will permit them to speak "off the cuff." Even the accomplished speaker should have some reliance on notes. In all of this advice, Blair is exhibiting an awareness that the audience for political oratory is liable to be more heterogeneous than the audience for any other kind of oratory. Consequently, a speech for a popular assembly must have enough polish to satisfy the discriminating, sufficient naturalness to disarm the rude, and an adequate measure of warmth and sincerity to move all.

The diffuse style is generally more suited to popular eloquence than the concise style. In speaking to a multitude, one must take care to explain, to amplify, to illustrate. But as in everything else, diffuseness can be carried to excess. Verbose speakers run the risk of losing "more in point of strength than they gain by the fullness of their illustration." In this regard, Blair gives a piece of advice that has all the gnomic quality of an Horatian utterance: "We ought always to remember that how much soever we may be pleased with hearing ourselves speak, every audience is very ready to be tired; and the moment they begin to be tired, all our eloquence goes for nothing."

No less aphoristic is Blair's final piece of advice: "The impression made by fine and artful speaking is momentary; that made by argument and good sense is solid and lasting."

To illustrate popular eloquence at its best, Blair quotes extracts from Demosthenes's First Philippic. Except for two brief transitional sen-

13 Blair says he is using Leland's translation. Thomas Leland (1722-1785) published a translation of all of Demosthenes's orations between the years
tences, Blair makes no interruptions of the five-page quotation. And he does not furnish any analysis of the passage. He says simply, "These extracts may serve to give some imperfect idea of the manner of Demosthenes."

In Lecture XXVIII, Blair treats of the eloquence of the bar. He seems to have held the legal profession in high esteem. Midway in his lecture he pauses to pay tribute to lawyers. "Of all the liberal professions," he says, "none gives fairer play to genius and abilities than that of the advocate." The lawyer is less prone to suffer "by the arts of rivalry, by popular prejudices, or secret intrigues," and he can rise in his profession by merit alone. Clients will not be wanting to the lawyer "who gives the most approved specimen of his knowledge, eloquence, and industry."

Blair makes a distinction at the outset between political and forensic oratory. The distinction rests on three bases: the end, the audience, and the subject matter. Whereas the end of popular eloquence is persuasion, the great object of forensic eloquence is conviction. The speaker at the bar addresses himself to a select audience: to a few judges, and these generally men of "age, gravity, and authority." The lawyer, too, must confine his topics to "precise law and statute." "For these reasons," Blair says, "it is clear that the eloquence of the bar is of a much more limited, more sober and chastened kind than that of popular assemblies."

The judicial oratory of men like Cicero and Demosthenes cannot serve as an exact model for modern forensic oratory. The character of the courts in Greece and Rome made it possible for the ancient orators to employ many of the

1756 and 1770. This must have been a popular translation, for the CBEL records subsequent editions in 1771, 1777, 1802, 1804, 1806.
devices and techniques commonly associated with popular oratory. Because the laws in ancient times were fewer and less complex than in modern times, advocates had to give less study to jurisprudence and more to eloquence. There were men called pragmataci, whose office it was to supply the orators with all the points of law that they would need for a particular case. Accordingly, the orators were chiefly preoccupied with dressing up those points of law with such colors of eloquence as would most effectively move the judges. Another circumstance was that the judges in Greek and Roman courts were more numerous than they are in modern times. Cicero, for instance, pleaded the cause of Milo before fifty-one judices selecti. The number of judges made the ancient courts more like popular assemblies, and as a result the Greek and Roman orators employed many of the devices commonly used in speeches before the multitude. As Blair puts it, "Hence certain practices, which would be reckoned theatrical among us, were common at the Roman bar; such as introducing not only the accused person dressed in deep mourning, but presenting to the judges his family and his young children, endeavouring to move them by their cries and tears." The point of all this is that although we can learn a great deal from the theory and practice of the ancient orators we cannot pattern our speeches exactly on the classical models. When it is said that Blair is a transmitter of classical doctrines on rhetoric, the statement must be understood to mean that he transmitted those doctrines with such modifications as would make those doctrines palatable and suitable to the modern world.

The differences between forensic oratory and popular oratory call for some shifts of emphasis. Some play will be allowed to the imagination, some display of warmth may be admitted, but in eloquence designed for the bar the
appeal must be predominantly, and in some few instances exclusively, to the reason. The style must be pure, neat, and perspicuous, carefully guarded against a surcharge of verbosity, figures of speech, and jargon. Blair cautions the lawyer against the display of wit. "It is not his business," Blair says, "to make an audience laugh, but to convince the judge; and seldom or never did any one rise to eminence in profession by being a witty lawyer." In reading Blair's observations about judicial oratory, one must bear in mind that Blair is talking about courts in which the practice of trial by jury was not as widespread as it is today. The presence of a jury makes modern courts more like the Greek and Roman courts with their assembly of judges. Lawyers today know the value of appeals to the imaginations and emotions of the twelve men or women in the box.

Blair recognizes the sagacity of the principle, first set forth by Aristotle and later confirmed by Quintilian, that an orator must impress his audience with the probity of his character. About this ethical means of persuasion Blair says that "there is no instrument of persuasion more powerful than an opinion of probity and honour in the person who undertakes to persuade." So important is this probity of character that the orator must jealously guard it. Taking care to avoid causes that are manifestly odious and unjust and to eschew means that are moretricious or downright dishonest. The importance of high moral character Blair has insisted on in the early lectures and will reaffirm in the final lecture on eloquence.

The remainder of Lecture XXVIII is given over to an analysis of one of

14 See Aristotle, Rhetoric, ch. 2, 1356a; also Quintilian, Instit., IV, i, 7: "... plurimum tamen ad omnia momenti est in hoc positum, si vir bonus creditur."
Cicero's forensic orations, the Pro Cluentio. In illustrating the excellence of popular oratory, Blair had quoted verbatim from Demosthenes and had given no commentary. In this instance, he gives very few direct quotations from Cicero's oration and does give some commentary. Blair's method here is to summarize the successive stages of Cicero's oration and to comment on the purpose and effectiveness of each step. As he says at the end of the Lecture, "What I principally aimed at was to show his disposition and method, his arrangement of facts, and the conduct and force of some of his main arguments." He finds Cicero's oration "an excellent example of managing at the bar a complex and intricate cause, with order, elegance, and force." He admits, however, that there is no adequate substitute for the original oration. Blair has succeeded signally in exposing Cicero's mastery of disposition, and since argument is the principal element in forensic oratory, this summary method perhaps illustrates to best advantage Cicero's happy management of his argument.

One wonders whether Blair's consideration of pulpit eloquence in the usually climactic third position is any indication that he regarded this as the highest type of oratory. He does say that the dignity and importance of the subjects of pulpit oratory "must be acknowledged superior to any other." The preacher also enjoys several advantages over other orators: he speaks to large assemblies, he is free from all interruptions, and he is exempted from making any replies or extemporaneous utterances.

It must not be forgotten that Blair was himself a pulpit orator, and a very famous one at that. 15 Blair achieved his fame as a preacher despite the

fact that his voice and manner were far from prepossessing. Thomas Somerville testifies\(^\text{16}\) to the stiffness and affectation of his manner, and James Boswell remarks\(^\text{17}\) that Blair's voice lacked resonance and that his pronunciation was marred by a peculiar burr. It seems to have been the eloquence of the sermons that captivated Blair's audiences. The same James Boswell who complained about Blair's delivery said that Blair "would stop hounds with his eloquence."\(^\text{18}\) Basing his judgment principally on the eloquence of the sermons, Lord Kames declared that Blair was "the best preacher in Britain."\(^\text{19}\) The publication of the sermons, in five volumes, between 1777 and 1781, extended Blair's fame throughout the whole of Great Britain, to the continent, and to America. Before 1801 there were at least twenty-one editions of Volume One of the Sermons and eighteen editions of Volume Two.\(^\text{20}\)

There was some extravagant praise of the sermons from Blair's contemporaries. One anonymous writer has pointed to Blair's sermons as the chief source of his celebrity.\(^\text{21}\) And another writer has gone so far as to say, "Indeed, if we except the Spectators, we think that Dr. Blair's sermons are the

\(^{16}\) Thomas Somerville, My Own Life and Times, Edinburgh, 1861, 57-58.

\(^{17}\) Private Papers of James Boswell from Malahide Castle, Mount Vernon, New York, 1928-1934, XIII, 170.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., 109.

\(^{19}\) Ibid., XV, 287.

\(^{20}\) Schmitz, Hugh Blair, 142.

most popular work in the English language."22 This extravagance was balanced by the more temperate judgments of other contemporaries. Dr. Johnson, for instance, was characteristically judicious in his observations on the sermons. In a letter to Boswell, dated February 13, 1777, Johnson pronounced that the sermons were "excellently written both as to doctrine and language."23 At another time Johnson said to Boswell, "I love 'Blair's Sermons'... and though the dog is a Scotchman, and a Presbyterian, and everything he should not be, I was the first to praise them."24

The sermons did not fare so well at the hands of some late nineteenth-century critics. Leslie Stephen, for instance, affirmed that Blair's sermons represented "the last stage of theological decay";25 and Edmund Gosse referred to them as "Blair's bucket of warm water."26 A more balanced judgment has been rendered by those two twentieth-century critics who have made a close study of Blair's sermons. Both Hawley and Golden regard the sermons as lacking in that


24 Ibid., IV, 98. It is commonly believed that Dr. Johnson's enthusiastic praise of the Sermons in manuscript induced Mr. Strahan to publish Blair's sermons. Professor Schmitz, however, found in the National Library of Scotland a letter dated October 29, 1776, which seems to prove that Blair had received a hundred pounds for the Sermons before Johnson recommended them to Mr. Strahan.—Robert W. Schmitz, "Dr. Johnson and Blair's Sermons," Modern Language Notes, LX, 1945, 268-270.


religious depth which characterizes the very best examples of pulpit oratory; but they think that he made a significant contribution to the art of preaching by uniting intellectual disciplines with the religious. Hawley says of Blair:

Had it not been for him it might have been many years before the traditional religious thought and practice had been introduced to an enriched by the values that were developing out of the eighteenth century "**aufklärung.**"

Golden's assessment is much in the same vein:

Further, the style which he helped to initiate was the vogue for approximately fifty years. Perhaps Blair's great contribution as a pulpit orator, however, was his successful attempt to blend the intellectual and cultural forces of the eighteenth century with the traditional religious thought and practice.

The foregoing observations evince that Blair was both a competent and an historically significant pulpit orator. But they do little to answer our original question: did Blair place pulpit oratory at the top of the hierarchy? There is no explicit statement in the Lectures that he did hold pulpit oratory to be the chief kind, and aside from the fact that his discussion of pulpit oratory occupied a climactic position, there is no evidence from which we can infer that he regarded this species of oratory as supreme. None of the classical rhetoricians, as far as the present writer knows, made any attempt to arrange the three kinds of oratory on a scale of value. Blair seems not to have made any such attempt either. Each kind of oratory has its own use and excellence, and it were as futile to decide which of these kinds is the better as to decide which is the superior tool, a hammer or a saw.

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Although Blair recognized that the pulpit orator enjoyed certain advantages over the practitioners of the other kinds of oratory, he also saw that the preacher labored under certain disadvantages. The chief disadvantages are that the preacher discourses on subjects grown trite and familiar and that he deals primarily with abstract qualities. He agrees with Jean de la Bruyère that "l'éloquence de la chaire" is an art known only to a few and that it is an exercise difficult to bring off successfully. As Blair says,

No sort of composition whatever is such a trial of skill as where [sic] the merit of it lies wholly in the execution; not in giving any information that is new, not in convincing men of what they did not believe, but in dressing truths which they knew and of which they were before convinced in such colours as may most forcibly affect their imagination and heart.

It is because of the difficulties inherent in this kind of oratory that so few excel in it. The wonder, as Blair sees it, is not that there are so few eminent preachers but that there are so many competent ones. Blair agrees perfectly with his friend George Campbell, who had said, "I have been for a long time more disposed to wonder that we hear so many instructive and even eloquent sermons, than that we hear so few." The laity might well advert to the difficulties of this kind of speech whenever they are prone to be critical of the state of homiletics among their priests and ministers.

If the general aim of all oratory is persuasion, the special aim of pulpit oratory is to persuade men to be good. The preacher must appeal primar-

29 In a footnote Blair gives a long quotation in French from Carac-tères ou moeurs de ce siècle, a very popular work that Bruyère fashioned on the model of Theophrastus and first published in 1668.

30 Philosophy of Rhetoric, Bk. I, ch. x, sec. v. A study of the whole of Chapter X of Campbell's book reveals many points on which the two Scottish rhetoricians agree. The similarity of doctrine does not, of course, argue a mutual influence in this matter.
ily to the understanding. "He who would work on men's passions or influence their practice without first giving them just principles and enlightening their minds," Blair says, "is no better than a mere declaimer." One might have expected to find some neat pattern running through the discussion of the three kinds of oratory: the primary appeal to the emotions in popular oratory, the primary appeal to the reason in judicial oratory, and a balanced appeal to reason and emotion in pulpit oratory. But Blair has consistently advocated that the primary appeal must be to the reason. Some suspicion arises that Blair underestimates the motive power of the feelings. Blair does not positively interdict appeals to the emotions; as a matter of fact, he recognizes that where conviction is the object the understanding alone must be appealed to but that where persuasion is the object the passions must be touched. But throughout the Lectures he puts so little emphasis on appeals to the emotions that, in effect, he minimizes their importance.

One of the prime requisites for a preacher is that he be a good man. The present writer has frequently throughout this study expressed his reservations about the necessary connection between moral character and eloquence. It was not easy to assent to Blair's proposition that a man could not display an infallible taste, that he could not produce sublime effects, that he could not write eloquently, unless he was a good man. Blair indeed had the authority of Longinus and Quintilian behind him. And yet, although virtue and eloquence frequently go together, neither logic nor history seems to corroborate the view that eloquence cannot exist without virtue. Thus Jacques Maritain, arguing from a Thomistic point of view, says, "The good that art pursues is not the good of the human will but the good of the very artifact. Thus, art does not require,
as a necessary pre-condition, that the will or the appetite should be undeviating with respect to its own nature and its own--human or moral--ends and dynamism." 31

Notwithstanding this demur, there does seem to be some justification for holding that a preacher must be a good man. If there is any activity where virtue would seem to be a necessary concomitant of art, it is the oratory of the pulpit. The effectiveness of a sermon would undoubtedly be weakened if the preacher's private life was known to be scandalous. 32 "Practice what you preach" has not infrequently been the cry that was muttered by belabored congregations. The validity of Aristotle's principle that an orator sell himself to his audience is especially evident in connection with pulpit oratory. The matter of sincerity is involved here too. A preacher could hardly maintain what Blair considers to be the two most necessary qualities of sermons, gravity and warmth, if he were not a good man. The "whitened sepulchre" will eventually betray his lack of sincerity. No man can be truly eloquent, Blair maintains, "who does not


32 A cause célèbre involving the prominent Congregationalist minister Henry Ward Beecher might cast some doubt on the truth of this observation. In a recent series of articles Robert Shaplen has pointed out that when Henry Ward Beecher was arraigned in court on the charge of having committed adultery with Mrs. Elizabeth Richards Tilton, the wife of a parishioner in his Plymouth church, his Sunday services were packed even more than usual. (See Robert Shaplen, "That Was New York: The Beecher-Tilton Case," New Yorker, XXX, June 5, 1954, 37-61 and June 12, 1954, 34-69; see especially June 12, 1954, 35). It could be said, however, that most of these people flocked to Beecher's church not to be edified but to satisfy their prurient curiosity.
Blair's rules for the proper conduct of a sermon will be set down in outline and then commented on.

1. The unity of a sermon requires that some one main point constitute the burden of the discourse.

2. Sermons will be the more striking and useful, the more precise and particular the subject of them is.

3. The preacher must not attempt to say all that can be said on a subject.

4. The instructions must be rendered interesting to the hearers.

5. Preachers must be wary of taking their models "from particular fashions that chance to have the vogue."

Perhaps the most striking feature of Blair's own sermons is the clear-cut organization. Blair observed his first rule in an admirable fashion. In the introductory paragraphs of his sermons, he set forth his text and indicated, in a very schematic way, the divisions of his subject. In the body of the sermon he makes skillful use of transitional devices to indicate to his hearers when he is passing to the next part. Digressions are rare in Blair's sermons, and although he works variations on his single theme, the variations are always pertinent. This insistence on unity is founded on a principle that Blair has repeatedly called up in earlier lectures: "the mind can fully attend only to one capital object at a time." To compose a sermon in defiance of this principle is to weaken the force of the sermon and to mar its beauty.

Young preachers commonly chose general subjects, like "the excellency of the pleasures of religion," because they find such subjects easy to handle.

33 Blair quotes this Latin phrase at least twice in the lectures but nowhere identifies its source. The phrase is from Virgil's *Aeneid*, Bk. XI, l. 377.
But sermons on broad subjects so often fall into "the beaten track of commonplace thought" that they fail to move or convince the audience. Those sermons will be most effective which concentrate on some one aspect of a subject. Instead of discoursing on the general subject of sin, for instance, the preacher would do better to focus on a single vice. Choosing too broad a subject is a common fault of immature writing, and Blair does well to remind his students of this pitfall.

Closely allied to this fault is the fault of attempting to exhaust a subject. Blair comes down particularly hard on "the spinning and wire-drawing mode." "Nothing," he says, "is more opposite to persuasion than an unnecessary and tedious fullness." He advises the preacher to put himself in the position of the hearers. Let the preacher ask himself what knowledge of the subject he can presume his audience to know. Let him ask himself what views of the subject would most strike him and would be most likely to persuade him. Let him concentrate then on those salient points. The ability to discern the more striking views of a subject will, of course, require judgment—the kind of judgment that cannot be taught, that can only be learned.

Blair's fourth rule for the conduct of a sermon—"render your instructions interesting to the hearers"—is so obvious that in its bare statement it becomes almost laughable. "Yes, Dr. Blair," we exclaim, "make the sermon interesting. That's the whole secret of eloquence. Tell us how to make it interesting, and you will have given us the key to the world." Blair must redeem the naïveté of this truism by giving us some practical advice. "The great secret," Blair says, "lies in bringing home all that is spoken to the hearts of the hearers so as to make every man think that the preacher is addressing him in particu-
ular." The preacher will establish this rapport with his audience by the skill of his delivery, by the use of vivid, concrete language, by the use of examples drawn from history or everyday life, and by the accommodation of his instructions and exhortations to the different ages, characters, and condition of the people in his congregation. All of this advice, while sound, is really too general to be helpful. It is not much help either to be referred to Bishop Butler's sermon on the "Character of Balaam" for an example of an interesting sermon. Blair will redeem himself in the next lecture when he gives a detailed analysis of Bishop Atterbury's sermon.

About the proper style for sermons Blair is somewhat more pointed. The style must be at once perspicuous, lively, and dignified. Perspicuity will depend mainly on the use of "plain words, easily understood and in common use." Liveliness will result from the skillful and appropriate use of figures of speech. Dignity will be achieved mainly by frequent quotations from the Scriptures. About the use of figures of speech Blair lays down a caution that he frequently stressed earlier: "never to employ strong figures or a pathetic style except in cases where the subject leads to them and where the speaker is impelled to the use of them by native unaffected warmth." On the negative side, Blair advises the preacher to avoid conceits, "affected smartness," and "quaintness of expression"; to be sparing in the use of epithets; to avoid repeating a favorite expression ("Let not any expression which is remarkable for its lustre or beauty occur twice in the same discourse.").

The remainder of Lecture XXIX is given over to some general observations about the best models of French and English pulpit oratory. Blair exhibits an intimate acquaintance with the French divines of the seventeenth and
eighteenth centuries. French was the one modern language, other than English, that Blair read with facility. He has read the French sermons in the original and he has read such contemporary criticism of sermons as Jean-S Baptiste-Louis Crevier's Hérorique Francaise (Paris, 1765) and Voltaire's article on eloquence in the Encyclopédie. William Hau ley has shown in his dissertation how much Blair relied on the French preachers for his own style of pulpit oratory. It would have pleased Matthew Arnold to know that Blair, in his quest for "the best that was known and thought in the world," was not blinded by any chauvinistic allegiances.

French sermons, Blair finds, are characterized by earnestness and warmth. English sermons are distinguished by their reliance on appeals to the understanding. The perfect sermon, in Blair's view, would be one that united the French virtues with the English. In advocating this union, Blair has not forsaken his preference for res verba; he is simply granting a place to that enthusiasm which had been so long absent from British oratory.

Blair nominates Saurin as the best of the French Protestant preachers. The most eminent of the Catholic preachers are Louis Bourdaloue and Jean-Baptiste Massillon. French critics have engaged in lively disputes about the relative merits of these two Catholic preachers. Blair concedes that Bourdaloue is "a great reasoner" and that he "inculcates his doctrines with much zeal, piety, and earnestness"; but he finds Bourdaloue verbose, "disagreeably full of quotations," and lacking in imagination. Massillon is more uniformly pleasing, more effectively "pathetic and persuasive." In Blair's judgment, Massillon is "the
most eloquent writer of sermons which modern times have produced. By way of illustrating Massillon's eloquence, Blair quotes, in French, a peroration that, according to the testimony of Voltaire, so affected the congregation that they started from their seats. The quoted passage abounds in those short sentences which are rhythmically appropriate to impassioned moments, in those vocative locutions (e.g. "mes frères") which serve to establish an intimate rapport with the audience, and in figures of speech which grow naturally out of the warmth of the exhortation. Blair will have more to say about the French preachers in later lectures.

Blair next makes some general observations about a few of the English preachers. He pronounces that the sermons of seventeenth-century divines were burdened with "scholastic casuistical theology," that in the didactic parts of their sermons they too often descended to "minute divisions and subdivisions," but that in the perorations they were capable of a warmth of address that touched the consciences of their hearers. Blair's failure to appreciate fully the magniloquence of the seventeenth-century preachers is one of the rare instances in the lectures where his literary judgment is awry. His deep-seated prejudice against anything "scholastic" prevented him from viewing these divines in true perspective. It is noteworthy too that in his own sermons Blair studiously avoids theological discussions. In his sermon "On Devotion" Blair goes so far as to say that if self-conceit

34 This statement about Massillon's supremacy conflicts with a statement that Blair makes at the end of Lecture XXXII: "The most eloquent of the French, perhaps, indeed, of all modern orators, is Bossuet, bishop of Meaux, . . ." Blair never reconciles these two opposing judgments.
make you establish your own opinions as an infallible standard for the whole Christian world and lead you to consign to perdition all who differ from you, either in some doctrinal tenets or in the mode of expressing them, you may rest assured that to much pride you have joined much ignorance, both of the nature of devotion and of the Gospel of Christ.\(^35\)

The seventeenth-century divines were too "doctrinal" for Blair's taste. William Taylor has discovered in studying Blair's ninety-one printed sermons that whenever Blair descended to doctrine it was the doctrine of natural religion. Taylor found "no allusion whatever to the Cross of Christ and the truths that either centre in or radiate from that."\(^36\)

After the Restoration, preaching became more correct, Blair thinks. The clergy of the Established Church not only rejected "the pedantry and scholastic divisions of the sectaries" but abandoned as well the warm and pathetic style of address and adopted a mode of "cool reasoning and rational instruction." Blair cites a Dr. Clark\(^37\) as an exemplar of this style of preaching: sermons consistently characterized by good sense and sound reasoning but entirely devoid of warmth and enthusiasm. Archbishop Tillotson, on the other hand, is a preacher who unites warmth and enthusiasm with cool reasoning, and for that reason he is one of the best models that the English pulpit has to offer. Dr. Isaac Barrow (1650-1677) is notable for his "prodigious fecundity of invention"; but Barrow's fertile imagination needed disciplining. Bishop Francis Atterbury (1662-1752)

\(^35\) Sermons of Hugh Blair, London, 1819, I, 43.


\(^37\) Probably Dr. Samuel Clarke (1675-1729), an Anglican divine, whom the DNB designates as "the first of English metaphysicians after John Locke." The CSELT (II, 351) records the publication of Seventeen Sermons (London, 1724).
is in Blair's opinion one of the most eloquent of the English preachers, and it is a sermon of Atterbury's that Blair selects for critical examination.

Blair devotes the whole of Lecture XXX to a close analysis of the first sermon in the first volume of Atterbury's sermons--a sermon on the text from the First Psalm, "Offer unto God thanksgiving." Blair subjects this sermon to the same kind of minute analysis that he used on Addison's Spectator essays. At times he will quote an entire paragraph before he gives his commentary; at other times he will make his commentary after each sentence. Whereas his comments on Addison's essays dealt primarily with matters of style, his comments on Atterbury's sermon deal rather with the propriety of the thoughts and sentiments, the disposition of the parts, and the tone of the discourse. His comments on these matters are not as illuminating as his comments on Addison's style, but they are, for the most part, sensible and instructive.

His method can be illustrated with a representative passage. He makes this comment on one passage in the sermon:

I cannot much approve of the light in which our author places his argument in these paragraphs. There is something too metaphysical and refined in his deducing, in this manner, the obligation to thanksgiving from the two faculties of the mind, understanding and will. Though what he says be in itself just, yet the argument is not sufficiently plain and striking. Arguments in sermons, especially on subjects that so naturally and easily suggest them, should be palpable and popular; should not be brought from topics that appear far sought, but should directly address the heart and feelings. The preacher ought never to depart too far from the common ways of thinking and expressing himself. I am inclined to think that this whole head might have been improved, if the author had taken up more obvious ground; had stated gratitude as one of the most natural principles of the human heart; and illustrated this by showing how odious the opposite disposition is and with what general consent men, in all ages, have agreed in hating and condemning the ungrateful; and then applying these reasonings to

38 Published in London in 1740.
the present case, had placed in a strong view that entire corruption of moral sentiment which it discovers to be destitute of thankful emotions towards the Supreme Benefactor of mankind. As the most natural method of giving vent to grateful sentiments is by external expressions of thanksgiving, he might then have answered the objection that is apt to occur, of the expression of our praise being insignificant to the Almighty. But by seeking to be too refined in his argument, he has omitted some of the most striking and obvious considerations, and which, properly displayed, should have afforded as great a field for eloquence as the topics which he has chosen.

Blair consistently deprecates fine-spun arguments in sermons. Close, subtle argument is suitable for judicial oratory but misses its mark when directed to the heterogeneous audience that assembles to hear a sermon. Arguments in sermons must be "palpable and popular"—must be concrete, he seems to be saying, must be drawn from familiar experience. Some of Blair's own popularity as a preacher stemmed from the fact that he studiously avoided the abstract wherever possible. His sermons have that concreteness of style which characterises the essays of Thomas Babington Macaulay. Unfortunately, concreteness of style has often been (though not inevitably, it should be added) a mask for tenuity of matter—as it certainly was in the case of Blair and Macaulay.

Having considered the kinds of orations, Blair turns in the next two lectures (XXXI and XXXII) to a consideration of the parts of an oration. Traditionally, a consideration of the parts of an oration occupied a major portion of classical rhetoric texts. Quintilian, for instance, devoted three books (IV, V, and VI) of his Institutio Oratoria to a discussion of the parts.

Blair assigns six parts to every formal oration:

(1) The exordium or introduction.
(2) The division of the subject.
(3) The narration or explication.
(4) The reasoning or arguments.
(5) The pathetic part.
(6) The peroration or conclusion.
In general, Blair is observing the divisions made by Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian. But he has assigned more parts than the classical rhetoricians named. The Greek and Roman rhetoricians concentrated on *exordium*, *narratio*, *probatio*, and *peroratio*. They did consider *partitio* (which seems to correspond with Blair's "division of the subject"), but instead of making *partitio* a separate part, they considered it to be a part of the process of *narratio*. Nor did they treat "the pathetic part" as a separate division; the pathetic part was discussed in connection with the peroration.

Robert Schmitz has suggested that in making these divisions Blair relied immediately on George Cassender's *Præceptiones Rhetoricae*, a Latin text that was a staple of instruction at the High School that Blair attended in Edinburgh. Schmitz points out that Cassender divided an oration into these six parts: (1) *exordium*, (2) *narratio*, (3) *propositio*, (4) *confirmatio*, (5) *confutatio*, and (6) *peroratio*. Cassender, like Blair, has added two co-ordinate parts to the usual classical division. There is no need to worry this matter any further; although Blair has added two parts, he does not treat of anything that was not treated by most of the rhetoricians before him.

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39 See Quintilian, for instance—Instit., IV, v, 1: "Partition may be defined as the enumeration in order of our own propositions, those of our adversary, or both."

40 Hugh Blair, 110.

41 Schmitz cites an edition of *Præceptiones Rhetoricae* published in Venice, 1644. George Cassender (1513-1568) was a Flemish humanist and theologian, whose collected works, first published in Paris, 1616, were placed on the Index, largely because of the Catholic interpretation he attempted to put upon Protestant formularies. See the article on Cassender in the Catholic Encyclopedia.
It would be a waste of effort to follow Blair's exposition point by point. In the consideration of the various parts of a speech, he merely lays down rules for the proper conduct of these parts. He has not added anything new to the discussion. He acknowledges his close dependence on Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian, and frequently quotes the latter two in support of his own observations. In other words, what Blair gave his students was an abridged and watered-down version of the classical precepts on this subject.

A few points from these two lectures bear mention. In dealing with invention in the discussion of the argumentative part of a speech, Blair impugns the value of the topics or loci communes. Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian had paid great attention to the sedes argumentorum. Blair wonders whether all this attention was justifiable. The Greek sophists were the first contrivers of this artificial system, Blair remarks. Succeeding rhetoricians, dazzled by the subtlety and fertility of the system, worked it up into a regular system and made it a pedagogical device for teaching students how to perfect themselves in the art of invention. Blair's observations on the validity of this system are worthy of extended quotation:

The loci indeed supplied a most exuberant fecundity of matter. One who had no other aim but to talk copiously and plausibly, by consulting them [i.e. the loci] on every subject and laying hold of all that they suggested, might discourse without end; and that too though he had none but the most superficial knowledge of his subject. But such discourse could be no other than trivial. What is truly solid and persuasive must be drawn "ex visceribus causae," from a thorough knowledge of the subject and profound meditation on it. They who would direct students of oratory to any other sources of argumentation only delude them; and by attempting to render rhetoric too perfect an art, they render it, in truth a trifling and childish study.

Blair likewise questions the value of "metaphysical" inquiries into the nature of the various passions--elaborate inquiries such as Aristotle pro-
vided in his *Rhetoric*. Blair grants that what Aristotle has written on the passions "may be read with no small profit, as a valuable piece of moral philosophy"; but he questions whether such a discussion "will have any effect in rendering an orator more pathetic." It is not philosophical analysis that will invest the orator with an ability to move the passions. This talent will come, rather, from nature, from a "certain strong and happy sensibility of mind."

Rules and instructions, in this as in other matters, will direct genius rather than supply it.

This seems to be as good a place as any to make some observations about Blair's reverence for the classical rhetoricians. The reader by now should be convinced of Blair's close dependence on the classical rhetoricians, especially on Cicero and Quintilian. At times, his own rhetorical doctrine has been nothing more than an English rendering of the Greek and Roman texts. Blair has been at no pains to conceal his debt to the classical rhetoricians. But it would be a grave mistake to conclude that he has assimilated them implicitly and indiscriminately. He has never hesitated to reject them when he has found them to be picayune, arbitrary, or over-burdening. We have just seen two examples of this. Despite the weight of classical authority behind the *loci* and the study of the passions, he has forthrightly rejected them as pedagogical devices. Blair seems to have a strong suspicion of anything that smacks of the artificial, the pedantic, the metaphysical. Doubtless, these prejudices led him, in some instances, to reject many things of value; but the point is that he is capable of making rejections despite his great admiration for the classical rhetoricians.

Blair has gone along with the general trend of rhetoric study in the
eighteenth century. There was a general movement to simplify the study of rhetoric—to winnow, to prune, to adapt the rhetorical discipline as it came down from the Greeks and the Romans. And so we have seen how the elaborate discussion of the figures of speech was drastically abridged, how the discussion of the passions was reduced to a few paragraphs, and how the discussion of the loci was dropped altogether. This process of minimization has continued down to our own day. The process has not always resulted in pure gain. Modern rhetoric texts are woefully anemic progeny of the full-blooded classical treatises.

In Lecture XXXIII Blair turns to the study of delivery or, as the classical rhetoricians termed it, pronuntiatio. Both Cicero and Quintilian reported the story that Demosthenes, when he was asked what was the most important part of oratory, what was the second most important, and what was the third, in each instance named delivery. Blair himself says that "nothing is of more importance." Skillful delivery plays a great part in effecting the end of oratory, persuasion. "Now, the tone of our voice, our looks and gestures," he says, "interpret our ideas and emotions no less than words do; nay, the impression they make on others is frequently much stronger than any that words can make." Delivery then is not, as some writers had held, mere decoration or a crafty art for catching an audience. Delivery merited the close attention of aspiring orators.

Blair himself was not adept, as we have seen, in the art of delivery. For sound advice on this matter he has had to rely mainly on others. In a long footnote at the end of the lecture he offers, rather apologetically, some "hints".

42 Institut., XI, iii, 6; De Oratore, III, lvi, 213.
force." To be fully and easily understood, an orator must give due consideration to (1) loudness of voice, (2) distinctness, (3) slowness, and (4) propriety of pronunciation. To give a speech force and grace, an orator must give due consideration to (1) emphasis, (2) pauses, (3) tones, and (4) gestures.

An orator's first concern is to be heard. He must be able to project his voice to the remotest corners of the assembly-hall. Although power of voice is largely a gift of nature, it can receive some assistance from art and practice. It is important, Blair thinks, to make a distinction between loudness or strength of sound and pitch or key. Failure to observe this distinction has led many orators into the mistake of altering their pitch. "Give the voice, therefore, full strength and swell," he advises, "but always pitch it on your ordinary speaking key."

This mention of the "ordinary speaking key" strikes the keynote of all of Blair's observations on delivery. Naturalness is the great virtue of speaking; affectation the great vice. "Let your manner, whatever it is, be your own," he says. "Whatever is native, even though accompanied with several defects, yet is likely to please, because it shows us a man, because it has the appearance of coming from the heart." Blair sees no inconsistency—and there really is none—between this advice to be yourself and the prescriptions for proper delivery that he is at pains to lay down.

Most of Blair's observations on proper delivery are the dictates of commonsense, and to review them would be to worry the obvious. Some of the more capital observations might be assembled in a single paragraph. He advises, for instance, that every word be given "just the same accent in public speaking as in common discourse." He recommends that a speaker mark the pauses and emphases
in the manuscript of his speech, taking precaution, however, to avoid "multiply-
ing emphatical words too much." He deplores the capricious system of punctua-
tion that prevails in his day and recommends that the sense of a sentence should dicta.te the breaks and pauses. The tones of public speaking should be founded on "the tones of sensible and animated conversation." Blair concedes that some kinds of public speaking require a tone "exalted beyond the strain of common discourse," but he warns against the "constant indulgence of a declamatory man-
er," which can produce a deadly monotony. One of the observations at the close of the lecture is particularly cogent: "He will generally please most when pleasing is not his sole nor chief aim."

Although Blair is not especially profound on delivery, his advice could scarcely fail to be helpful to his students. His own inadequacies as a public speaker prevented him from impressively exemplifying the art that he was expounding. But his immense prestige as a pulpit orator undoubtedly gave great weight to his observations and prescriptions.

Just as Blair concluded his lectures on style with some special ad-
vise, so he concludes these lectures on oratory with some advice for "improving in eloquence." This he does in Lecture XXXIV.

First of all, Blair makes a final strong plea for the necessity of virtue in an orator. He quotes with approval Quintilian's proposition, "Non posse oratorem esse nisi virum bonum."44 Blair maintains that this proposition is not "a mere topic of declamation" but that it is "undoubtedly founded in truth and reason." It can be said to Blair's credit that this time, besides

44 Institut., XII, 1, 3.
enunciating the proposition, he offers some reasons for holding it. He repeats
the Aristotelian tenet that nothing contributes more to persuasion than the good
opinion that the audience entertains of the orator's probity. He is keen enough
to recognize, however, what Machiavelli had recognized long before him: that
for the purposes of persuasion seeming virtue can be just as effective as real
virtue. Accordingly, he must search for the advantages of real virtue.

He declares that nothing is "so favourable as virtue to the prosecution
of honourable studies." This is perhaps the strongest argument that he of-
fers for the necessity of virtue. Unquestionably, as inveterately licentious
man has little inclination for study; dominated by passion as he is, such a man
finds himself with a will that is weakened and an intellect that is dulled.

Père Sertillanges puts the matter this way:

On what, first and foremost, does all the effort of study depend? On at-
tention, which delimits the field for research, concentrates on it, brings
all our powers to bear on it; next, on judgment, which gathers up the fruit
of investigation. Now, passions and vices relax attention, scatter it,
lead it astray; and they injure the judgment in roundabout ways, of which
Aristotle and many others after him have scrutinized the meanders.45

Quintilian too had observed that it is only when the mind is "free and self-
possessed, with nothing to divert it or lure it elsewhere, that it will fix its
attention solely on that goal, the attainment of which is the object of its
preparations."46

Blair's next claim is, at best, debatable. "Bad as the world is," he
says, "nothing has so great and universal a command over the minds of men as

45 A. D. Sertillanges, O.P., The Intellectual Life: Its Spirit, Con-
ditions, Methods, Westminster, Maryland, 1948, 24.

46 Institut., XII, i, 5.
virtue." A look at the history of the world might move one to conclude that vice has proven more of a lure for men than virtue. Man certainly admires virtue in the abstract and even admires particular concrete examples of virtue, but because of his fallen nature he has more often succumbed to the lure of vice than to the lure of virtue. Blair may very well be right in this claim, but because the truth of the proposition is not self-evident, he would have to present more of a demonstration than he has given here. Among other things, he would have to prove that man has a propensity for virtue—that is, for real virtue, not just for an apparent or expedient virtue.

To excel in the higher kinds of oratory, then, men must "cultivate habits of several virtues" and must "refine and improve all their moral feelings." Blair held the very laudable notion that he was not just a teacher of rhetoric; he felt that he must be concerned for the whole man. Accordingly, he sought to inculcate a desire for virtue at the same time that he schooled his students in the art of eloquence. This sense of mission stemmed not merely from his position as a clergyman. Being the kind of man that he was, admiring the kind of men that he did, he would have been concerned for the moral health of his students even if he had been only a lay man. Undoubtedly, this unequivocal stand on the intimate relation between virtue and art contributed to the widespread popularity of Blair's Lectures. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when schools and colleges were still directed by clergymen, the strong moral tone of the Lectures recommended Blair's text for adoption. How different today. Even the hint of a moral tone in a rhetoric text would hinder its adoption.

That Blair was concerned for the development of the whole man is
further confirmed by his insistence, with the authority of Cicero and Quintilian behind him, that the orator must be thoroughly steeped in the liberal arts. It was not any narrow concentration on the oratorical arts that would produce eloquence; it was depth and breadth of knowledge—that depth and breadth which was the peculiar fruit of a liberal education. The speaker must be learned not only in those studies which immediately pertain to his profession but in belles lettres as well.

A habit of application and industry was a sine qua non for the formation of an orator. "Nothing is so great an enemy both to honourable attainments and to the real, to the brisk and spirited, enjoyment of life," says Blair, "as that relaxed state of mind which arises from indolence and dissipation." The Scotch have always been noted for their capacity for hard work, and someday someone will demonstrate the truth of the thesis that the Victorians derived their taste for hard work from the Calvinistic element in Scottish Presbyterianism.

Imitation of the best models will also help to perfect the student in eloquence. The student must exercise a nice discretion in his choice of models; he must avoid a too slavish imitation; and he must not attach himself too closely to any one model. Blair regrets that although the English language provides many examples of good writing it can offer very few models for eloquent public speaking. The French have many admirable models—Saurin, Bourdaloue, Flechier, Massillon, Bossuet, Fontenelle, Cochin, and D'Aguesseau. The English have a

47 For a discussion of the importance of a liberal arts training for an orator, see Cicero, De Oratore, III, xx, xxvii, xxxi and Quintilian, Instit., XII, ii.
few writers, like Dean Swift and Lord Bolingbroke, whose style approaches the style appropriate for public speaking. But it must always be borne in mind that there is "a very material distinction between written and spoken language." In written discourse one looks principally for correctness, precision, and polish; in speeches one expects an easier, more copious style.

Blair concludes his lecture with some comments on those critical and rhetorical writers who can be of some help to the student in the practice of eloquence. He takes a dim view of most modern teachers of oratory. "In modern times," he says, "for reasons which were before given, popular eloquence, as an art, has never been very much the object of study; it has not the same powerful effects among us that it had in more democratical states." Blair singles out Gerardus Vossius, a Dutch rhetorician who lived from 1577 to 1649, as an example of a modern writer "who has gathered into one heap of ponderous lumber all the trifling, as well as the useful, things that are to be found in the Greek and Roman writers." Among modern writers on oratory, the French have been most instructive, but they are only the best among a singularly mediocre lot. He mentions such French critics as Fénelon, Rollin, Batteux, Crevier, and Gilbert, but says that "none of them are so considerable as to deserve particular recommendation."

It is to the ancient rhetoricians that the student of eloquence must turn. Although the ancients have the defect of being "too systematical," they are after all the writers who can be most helpful. The ancient rhetoricians whom Blair thinks most worthy of being consulted are Aristotle, Demetrius Phalerus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Cicero, and Quintilian.

It is indeed fitting that the lectures on rhetoric should end with
the name of the rhetorician whom Blair most admired: "Seldom has any person of
more sound and distinct judgment than Quintilian applied himself to the study
of the art of oratory." Professor Harding observes wisely that Blair's "reli-
ance upon the practical wisdom of Quintilian saves him from the absurdities in-
to which less careful writers lapse in their efforts to be original."

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Hugh Blair's rhetorical theory must now be summarized and assessed, and its influence determined, as far as influence can be measured. The exposition of Blair's theory has been conducted in tedious detail. The tediousness of the exposition may be inexcusable; but that exposition is a necessary prelude to evaluation is undeniable. A study like this can justify itself only if it has served to light up a small corner of the province of knowledge. It is a succession of such "lightings-up" that will eventually, if such a consummation is at all possible, illuminate the entire province. We tend to belittle the minutiae that constantly turn up in our scholarly journals; but it has happened before, and it will continue to happen, that some particular piece of minutiae will unite with other pieces and stimulate the production of a new synthesis of truth.

The first chapter of this thesis has shown that the study of rhetoric had a long and honorable tradition in the English school system. The study of rhetoric flourished most vigorously in the schools founded by the sixteenth-century humanists. The formal study of rhetoric continued for well over two hundred years, but it steadily waned in importance and in vigor. Blair stood almost at the end of the tradition. A member of the Scottish School which attempted to revive interest in rhetoric, Hugh Blair strove boldly and even omm-
patently to save the tradition. For a time it appeared that rhetoric would survive in the schools. Men like Richard Whately and Alexander Bain took up the apostolate in the early years of the nineteenth century. But the flicker of flame that had been assiduously fanned into a promising glow was soon smothered in its bed of embers. Later on in this chapter some attempt will be made to account for this decline. Suffice it to say here that the decline came and that Blair was fighting a rear-guard action.

What was there about Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres that gave such high promise of arresting the decline? Was there intrinsic merit to the Lectures, or did the Lectures merely fit the mood of the times? Were the Lectures merely trading on Blair's prestige as a preacher and a litterateur? Was Blair's rhetorical theory original or derivative? Was his presentation of rhetorical theory particularly novel or cogent? Did he make a significant contribution to the study of rhetoric? Would the status of rhetoric in English and American schools have been higher or lower if he had never composed his lectures? These and allied questions will seek some answer in the following paragraphs.

One of the things that must strike the reader of Blair's lectures is their amazing comprehensiveness. Few, if any, English or American rhetorician, before or after Blair, attempted to treat of such a variety of subjects. Most English rhetoricians tended to concentrate on some one area of the subject—delivery, style, invention, or disposition of arguments. Those rhetoricians who did attempt to cover all areas of rhetoric dealt very cursorily with the several parts. Blair, it is true, neglected inventio and memoria, but he gave adequate treatment to dispositio and pronuntiatio and thorough treatment to elocutio.
Blair attempted to justify his neglect of inventio by adverting to the fact that most of his students would have had a course in logic before they came to his class and by casting some doubt on the value of loci communes in forming an accomplished orator. He offers no explanation for his neglect of memoria. But how much that is really instructive can be said about this part of rhetoric? A teacher might set forth some mnemonic devices that would prove of practical value to the student. What else could he say? What more did Cicero and Quintilian offer on this subject? Memory is a skill like typewriting; it is practice not instruction that will improve the skill. And we must remember too that Blair set little store by memorized speeches. Set speeches tended to lose that spontaneity and naturalness which he felt to be effective in oratory.

In the place of those parts of rhetoric treated at some length in other rhetoricians Blair supplied discussions of Taste, Language, the Sublime, and the Beautiful. These were subjects in which the age had a consuming interest. These were subjects which Blair felt would contribute to the cultivation of eloquence. Blair's discussion of these concepts was inchoate and sometimes nebulous, but the attempt was both legitimate and pertinent. While it might be argued that a knowledge of the Sublime will not of itself produce a sublime writer, if could hardly be maintained that such a knowledge would hamper the development of a sublime writer. No theoretical knowledge, for that matter, will of itself produce a practical skill. But a pianist is no worse a pianist--as a matter of fact he is likely to be a better pianist--for knowing the theory of his art.

In addition to the thirty-five lectures devoted to rhetoric, Blair's text provided thirteen lectures on belles lettres--historical and critical
studies of the various genres. All of this under one cover! This comprehensiveness was certainly one factor which influenced schoolmasters to adopt Blair's text for classroom use. Publishers today are well aware that when a number of Freshman English texts are being considered for adoption, comprehensiveness of coverage is often the factor which tips the balance in favor of one text over the others. Significantly, the only contemporary rhetoric book which rivaled the sale of Blair's Lectures was George Campbell's *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, a text that approached the comprehensiveness of Blair's book.

Another factor that contributed to the popularity of Blair's text was that it was a compendium of the best of classical and contemporary rhetorical doctrine. The first chapter of this thesis revealed that the two most popular classical rhetoricians in English schools were Cicero and Quintilian. These were the two authors most frequently mentioned or quoted in the Lectures. Ostensibly, Blair used these two authors as supporting authorities for the advice he gave his students, but more often than not, even when he did not specifically cite or quote them, he was merely abstracting and paraphrasing the rhetorical doctrine he had learned from them. An English adaptation of Quintilian and Cicero would never meet with resistance from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century schoolmasters. All the other esteemed classical writers on eloquent discourse

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were in the book too—Aristotle, Longinus, Horace, Dionysius, Demetrius Phalereus. In addition, there were those contemporary writers who were enjoying a vogue—Adam Smith, David Hume, Lord Kames, George Campbell, Thomas Sheridan. The reliance on so many Scottish writers undoubtedly appealed to the national pride of the Scots, and the reputation of the Scottish school system in the eighteenth century served to recommend to American schoolmasters a text which included so many Scottish authorities. Blair's frequent appeal to the French Encyclopedists and Academicians would recommend the book to those who were caught up with the rationalist spirit.

Students could not help being impressed by the range of Blair's reading. His range was both extensive and cosmopolitan. At a time when the English universities were in a moribund state, a university professor who displayed a catholic reading taste would gain the respect of those who were disgusted by the narrowness, provincialism, and superficiality so prevalent among the pedagogues. It would be vain to pretend that Blair's reading was as profound as it was extensive. Blair was neither a profound nor an original thinker. Despite this limitation, Blair's literary judgment was remarkably sound. The "good sense," upon which he so frequently relied, seldom betrayed him into making a crass judgment. Impugners of Blair's judgment invariably cited his stubborn defense of the authenticity of Macpherson's Ossianic poems and his acclaim of Ossian as the Scottish Homer. Blair indeed defended the authenticity of Macpherson's translations even in the face of such formidable opposition as that which came from Dr. Johnson. Five years after Blair's death in 1800, the Highland Society conclusively proved that Macpherson's avowed translations were a fraud. How damaging to Blair's reputation for sound literary judgment can we consider this
exposure? He was guilty of an error in fact—and he was neither the first nor the last literary man to make such an error. He had no knowledge of the Gaelic language, and he was perhaps too credulous of Macpherson's integrity. But how far away really was Blair's judgment of the literary quality of the Ossian poems? In a recent essay, Arthur Koestler cites the Macpherson affair as an example of a certain kind of snobbery that exists today—the kind of snobbery that alters its judgment of a work of art when it learns that the work is not an "original." Mr. Koestler quotes the evaluation of Macpherson made by the Encyclopedia Britannica:

The varied sources of his work and its worthlessness as a transcript of actual Celtic poems do not alter the fact that he produced a work of art which . . . did more than any single work to bring about the romantic movement in European, and especially in German, literature. . . . Herder and Goethe . . . were among its profound admirers.

If Blair was culpable in his judgment of Ossian, he shared his error with a distinguished company of literary men.

The marked religious tone of the Lectures also played a part in recommending Blair's text to schoolmasters. Blair's insistence that a man of eloquence must be a man of virtue became the warp upon which his lectures were woven. His citations from Scripture were used primarily to illustrate literary excellences, but at the same time he was fully conscious that by sending students to the Bible for literary models he would be exposing them to spiritual edification—and how important this was in an age when the skeptical spirit of the Enlightenment was leading young people to look upon the Bible as a collection

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of fairy tales. Blair must also have ingratiated himself with schoolmasters by viewing himself not merely as a teacher of rhetoric but as a moulder of the whole man. His little homilies on the importance of wide reading, of industrious study habits, of solid grounding in the grammar and etymology of the language, of a knowledge of foreign languages, both classical and modern—all of these recommendations, backed up by his prestige as a litterateur, a teacher, and a pulpit orator, carried great weight with teachers and students alike. It should be remarked that Blair seeks to inculcate those humanitarian or social virtues—industry, thrift, temperance, honesty, responsibility, etc.—which R. H. Tawney in Religion and the Rise of Capitalism shows to be the peculiar product of the Calvinistic ethos. Neither in the Lectures nor in the Sermons did Blair call for the cultivation of those virtues which contribute to the kind of personal sanctification that the Oxford Reformers were to advocate some fifty years later.

The mode and style of presentation also contributed to the popularity of the Lectures. All of Blair's instructions were singularly elementary. Presuming in his students no previous training in rhetoric, Blair took great pains to define his terms, to elaborate on what might strike us as commonplaces, and to supply whatever background he deemed necessary for an understanding of the topic under discussion. As a result, Blair's Lectures could be—and were—used on several levels of the school curriculum.3 Allowing for some vagueness about

3 That Blair's Lectures was considered elementary enough to be used even outside the classroom is evident from this item recorded in A Catalog of Books Represented by Library of Congress Printed Cards: "Lectures on rhetoric, by Hugh Blair, D.D. condensed by Grenville Kleiser; for the exclusive use of Grenville Kleiser's mail course students. New York and London, Funk & Wagnalls company, 1911, vii, 164pp, 18cm (Practical English series) PE 1402.B7 1911."
such key terms as **beauty, sublimity, taste** (a vagueness, incidentally, that was characteristic of all eighteenth-century writing on these terms), one can point to the lucidity of Blair's presentation as a model of expository writing. There was no jargon in Blair. There was nothing that the layman, possessed of even an ordinary competence in the English language, could not grasp. Even when Blair descended to those psychological considerations that were occupying so much of the attention of the eighteenth-century writers, he could be easily followed.

The **Lectures** were also marked by a clear, systematic organization. If Blair did not have a profound mind, he did have an orderly one. He carefully planned the series of lectures and systematically organized each one of them. Often in the introductory paragraphs of the lectures he summarized what he had done and outlined what he would do; the shift from one part to the next was subsequently marked by transitional sentences or paragraphs. This kind of clear-cut organization must have proved a boon to note-scribbling students. The Lectures lent themselves so readily to outlining that Heads of the Lectures, as was pointed out in a previous chapter, was published soon after Blair began delivering his lectures at the University of Edinburgh. Abraham Mills, who published the most widely-used American editions of Blair's Lectures, supplied for each lecture outlines and questions which, in view of Blair's orderliness, must have required little labor and less ingenuity to prepare. In order to provide a sharply-defined text, modern editors of composition manuals have had to resort to such mechanical devices as headings and sub-headings, contrasting type, numerals and letters, and marginal glosses.

With all these virtues, what did Blair contribute to the study of rhetoric? The almost universal verdict handed down about Blair's Lectures is
that it is a text distinguished for its lack of originality. Even René Wellek, the latest historian of literary criticism, has pronounced the Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres to be "an unoriginal textbook."  

The most fervent admirer of Blair would be hard put to it to defend Blair against the charge of unoriginality. But even if one is constrained to admit the justice of the charge, how damaging to Blair's reputation and worth can the charge be construed? Who has made an original contribution to knowledge? Originality will always be a relative thing. One writer can be judged more original than another, but there has not been, and there will never be, an absolutely original writer. Each writer, each thinker, each inventor, builds on those who have gone before him, and as a result, chronology will bring us as close as we will ever get to an absolutely original contribution. To ask originality of a man, then, is to expect what cannot be; and to say that a man is not original is to propose what is the least disparaging thing that can be said about anyone.

Judged even in relation to his two Scottish contemporaries, Kames and Campbell, Blair must take an inferior position. Blair has appropriated not only what was best in the classical rhetoricians but what suited his purposes in the discussions of his contemporaries. Blair not only borrowed and adapted the rhetorical doctrines and precepts he found in such classical writers as Quintilian and Cicero, but he served as a kind of relay station for the current of ideas into which he had tapped.

Blair made no attempt to deny what it would have been impossible to conceal. In the Preface to the Lectures, he had freely admitted that the lectures were not "wholly original," but at the same time he refused to admit that they were wholly "a compilation from the writings of others." He emphatically and perhaps even rashly averred that "a great part of what will be found in these Lectures is entirely [my] own." If it is true, as was stated above, that no writer is absolutely original, then none of the ideas in the lectures will be entirely Blair's own. Blair claimed in his Preface that on every subject in the lectures he had thought for himself, even though at times he had availed himself of "the ideas and reflections of others." Blair may very well have formulated some of his rhetorical doctrines independently of others; and in such instances he can be excused for thinking that he has come up with something new. The present writer has not always shown a source or an analogue for Blair's rhetorical doctrines--partly because the present writer is not, and perhaps could not be, a master of the tremendous mass of rhetorical writing and partly because he hesitated to declare a borrowing where the only evidence was parallelism of thought; but undoubtedly the seeds for all of Blair's views could be found in earlier writers. What can be looked for now, however, is ideas to which Blair gave a peculiar slant or a distinctive cogency.

Blair's definition of taste as "the power of receiving pleasure from the beauties of nature and of art" is certainly not original. His pronouncements on taste stem from D'Alembert, Gerard, Hume, Burke, and Kames, among his contemporaries, and ultimately from Hobbes, Locke, Hutcheson, and Shaftesbury. By setting taste as the faculty which experiences the pleasure, and reason as the faculty that makes the judgment, Blair became a mediator between the School
of Feeling and the School of Reason, two schools which had been stubbornly op-
posed to one another throughout the greater part of the eighteenth century.

Perhaps Blair's most distinctive contribution to the discussion of taste was his
proposing as a criterion of the beautiful "that which men concur the most in ad-
miring." Such a criterion was posited, of course, on the premise that human na-
ture is fundamentally the same in all places and at all times, and also on the
optimistic notion that in the course of time true taste "never fails to assert
itself." In effect, Blair shifted the criterion from a basis in established
principles to a basis in common feeling. The usefulness of Blair's criterion
was crippled, as was shown in Chapter II, by the series of qualifications which
Blair attached to his norm. However anxious one is to make a strong case for
Blair's discussion of taste, one is forced to admit that at best Blair's obser-
vations on taste are discouragingly nebulous. And his insistence that a man of
taste must be a man of virtue was not accompanied by that cogency of argument
that compels assent.

A reading of Samuel H. Monk's The Sublime: a Study of Critical The-
ories in XVIII-century England reveals that the theories of the Sublime in the
eighteenth-century were as vague as they were various. Blair did very little
to sharpen the notions of the sublime. Blair's theories of the sublime differed
on so many points from those of Longinus that one is forced to assert that
Blair's discussion derived more from Burke, Kames, and Gerard than from the ear-
lier classical discussion. In accord with the tendency of his age, Blair shifted
the center of emphasis from language to thought. One result of this shift was
a de-emphasis on the figures and tropes as a source of the sublime, and the ele-
vation of conciseness and simplicity as the prime element in the sublime. Blair
agreed with Burke that a sublime effect could not be too long sustained, but he had some reservations about Burke's tenet that a clear idea is the name for a little idea. Blair had too fervent a worship of peripuity to go the whole way with Burke on this notion.

Blair's most distinctive and perhaps most influential contribution to the discussion of the sublime was his theory that the major source of the sublime is "great power and strength." Burke had proposed terror as the major source. Blair seems to have had the better part of the argument here because he probed deeper for the cause: the terror that one finds in natural objects is produced by the power and strength implicit in them. Whether Wordsworth ever read Blair is uncertain, but it seems likely that in his preoccupation with the stern aspects of Nature, especially in The Prelude, Wordsworth was influenced by the general climate of opinion that Blair helped to create. If Blair has made any original contribution to criticism, it is just this analysis of the true source of the sublime.

In his discussion of Beauty, Blair betrayed the influence of Locke and Hartley's associational psychology, as well as the influence of his immediate friends, Hume and Kames. Blair rejected the time-honored "uniformity amidst variety" as the fundamental quality of beauty and sought the principles of beauty in such accidental qualities as color, figure, motion, and adaptation of means to an end. For Blair, variety was a much more powerful principle of beauty than uniformity. Symptomatic of this preference was his acceptance of Hogarth's serpentine line as the ultimate in beautiful configuration. Blair also held that beauty resided in the "see-er" not in the object, but he failed to make the useful distinction that Hume, Kames, and even Addison made between
primary qualities and secondary qualities. Nor did he make any attempt to explain the puzzling notion that sublimity can exist in the object but beauty cannot.

While Blair’s discussion of taste and the sublime left much to be desired, his discussion of beauty was even less satisfying. He had been caught up in the whirl of associational psychology, but he had neither the acuteness of intellect nor the patient curiosity that would enable him to probe to the heart of the matter. As a result, his discussion of beauty was superficial and inchoate, and it is impossible to believe that his students took away from his lectures anything that was helpful either for the creation or for the analysis of the beautiful.

Blair shared the interest of his contemporaries in language. The paramount linguistic interest of the British in the eighteenth century centered around prescriptive grammar. Blair showed only a slight interest in the problems of grammar; he was rather more interested in the origin and development of language and in comparative linguistics. His interest in the genesis of language was of a piece with his interest in primitivism. To feed this interest he turned to Adam Smith, to James Harris, and to the French academicians, who provided him with theories which were not only plausible but also compatible with his esteem of the noble savage. Two limitations prevented Blair’s becoming a competent philologist: (1) the meager findings and the inadequate philological techniques available in the eighteenth century; (2) the narrow range of his language proficiency. Blair could handle Greek, Latin, French, and Modern English, but he had no proficiency in German, Italian, Spanish, Hebrew, and the Slavic languages, and he was woefully ignorant of Anglo-Saxon, Middle English, and
Hampered by his linguistic inadequacies, he could hardly be expected to make any original contribution to language study. What he did transmit from his study of more qualified linguists was commonplace, superficial, and highly speculative.

One of the most interesting discussions—and maddening too, because the discussion is abortive—is the speculation, appropriated from Des Brosses and Dr. Wallis, about initial consonant patterns. There is a compelling plausibility about the theory, for instance, that words beginning in _Str_ (strive, strength, strike, strife, stress, etc.) usually denote violent force and energy. One wishes that Blair had pursued this theory. If he had, he might have made a valuable contribution to linguistic study. Modern critics have concentrated on vowels in their analysis of “sound-to-sense” effects. It is high time that modern practitioners of close-analysis make some investigation of consonant patterns—and the investigation might well start with the suggestions laid down in Blair’s lectures on language.

Blair’s most distinctive contribution to linguistic theory is his doctrine of the poetical nature of primitive peoples. Blair advanced two theories: (1) figurative language was natural to man; (2) primitive man was more poetic than civilized man. The first of these theories, if true (and Blair did make it seem plausible enough), could be used to silence those in our pragmatic age (students especially) who regard poetic language as in some way unnatural, esoteric, and sophisticated. If it could be shown that the language which falls most naturally from a man’s tongue is poetic language and that prosaic or abstract expression is something that a man must learn, teachers of poetry courses might be able to lay to rest one of the most vicious myths about poetry.
In his attempt to justify his second theory, Blair pointed first of all to the poverty of primitive man's vocabulary, which made it necessary for primitive men to employ highly figurative combinations, much like the Anglo-Saxon kenning, to express new ideas, wants, and emotions; secondly, to the fact that a primitive vocabulary was founded almost exclusively on sensible objects; and thirdly, to the fact that primitive man was more under the dominion of imagination and fancy than is civilized man. Blair's theory is interesting and even credible, but it leaves some important questions unanswered. Was the greatest poetry of any nation been produced in the early stages of its history, or has that poetry appeared only after that nation has reached a relatively high level of civilization? And what about Coleridge's contention that the best part of poetic language results from man's reflections on his concrete experiences—a reflective process which, Coleridge feels, barbaric, uneducated men are incapable of exercising? Although Blair left such significant questions unanswered, his theory was approved by such intelligent men as Wordsworth, Macaulay, and Halliwell in the nineteenth century. Perhaps the final assessment of the validity of the theory will have to wait on the further discoveries of archaeologists, philologists, and anthropologists.

It is when Blair comes to discuss style that he shows himself to be an impressive teacher. In discussing style he seemed to be on familiar and solid ground. A superb stylist himself, he had a fine sense for the virtues of style in others' writings and a keen instinct for just those principles and precepts which could lead others to the acquisition of an elegant style. That the good style was a major concern of Blair's can be inferred from the fact that he devoted more lectures to style than to any other subject and that the previous
lectures on Taste, Beauty, Sublime, and Language were, by his own admission, designed to serve as a prelude to his discussion of style. Proportionately, Blair directed more attention to style than perhaps any other rhetorician before him or after him. It is this preoccupation with style which most strikingly differentiated his textbook from the rival textbooks produced by Lord Kames and George Campbell. Blair owed and owned debts to Kames and Campbell on many scores, and on the ground of profundity of thought he had to yield the superior position to his two friends; but in his treatment of style Blair outstripped them both. If schoolmasters were looking for a book that adequately treated style, invariably they turned, not to Kames and Campbell, but to Blair. The wide popularity of Blair's *Rhetoric* was probably due in the main to his extensive and solid treatment of the problems of style.

Blair showed himself to be a true son of the eighteenth century in his insistence that perspicuity is the supreme quality of a good style. Ornament is the other prime quality, but Blair made very clear that ornament is a subservient and expendable quality in relation to perspicuity. Although Blair repeatedly revealed himself in the lectures to be a transitional figure between the Augustan Age and the Romantic Age, he had in this reverence for perspicuity, allied himself unequivocally with the English Augustans and with his idol Quintilian. Blair's emphasis on lucidity was based, of course, on the premise that the primary end of discourse is communication. The Romantic view of discourse as primarily expression was not for him. Some of his harshest strictures (as on Cowley, for instance) were reserved for those writers whose style was obscure. Blair's objections to Dr. Johnson's style were not for the usual reasons: the heavy, Latinate diction, the pompous tone, the mannerism of the balanced struc-
ture; Blair's objection was rather that the above-named characteristics, while not vices in themselves, tended to obscure meaning. Swift was an admirable model because his writings were consistently marked by perspicuity; but Addison was a superior model because he had found the way to combine ornament with lucidity. The curious thing is, however, that although Addison is the supreme English stylist, Blair's own style has a greater affinity with Swift's style than with Addison's. Like Swift's writing, Blair's is almost wholly devoid of figures of speech. Blair would probably defend himself by saying that he was engaged in expository writing and that for such purposes the dry, plain style was best.

One of the most important points that Blair made in regard to perspicuity is that a man cannot write clearly unless he thinks clearly. He was showing here the close connection that he held to exist between logic and rhetoric. And how right Blair is in this! People today are prone to excuse their muddled writing on the ground that they have only the fussiest notions of correct grammar and punctuation. Blair exposed the sophistry of such excuses. The writing is muddled because the thinking is muddled, and no amount of blue-pencilling by a meticulous editor could produce sense from such chaos. Blair admitted that some writing is unavoidably obscure because the ideas are unusually complex. But where the subject-matter admitted of clear crystallization he had no patience with befuddled articulation. In this regard, Blair revealed himself to be a champion of the principle that there is an integral relationship between matter and form. For analytical purposes it is possible to speak of res and verba, and Blair was willing to concede that of the two, res is the more important; nevertheless, in practice, the two go together. One reflects the other.
Consequently, where the concept is misty, the expression will be inept.

Blair's predilection for perspicuity carried some disadvantages. It led him, for one thing, into some unreasonable strictures on the long sentence. Admittedly, the long sentence, unless expertly handled, can get tangled up in its own skeins. It must also be acknowledged that an unbroken succession of long sentences can weary the attention and that the long sentence must be reserved for grandiloquent effects. But when all of these concessions are made, there is still something to be said for the long sentence. Anyone who has travelled the well-marked labyrinth of a Ciceronian sentence can attest to the delights of the journey. The cadence of the long sentence, the balance of the members, the skillful articulation of the joints, the pauses, the sudden dart into side-paths—all of these, when controlled and directed by a craftsman, can produce effects impossible to the short, direct sentence. Has not the modern journalistic penchant for the short sentence produced its own monotony? A constant diet of ten-word sentences whets an appetite for the intricacies and involutions of such masters of the long period as Sir Thomas Browne, Dr. Johnson, and Cardinal Newman. Let Dr. Blair be reminded that succinctness is no virtue in itself and that the harmony of a sentence needs extended space in which to spin out its rhythm.

Blair would never be knighted for his contributions to the study of figures of speech. His observations on figures were, almost without exception, commonplace and derivative. What he can be commended for is his reducing the whole discussion of figures to manageable proportions. He refused to be bothered by the inconsequential distinctions that many rhetoricians before him tried to make between figures of words and figures of thoughts. He had the temerity
to propose that the beauties of composition did not depend solely or even chiefly on figurative language. And he considerably abbreviated the list of figures to be defined and illustrated. The figures that he chose to discuss in his lectures are the figures that, if they are discussed at all, are discussed in modern composition texts.

It was in these lectures on Style that Blair first exhibited his uncommon talent for prose analysis. His gift for analysis of prose style is rare if it is not unique. Elaborate techniques have been devised for the analysis of verse, but to find a system for the analysis of prose one will search long, and even then may search in vain. What is most commendable about Blair’s system is that it did not become clogged with jargon. In reading Blair, we do not need a glossary for the definition of terms like “tension,” “paradox,” “symbolic action,” “irony,” “ambiguity.” Nor had Blair erected his system into an arcane, precious art. As a matter of fact, it is misleading to refer to Blair’s method as a system at all.

Blair’s talent for close analysis is seen at its best in his study of Addison’s essays. Blair felt self-conscious about his minute, sentence-by-sentence analysis of Addison’s prose style, and he occasionally paused to apologize for or to justify his probing. To read the four lectures at one sitting is indeed wearying and even annoying. But one must remember that Blair’s students heard these lectures one at a time, that they had read the essays thoroughly before coming to class, that they had previously made their own attempt to analyze the style, and that they had the text of the essay before them while Blair was dissecting it. Undoubtedly the feeling arose at times that the teacher was needlessly worrying a point. But just when the explication seemed about to be
enveloped in a gossamer cocoon, Blair would snap the thread and move on to the next frame. In that next frame, almost by way of compensation for his patience, the student would get a brilliant analysis of the choice or collocation of words, the harmony of the period, or the logic of the thought. And it must have been extremely satisfying to the students to see a crooked sentence straightening out under the pressure of Blair’s probing and kneading. Blair is unsurpassed in his observations on particles and conjunctions. What he has done, for instance, with the article the from the first sentence of Addison’s Spectator essay, No. 411, is one of the most impressive passages of analysis in the whole of English criticism. If modern teachers of literature are seeking a method of analyzing prose style, they might well start with Blair: he was both a pioneer and an expert in the art.

The heart of what Blair was seeking to do in his lectures on Style is contained in his pronouncement that he was combatting the “affected and frivolous use of ornament” and advocating “more solid thought and more manly simplicity in style.” This was a noble program, but perhaps he was too effective in the first part of his program. He protested so loudly against the strained use of ornaments that he virtually rendered ornament inoperative. In the minds of his students ornament had become mere tinsel.

Blair showed this same suspicion of ornament when he came to discuss declamatory. Ornament consistently took an inferior position to such qualities as force, warmth, simplicity, and Blair even went so far as to declare that strength and ornament were incompatible elements. A good deal of Blair’s suspicion of ornament undoubtedly stemmed from his suspicion of the declamatory and the “scholastic.” Declamation and scholastic were always “dirty” words with
Blair. The dim view that he took of amplification was owing to the fact that amplification was associated in his mind with those sophistical arts supposedly practiced by the scholastics. Whether Blair took his antipathy for the scholastics directly from Bacon and Hobbes is not certain, but he had certainly been infected by the spirit of the Royal Society in general. Declamation, amplification, and ornament were the arts used by the scholastics to mask the shallowness of their reasoning and to deceive their audience. This judgment of Blair's would have been more impressive if it had been founded on some first-hand acquaintance with medieval and Tudor rhetoric; but actually his prejudice had been picked off the wind.

The recurring terms throughout the lectures on oratory were good sense, decorum, manliness, and sincerity—just those qualities that were most antithetical to the qualities he associated with scholastic rhetoric. His preference for Demosthenes over Cicero was based on the greater "manliness" and "vigor" that he found in the Greek orator. There was, Blair felt, something effeminate about Cicero's oratory. The reason for the charge of effeminacy is not hard to fathom: Cicero displayed a penchant for ornament, rhythm, amplification. This touch of the effeminate (or the scholastic) was not enough to destroy Blair's admiration for Cicero as an orator, but it was enough to swing his preference to the more "manly" Demosthenes.

Good sense is a term that orients much of what Blair said not only on oratory but on other aspects of rhetoric. As we saw, good sense was not that intuitive faculty that the ordinary, uninhibited man was capable of exercising, but rather it was that wisdom which is the fruit of the liberal-arts training. It was, in other words, an acquired faculty rather than a native one. Good
sense invariably led one to adopt the via media. Via media is the keynote of Blair's whole approach to rhetoric and criticism. Blair was the trimmer, the compromiser, the moderate. His whole position in rhetoric was the middle way between the old classicism and the new romanticism. He was the bridge between the age that was and the age just born. And so he retained in his system of rhetoric those precepts from the ancient rhetoricians which satisfy good sense and adopted from the new psychology those theories of the imagination, the sublime, genius, beauty, and taste which in his estimation were best calculated to advance the art of rhetoric. Although not blessed with the keen mind of men like Hume, Adam Smith, Kames, and Campbell, Blair displayed in his escolasticism a remarkable instinct for what was sound and permanent.

One of Blair's great weaknesses was his lack of an adequate historical perspective. This weakness was never more manifest than in the survey of eloquence at the beginning of his lectures on oratory. While he had a first-hand acquaintance with the major classical rhetoricians, he gave only passing notice to the medieval rhetoricians and made no mention at all of the Tudor and seventeenth-century rhetoricians. These gaps have a significance; Blair derived all his rhetorical doctrine either from contemporary British and French rhetoricians or from the major Greek and Roman rhetoricians. In other words, Blair was not perpetuating the English rhetorical tradition; he was a preserver and purveyor of classical rhetoric modified by some of the current ideas.

Blair's approach to the study of oratory was not through the traditional five parts of rhetoric—*inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, pronuntiatio*—but rather through the three main kinds of oratory—demonstrative, deliberative, and judicial. Characteristically dissatisfied with the terminology...
of the classical rhetoricians, he rejected the terms demonstrative, deliberative, and judicial and discussed oratory as it was found in the three main arenas of public life—the popular assemblies, the law courts, and the pulpit. This change is verbal rather than substantial.

Blair showed that he had no slavish reverence for the ancients by his inveighing against their extensive investigation of the topics and the passions. Throughout the lectures Blair exhibited an impatience with anything that smacked of logic-chopping or hair-splitting. Perhaps this antipathy went back to his suspicion of scholasticism. A preoccupation with the topics and the passions seemed to Blair to be a treadmill affair, which merely served to delay the student from getting at the practice of oratory. Blair was not one to slight theory, but he became a successful teacher of rhetoric largely because many of his precepts could readily be turned into practice. Blair was a utilitarian, in the best sense of that word, and while men like Cicero and Quintilian could by no means be called mere theorizers, in the worst sense of that word, they were not disposed to turn their students loose in the market-place so soon as Blair was.

Blair best discovered himself to be in tune with the growing Romantic spirit in his frequent turning to a study of the quality of the agent. Blair's discussion of the relative merits of genius and art, his desire to form a man of taste who would be sensitive to the beauties and blemishes in art and nature, his tendency, in his close analyses of prose, to read back to the character and philosophy of the writer, and his insistence that the artist had to be a virtuous man—all these are evidence of his interest in the qualities of the man who produced the work of art. The orientation of Coleridge's criticism around Imagination and Fancy was merely a continuation of this same kind of preoccupation.
In the final lecture, both in the group on style and in the group on oratory, Blair tried to show his students how they might qualify themselves for their art. There must be the thorough grounding in the liberal arts; there must be the diligent study of the theory and practice of the best speakers and writers; there must be the learning through systematic imitation; and above all there must be the cultivation of virtuous habits. In the lectures on oratory, he made his last plea for the necessity of virtue in the speaker or writer. And it is here that he presented his strongest argument for this contention—namely, that virtue is conducive to study.

This recapitulation of the salient points in Blair's rhetorical doctrines leaves the way open to some final assessment of the worth and influence of Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric. This stage is always fraught with difficulty for the interpreter. He is often so close to his subject and frequently so in love with it that he cannot assume the proper perspective on it. His safest course perhaps is to look at what others have said about his man and then, with his equilibrium restored, to render his own judgment.

"In Edinburgh none was more famous in the latter half of the eighteenth century than Dr. Hugh Blair," says H. G. Graham, and this judgment is confirmed by Bower, one of the historians of the University of Edinburgh. Indeed, there is ample evidence, even from among contemporaries, that Blair was a man of distinction in his own town. A man named John Kay, for instance, reported that almost every person of note who visited Edinburgh during the seventies and

5 Scottish Men of Letters, 121.
6 History of the University of Edinburgh, III, 17.
eighties carried letters of introduction to Blair. 7 Robert Burns, who left his plow to come up to Edinburgh, where he was lionised by the literati, pronounced that Blair was "justly at the head of what might be called fine writing, and might be called in the first rank of prose, and he confessed that his heart overflowed with gratitude "when the good man descends from his pinnacle and meets me on equal ground in conversation." 8

Graham's phrase, "the literary accoucheur of Scotland," 9 perhaps best sums up Blair's position in late eighteenth-century Edinburgh. Blair was one of those invited in 1755 to contribute to what proved to be an abortive Edinburgh Review. His sponsorship of Macpherson's translation was notorious. What is not so well known is that John Home brought him his Douglas, Hume his essays, Adam Smith his treatises, and Burns his poetry. Alexander Carlyle testified 10 that Robertson and Blair had the task of reading manuscripts prepared for the press and that they were both "kind encouragers of young men of merit."

Modern students of literature are wholly unaware that Blair was an editor of Shakespeare. 11 Spurred by the announcement of a London edition of Shakespeare by Dr. Samuel Johnson, a group of Scottish publishers invited Blair

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7 John Kay, A Series of Original Portraits and Caricature Etchings: with Biographical Sketches and Illustrative Anecdotes, Edinburgh, 1877, i, 123.
9 Graham, Scottish Men of Letters, 126.
to prepare an edition of the Bard. Since the Scottish edition reached the market in 1755, twelve years before Johnson's edition, Blair became the sixth modern editor of Shakespeare, preceded only by Rowe (1709), Pope (1725), Theobald (1734), Hamner (1744), and Warburton (1747). The Scottish edition had a larger circulation in America than it did in England. Esther Cloudman Dunn in her *Shakespeare in America* has remarked that "the entrance of Shakespeare into the conservative American stronghold of traditional education, under the respectable aegis of Hugh Blair, is one of the pleasant little jokes of our history," and she goes on to say that Blair's observations on Shakespeare in the second half of *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* introduced the study of the poet "unchallenged, into the educational scheme of America."  

Blair was at the height of his prestige when he published his *Lectures* in 1785. The publication of the famous lectures was undoubtedly awaited with eagerness. A man of Blair's renown could expect extravagant praise from admirers and carping criticism from jealous rivals. The book was greeted with both praise and blame. Schmitz reports that the *Monthly Review* (LXVIII, 1785, 491), which was the first of the periodicals to greet the Lectures, maintained that Blair, by a "happy and singular union of taste and philosophy, . . . supplied a great defect in the science of criticism, and . . . made a valuable addition to the polite literature of the . . . age"; that Gilbert Stuart in *The English Re-

12 Schmitz reveals (Hugh Blair, 140) that the anonymous "Scots Editor" of this work was not identified as Hugh Blair until the 1795 printing. No doubt now exists, however, that Blair was the editor, right from the beginning, of the Scottish edition of Shakespeare.


14 Hugh Blair, 95.
view (II, 1783, 18-25, 81-95) remarked on the superficiality of Blair's mind and
the commonplaceness of his theories; and that The Gentleman's Magazine (LIII,
1783, 684, 758), although generally favorable, chiefly spent its time picking
holes in Blair's observations.

One can imagine that many of Blair's contemporaries felt as William
Cowper did. Writing to the Reverend William Unwin on April 5, 1784, Cowper
said,

I have read six of Blair's Lectures, and what do I say of Blair? That he
is a sensible man, master of his subject, and excepting here and there a
Scotticism, a good writer, so far at least as perspicuity of expression
and method, contributed to make one. But oh the sterility of that man's
fancy!15

A few days later, after having read some more of the lectures, Cowper tempered
his criticism a bit. "As his subjects improve," Cowper said of Blair, "he im-
proves with them; but upon the whole I account him a dry writer, useful no doubt
as an instructor but as little entertaining as with so much knowledge it is pos-
sible to be."16

Such strictures, however, did nothing to modify the extravagant praise
that Blair's work continued to elicit. Writing in the year after Blair's death,
an anonymous writer in the Scots Magazine17 said of the Lectures,

No work has been hitherto produced in English to supercede or rival them.
They display sometimes originality, always justness of thought, without be-
ing deformed by any excess of ornament. . . . There is no other book which
will afford a more comprehensive view to persons who are studying to correct

15 Thomas Wright, ed., The Correspondence of William Cowper, London,
1904, II, 188.

16 Ibid., 192.

17 Edinburgh, LXIII, 1801, 7.
a bad taste, or to form a good one for the beauties of composition or public speaking.

We can infer what the burden of a good deal of the contemporary criticism was from John Hill’s defense of Blair:

His merciless critics, eager to assume a consequence to which they were not entitled, forgot that to the merit of entire originality he never laid claim. As a teacher of youth, he was more anxious to accommodate his matter to their capacity than to the whim of conceited theorists. Upon slight defects his malignant critics fastened their envenomed tooth.18

Blair’s purpose, according to Hill’s account, was something less ambitious than his critics had supposed:

Dr. Blair was much more anxious to compose Lectures that might become distinguished for their utility, than for their depth. His object was to initiate youth into a study, with which the country at large was but little acquainted. His pupils had undergone no preparatory discipline in the science to which they applied themselves. Subtle discussions from their teacher would have been in a certain degree misapplied.19

This announcement of intention is somewhat more modest than Blair’s own announcement in the Introduction to the Lectures, but it certainly comes closer to what Blair actually achieved.

The wide and rapid circulation of the Lectures is a testimony to Blair’s popularity if it is not an indication of his influence. William Charvat provides these figures for the fifty years following the publication of the Lectures:

Blair’s Lectures appeared in both complete and abridged editions totaling fifty-three, thirty-nine of which were published before 1835. There were thirty complete editions, seventeen before 1835, and twenty-three abridged


19 Ibid., 43.
editions, twenty-two before 1835. In addition to these English and American editions of the Lectures there were translations published in French (Paris, 1797, 1821 [bis], 1830, 1835; Geneva, 1908), in Italian (Genoa, 1811; Naples, 1815; Turin, 1855), in Russian (Moscow, 1837-1838), and in Spanish (Madrid, 1798-1801). Besides the many abridgements that appeared, parts of Blair's lectures were incorporated verbatim in at least eight American textbooks on rhetoric. Some of Blair's observations on Style and Perspicuity even found their way into the most influential grammar book of the nineteenth century—Lindley Murray's English Grammar (1795). In a letter to Lindley Murray in 1800, Blair shows himself conscious of the honor that Murray had again done him by including selections from the Lectures in the English Reader (1799):

I have been honoured with your kind letter; and cannot but be very much flattered with the testimonies of esteem and regard which you are pleased to bestow: though I am humbled, at the same time, by a sense of my character's having been overrated by you, much above what it deserves.

While Porter Perrin has made the most thorough study of the practice

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21 Schmitz, Hugh Blair, 144-145.

22 See the authors and titles of these textbooks in Schmitz's Bibliography, Hugh Blair, 144-145.

23 Murray acknowledges his debt to Blair in the Introduction to English Grammar, adapted to the Different Classes of Learners, Exeter, New Hampshire, 1822, 5.

of rhetoric in American schools in the first part of the eighteenth century. Charles A. Frits, Donald Hayworth, and William Charvat have made the most thorough study of rhetorical practice in American schools in a later period. The studies of the latter three men all confirm what Morris Croll said in 1916: "the accepted rhetorical teacher, at least in America, until thirty or forty years ago was Hugh Blair." Charvat reveals that when chairs of rhetoric were established at American colleges in the late eighteenth century Blair's Lectures became the standard text. The Lectures, Charvat discovers, was first adopted by Yale in 1786 and then by Harvard in 1788. Between 1800 and 1835, the Lectures was adopted by Columbia, Pennsylvania, Brown, Middlebury, Williams, Amherst, Hamilton, Wesleyan, and Union. Harold Harding, who made a study of English rhetorical practice between 1750 and 1800, noted that Campbell, Whately, and Blair formed the basis of speech courses in American colleges and stated


30 Charvat, American Critical Thought, 31.

31 Frits, The Content of the Teaching of Speech, 64.
that "much of our present-day public speaking theory is inherited in one way or another from these three writers." Thomas Jefferson may have owed some of his eloquence to Blair's instructions. In the catalogue of Jefferson's library, made in 1815, a copy of Blair's Lectures is listed, and in a letter to Bernard Moore, an aspirant lawyer, Jefferson laid down a course of study which included, under the heading of "Rhetoric," the following three items: "Blair's lectures on Rhetoric, Sheridan on Elocution, Mason on Poetic and Prosaic numbers." Blair had a strong indirect influence on American writing through the medium of Edward Tyrrell Channing, the Boylston Professor of Rhetoric at Harvard whom Charvat speaks of as "perhaps the most important individual of his time in the dissemination of Scotch aesthetic." Channing's Lectures Read to the Seniors in Harvard College (Boston, 1858), which manifested the influence of Blair (especially in the treatment of style), formed the writing habits of many of the leading literary men in America during the middle years of the nineteenth century. Charvat assigns one other influence to Blair: He says that Blair's Lectures was the main force in the shift of preference, in America, from Johnson

32 Harding, English Rhetorical Theory, 291.  
35 American Critical Thought, 186.  
36 See the testimony of Andrew Preston Peabody, one of Channing's pupils, as given in Charvat, American Critical Thought, 32.
to Addison.37

In the face of such evidence of the popularity of Blair's Lectures in America, one is inclined to agree with the statement made in the New York Evening Post: the work "has acquired the authority of a standard, and is one of the most used in our colleges and principal seminaries."38

While the popularity of Blair is measurable, the influence of Blair is not so easily ascertainable. How does one determine the influence of one writer on later writers? One looks for explicit acknowledgment of debt, for frequent reference to or quotations from a predecessor, for verbal echoes, for parallel ideas, for catalogues of books in a writer's library, for annotated copies of books. Perhaps no one of these resources in itself can serve to establish beyond a doubt the indebtedness of one writer to another. Even the findings from a combination of these resources can create, at times, only a situation of "accumulated probabilities." If it were not for our knowledge that no writer is entirely original and that all writers tend to build on the foundation of ideas that has already been laid down, we might be inexorably dubious of all genetic scholarship. As it is, scholars have succeeded occasionally in rendering plausible, even certain, the influence of some writer on others.

What definite evidence of Blair's influence on succeeding writers do we have? The answer to that is simple—almost none. No one, as far as the present writer knows, has explicitly acknowledged that his style or his ideas

37 Charvat, American Critical Thought, 111.

flowed from Blair. Writers of textbooks have mentioned Blair, have incorporated excerpts from his lectures, and like Lindley Murray have even confessed an admiration for the man and his book. Such reflection of Blair hardly seems to qualify as evidence of influence.

If, as Professor Charvat maintains, Blair's Lectures was "a textbook which half the educated English-speaking world studied in its day," we can safely presume that many prominent men read and annotated Blair's text. We know that Jane Austen read the book; that Lord Macaulay read Blair and wondered that "so poor a creature as Blair should ever have had any literary reputation at all"; that Oliver Wendell Holmes could not help "Blair-ing it up" now and then. Many other literary men, as prominent as those mentioned, undoubtedly were acquainted with Blair; but again the evidence of any influence is negligible.

Part of the difficulty of establishing Blair's influence derives, of course, from the fact that Blair was such a derivative writer. Whenever we find, in later writers, ideas similar to Blair's, we can never be certain that the ideas came directly from Blair; they could just as well have come from those rhetoricians whom Blair had appropriated.

The one writer who exhibits any marked evidence of having been influ-

39 American Critical Thought, 44.


42 See Chapter II of The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.
enced by Blair is William Wordsworth. But even in the case of Wordsworth, the
influence seems to have been exerted, not so much by the lectures on rhetoric,
as by the belles-lettres part of his Lectures and by the Critical Dissertation
on the Poems of Ossian. In Chapter II of this study, the present writer noted
some indication—admittedly tenuous—that Wordsworth was influenced by Blair's
notions of the sublime—especially the "sublime in objects." There is also some
suggestion that Blair's notions of the picturesque may have prompted some of
Wordsworth's picturesque effects. In Lecture V, on "Beauty," Blair cited as ex-
amples of the picturesque "a bridge with arches over a river, smoke rising from
cottages in the midst of trees, and the distant view of a fine building seen by
the rising sun." Might not the notion of the bridge arching over the river and
the building gleaming in the morning sun have suggested some of the effects in
Wordsworth's sonnet "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge"? And Blair's "smoke ris-
ing from cottages in the midst of trees" has a remarkably close echo in Words-
worth's line in the Tintern Abbey poem—"wreaths of smoke/ Sent up, in silence,
from among the trees!" None of these parallels or echoes, of course, taken sep-
arately, adds up to anything conclusive; but when these parallels and echoes are
added to the growing evidence they begin to carry weight. What needs to be es-
established with certainty is what is highly probable: namely, that Blair's Lect-
tures was adopted as a text at the Hawkshead school when Wordsworth was a stu-
dent there in the early 1780's.

43 For a study of this probable influence see Arthur Beatty, William
Wordsworth, his Doctrine and Art in their Historical Relations, Madison, Wiscon-
sin, 1922, 54-35; R. C. Knowlton, "Wordsworth and Hugh Blair," Philological
Despite the lack of definite evidence, the influence of a book as popular as Blair's Lectures could not have failed to make some mark on the writing habits of the thousands of schoolboys who read Blair in the classrooms. If our modern age is disposed to denigrate the glory that Blair once enjoyed, it cannot deny him one claim to pre-eminence: his genius as a teacher. As Cowling has said, "No teacher ever made the study of English composition more pleasant, nor the principles of literary criticism more rational." Modern teachers of English could profit from a study of Blair's masterful pedagogy. He was consistently elementary, practical, and lucid; frequently he was even stimulating. A. M. Williams, a modern critic of Blair, has pronounced the Lectures to be, in general, "verbose," "hide-bound," "unprogressive," "inconclusive," but he concedes that Blair had conceived "a thoroughly sound plan of teaching his subject." Williams goes on to specify the merits of Blair as a teacher of writing:

First of all, he laid down that there is not a style to be imposed on all subjects and on all writers; the occasion and the natural genius of the writer must largely determine the form of the composition; that nevertheless the principles of all good style may be learned by careful study of the great English classics, and that this study is to be conducted with a view to ascertaining their excellencies, and to profiting by these; that style is not to be sought after to the sacrifice of the thought; but that, in the words of Quintilian, a writer is to be attentive to his expression, but about his matter solicitous.

Professor Charvat too has pronounced that many of Blair's principles "may be considered a permanent part of English rhetoric," specifying those principles


which "deal with the position of adverbs and of parenthetical matter, the proper use of relative pronouns, sentence unity, climax, and parallelism."46

Blair was indeed a first-rate teacher. The one thing lacking to make him a perfect teacher was a sense of humor. Throughout the entire course of lectures there is not a single touch of humor. The tone is persistently sober, gentle, and dignified. No one much respects the teacher who feels that he must constantly entertain his students with verbal fireworks, but everyone who sits on the other side of the desk appreciates an occasional bit of comic relief—if only to restore the equilibrium. Blair was temperamentally incapable of the humorous touch. All of the contemporaries who have recorded their impressions of Blair speak of his fastidiousness, his pride, and his self-consciousness about the eminence of his position. He had grown to take himself too seriously. It is this self-consciousness that accounts for the pompousness of many of his pronouncements. Blair was never really malicious in his strictures on others, but he rarely, if ever, conceded that he could be wrong. What he needed was the gift to be able to stand back from himself and his subject and to re-adjust the perspective. He would have done well to pray with Bobbie Burns, his fellow-Scottsman who did possess the gift of humor:

O wad some Power the giftie gie us
To see ourselv as ither see us!

Blair's historical importance is undeniable. No literary history can afford to ignore—and no modern literary history has ignored—Blair's Lectures. The fashion today, however, is to belittle the Scottish rhetorician. Some belittling was necessary to correct the imbalance resulting from the un critical

46 Charvat, American Critical Thought, 112.
adulation that once attended Blair. But modern assessors of Blair have been too ready to speak of his faults and to ignore his virtues. Let it be conceded that Blair's doctrines were largely derivative, that his thinking was superficial, and that his demeanor was lackluster. But on the credit side there was his simple, clear style, his amazing reading range, his persistent good taste, his talent for organization, and his exemplary faculty for teaching. It is the failure to see or to concede these virtues that has produced some of the almost brutal judgments on Blair that have been quoted in this thesis. He is certainly a much more significant figure in the English rhetorical tradition than a good many literary historians will allow us to believe.

Is it likely that there will ever be a revival of interest in Blair? Blair's popularity began to wane with the appearance of Bishop Whatley's Rhetoric in 1828. During the 1830's there was, for some unknown reason, a renaissance of interest in Blair's Lectures, but after the 1850's Blair's popularity steadily declined. Editions of the Lectures continued to appear as late as 1873, and abridged or incorporated versions of the Lectures continued to be read well into the twentieth century, but for all intents and purposes, Blair's hey-day was at an end. What bears pointing out, however, is that Blair's decline coincided with the general decline of interest in rhetoric. Nothing like the rhetorical discipline that once prevailed in the schools now exists. Compo-

47 Hawley points out that the Scottish and English periodicals of the 1830's devoted more space to the reviews of the Lectures than at any other time since the original publication of the book.—Hawley, Hugh Blair: Moderate Preacher, 115.

48 Father Norman Weyand, S.J., Chairman of the Department of English at Loyola University, Chicago, has informed this writer that he remembers studying Blair in the classroom during his high school days in the 1920's.
osition courses today are a considerably watered-down version of the rhetoric curricula of yesteryear. Rhetoric has gone the way of the other good things—classical languages, mathematics, geography, physics—that once figured so prominently in the curricula of the schools. If Blair's name is no longer mentioned in our classrooms, what rhetorician's name is heard?

A Blair revival, if it is ever to come, must await the restoration of rhetoric to the curriculum. Today there are increasing signs of a revival of interest in rhetoric. The New Criticism, with its emphasis on the close reading of texts, has sparked a renewed interest in diction, syntax, and rhetorical figures. Articles on rhetoric are appearing in ever increasing numbers in the scholarly periodicals. Several colleges are instituting graduate courses in grammar and rhetoric—courses designed and taught by the English Department with a view to acquainting future teachers of English with the history of grammar and rhetoric, with the teaching techniques of some of the great teachers of these subjects, and with the science and terminology of the tropes and figures. If this trend continues, rhetoric may again come into its own. And if rhetoric returns, there will be an honored place for Hugh Blair. In anticipation of that restoration, someone should set about preparing a critical edition of The Lectures on Rhetoric and Bellas Lettres.

This writer must be permitted one final pasan for Blair. It was Blair's style that first attracted this writer, and it is Blair's style that, in this writer's view, remains Blair's chief glory. He has not been recognised for the supreme stylist that he is largely because his writing is buried in the dormant disciplines of rhetoric and the sermon. But he has deserved better of posterity than he has been dealt. As a stylist, he is the peer of such great Eng-
lish writers as Swift and Addison, and it is to the everlasting shame of men like Bonamy Dobree, George Saintsbury, Walter Raleigh, and Herbert Read that in their books on English prose style no mention is made of Hugh Blair. One of the blessings of a revival of interest in rhetoric would be that Blair would again be read, and once read, would be recognized as one of the great English stylists. The day may even come when excerpts from Blair's Lectures—excerpts selected principally for their literary value—will be included in anthologies of English literature.

This writer's knowledge of Blair is now deeper and more balanced than it was when he began this study. Blair's great triumph is that even after he has been unsparingly anatomized he still commands respect and admiration. He played a significant part in the Scottish literary revival in the late eighteenth century. Dr. Hugh Blair, editor, critic, preacher, and rhetorician, may once again assume the commanding position he once occupied in the English and American school system.
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Honesty requires the present writer to confess that he has not read many of the books listed in the first section of this Bibliography (Primary Works Mentioned in the Text but Not Quoted).

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The dissertation submitted by Edward P. J. Corbett has been read and approved by five members of the Department of English.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the dissertation is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Date ________________________________ Signature of Adviser ________________________________