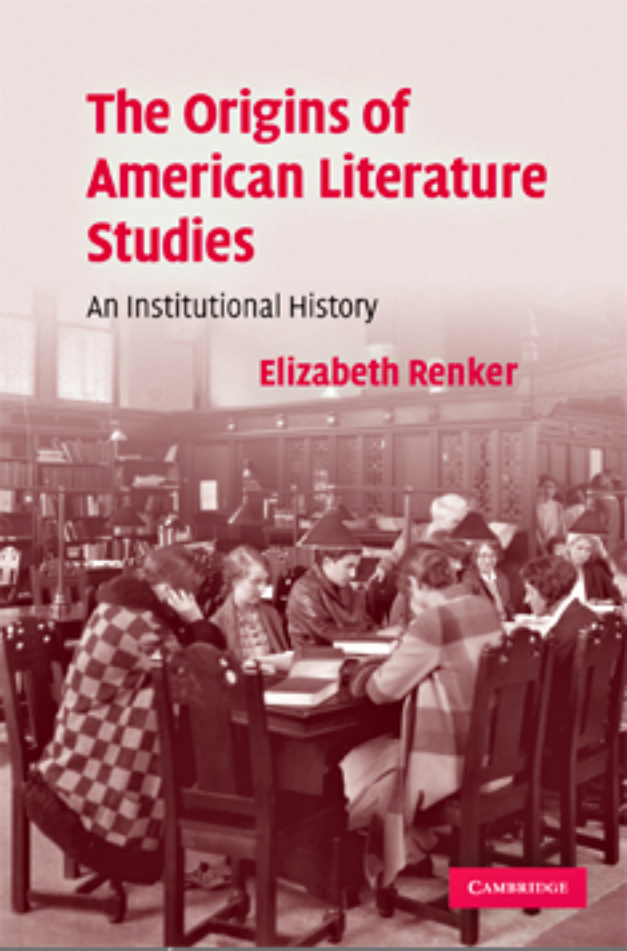
# The Origins of American Literature Studies

An Institutional History

Elizabeth Renker



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# THE ORIGINS OF AMERICAN LITERATURE STUDIES

Although American literature is now a standard subject in the college curriculum, a century ago few people thought it should be taught there. Elizabeth Renker uncovers the complex historical process through which American literature overcame its image of aesthetic and historical inferiority to become an important field for academic study and research. Renker's extensive original archival research focuses on four institutions of higher education serving distinct regional, class, race, and gender populations. She argues that American literature's inferior image arose from its affiliation with non-elite schools, teachers, and students, and that it had to overcome this social identity in order to achieve status as serious knowledge. Renker's revisionary analysis is an important contribution to the intellectual history of the United States and will be of interest to anyone studying, teaching, or researching American literature.

ELIZABETH RENKER is Associate Professor of English at The Ohio State University.

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# THE ORIGINS OF AMERICAN LITERATURE STUDIES

*An Institutional History*

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*For*
*Gordon McConville Hewes*
*Walter Rufus Arnold*
*Alexander Hayden Renker*
*Antonia Barron Renker*
*Charlotte Marie Renker*

*Future undergraduates*

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# *Acknowledgments*

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The idea for this project was born while I was on my own path to the Ph.D. at The Johns Hopkins University. Although working in the Department of English, I acquired additional training as an historian from Ronald G. Walters. His seminar in American Social History inspired me to begin archival research on the history of the discipline of English and its institutions, situated within the more general matrix of professionalism and education in the United States.

The work of Nina Baym, Gerald Graff, and Paul Lauter in particular inspired this project and their interest and support helped to sustain it. Daniel Aaron, Robert Heilman, R.W.B. Lewis, and Julian Markels, who participated at various points in the history I trace, graciously allowed me to interview them. Graduates and former faculty of the institutions I studied, as well as faculty spouses and faculty children, corresponded with me and answered my questions. James Phelan and Frank Donoghue read seemingly innumerable drafts and somehow maintained their stamina for reading even more drafts. Paula Bernat Bennett, Saul Cornell, Jared Gardner, Stephen G. Hall, Aman Garcha, and Janice Radway read and discussed parts of the manuscript and gave invaluable direction and advice. Nan Johnson shared her own work on curricular history. Harvey J. Graff's perspective pushed me past the hurdles. William J. Reese clarified the history of high schools. Mike Rose's tactical advice enabled

me to see the big picture. Shrewd critiques by the anonymous readers for Cambridge University Press improved the final contours of the book. Robert Miklitsch offered balance, ballast, and good humor. Andrew Pessin's wise friendship steered me past siren songs. My undergraduate research assistants, Rebecca Alexander, Rebecca Zell, and Kimberly Ackley, heroically swam through libraries. Sharon Cameron, Cathy N. Davidson, and Michael Moon brought parts of the manuscript into print during its long gestation and I am grateful for their enthusiasm.

A shorter version of Chapter 1, "Resistance and Change: The Rise of American Literature Studies," appeared in *American Literature* 64 (June 1992). Begun out of my instant fascination with Graff's *Professing Literature,* that article later became the germ of this book. "'American Literature' in the College Curriculum: Three Case Studies, 1890–1910," which appeared in *ELH* 67 (2000), contains brief excerpts from Chapters 2 and 3.

# *Introduction*

How does a topic – any topic – become a school subject? And how does a given subject find its place in the school system? What factors render it appropriate to a particular grade level, kind of school, brand of teacher, or type of student? The answers to these questions vary from one subject and one era to another. Indeed, every subject has its own curricular history. Individual curricular subjects in turn comprise a larger knowledge category that we typically refer to as "the curriculum." While, in its most rudimentary sense, this term designates a school's regular course of study, the historical phenomenon of the curriculum is not regular but variable and contingent. Curricula might or might not vary from school to school within and across specific time periods. The changing historical incarnations of the curriculum serve as what Richard Hofstadter and C. DeWitt Hardy call "a barometer by which we may measure the cultural pressures that operate upon the school."[1] In the pages that follow, I trace the history of one curricular subject in particular. Although still most commonly known as "American literature," that designation is now on the brink of change.[2] In that sense, this book frames both the beginning and the end of "American literature" in the curriculum.[3]

Although elementary and high school curricula widely offered American literature by the late nineteenth century, colleges and universities typically resisted its encroachment on the curriculum until the mid-twentieth century. Types of resistance varied from total curricular exclusion to various forms of strategic marginalization, for example, restricting American literature to introductory-level survey courses while refusing it space in advanced undergraduate and graduate classes. Howard Mumford Jones, who chronicled the academy's hostility to American literature, dubbed it in 1936 "the orphan child of the curriculum."[4] This book recovers and traces the complex historical processes that transformed American literature from a marginalized subject into one deemed worthy of higher study – that is, from a subject that did not count as serious

advanced knowledge into one that did. It is necessary to begin this tale before the emergence of American literature as such, with two key elements of its prehistory: the massive curricular transformations of the 1870s and the birth of English departments.

The classical curriculum that had largely organized study in the antebellum college toppled after 1870, in response to growing cultural pressures best emblematized by three institutions in particular. First, the new Cornell University opened in 1868 as, in benefactor Ezra Cornell's famous words, "an institution where any person can find instruction in any study." Second, President Charles William Eliot became president of Harvard University in 1869 and inaugurated the elective system there. While Cornell and Harvard differed dramatically in fundamental educational ethos, embodying the distinction between vocational and liberal higher education, these otherwise competing institutions nevertheless united in legitimizing the idea of a broader curriculum. In so doing, they not only challenged but also demolished the curricular criteria of the traditional colleges. Third, The Johns Hopkins University opened in 1876, redefining higher education as a form of advanced scientific expertise wholly independent of collegiate prescriptions. Its educational philosophy functioned as what Frederick Rudolph aptly calls a "successful assault on the undergraduate course of study."[5]

The curricular transformations of the 1870s also created the specific institutional matrix in which American literature would later make its bid for curricular status: the English Department. English, too, was not always a college subject. It emerged and took shape as an area of advanced study in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, along with the other modern languages.[6] At this time, the professor of modern languages became a new job category. As Michael Warner has shown, these new professionals invented literature as a "knowledge subject" that would not only warrant but require the professional methodologies they developed.[7] Yet not all forms of literature became knowledge subjects simultaneously. American literature famously lagged far behind English in its installation as a college subject and field of scholarly expertise. When I interviewed Daniel Aaron and R.W.B. Lewis, prominent early scholars of American literature, I asked both in what year they thought the field had achieved institutional status. Aaron said: the 1930s; Lewis: the 1960s.[8] The reasons for this widely noted lag, a full half century even by Aaron's more modest estimate, remain a historical puzzle.[9]

Published histories of the field typically cite the late 1920s as the turning point toward professionalization: the foundation of the American

Literature Group of the Modern Language Association in 1921 was followed by the inauguration of professional journals (*The New England Quarterly* in 1928 and *American Literature* in 1929); in addition, a growing body of published research and an increasing number of dissertations in the field were under way and accumulating momentum by that time.[10] While historically significant, these advances were nevertheless merely an interim stage of historical change. Jones's 1936 "orphan child" label indicates that marginalization persisted despite apparent progress measured in other ways, a point further attested by the oral histories I recorded with Aaron and Lewis. Even its staunchest advocates still typically described American literature as "parochial," as historical but not belletristic in interest, and as inferior in quality to "the work of the world's greatest artists."[11]

Scholarship thus far has focused primarily on the history of published scholarship and on the history of the canon as the historical keys to the professional transformations of the 1920s.[12] These elements are of course intimately related, focused as they are on research scholars as well as the authors and texts they determine to constitute the field's knowledge base. I add to these important studies a third foundational dimension of the field's history that has remained invisible precisely because it has little to do with research, authors, or books. This missing piece is the social identity of American literature in the school system.

My largest thesis is that American literature's entrenched image of aesthetic and historical inferiority was the product of specific kinds of social inferiority that were attached to the place of American literature in the school system. Its curricular identity was associated with non-elite kinds of schools, teachers, and students, forms of social inferiority in turn ascribed to the nominal content of "American literature" as a body of texts. The social inferiors at issue were particular teacher and student populations in actual schools, matters I treat in elaborate historical detail. Various institutions of higher education with different educational aims, the different and shifting groups of teachers employed by these institutions (shifts I conceive both synchronically and diachronically), and the disparate student populations they served all shaped the curricular identity of American literature.[13] The social functions associated with American literature as a curricular product were thus a foundational part of its identity *as* a product, quite apart from the content of its canon.[14] To achieve canonicity in the higher curriculum, American literature had to work itself out of this inferior social identity.

Like other curricular subjects, American literature thus had (and has) a much broader social identity than that affiliated primarily with either its canon or its experts. The books and authors one might think of as "really" comprising American literature constitute only a fraction of what it signifies in the sphere of social relations. My argument thus significantly adds to and also in some ways reverses the post-1980 debates about the history of the canon, which often focus on either the subversive or conventional content of literary texts as the signifying core of their cultural work.[15] I establish that American literature's social functions in the educational system were foundational to its curricular identity, quite independent of the content of its canon.

Indeed, the subject called "American literature" has its own history of canonicity apart from any particular imagined list of classic books. It too negotiated the transformation from noncanonical to canonical within the college curriculum in ways that intersect but are not coterminous with the history of the authors and texts construed as canonical at any given time. These are discrete registers of the canonical and must be disentangled if the historical process of canon-formation is to be fully understood. For ease of reference, I will henceforth call the canonicity of American literature as a subject "curricular canonicity" to distinguish it from the canonicity of individual authors and texts.

One emblematic example of the discontinuity between these registers of the canonical would be the reception history of the genteel tradition over the course of the past century. As Paul Lauter has traced, the accelerating demotion of the Fireside Poets (Longfellow, Whittier, Bryant, Holmes, and Lowell) and the culture of sentiment after the 1920s occurred alongside the accelerating professionalization of the field.[16] It would be easy to misconstrue the nature of the causal relationships between the two phenomena. American literature did not achieve its curricular canonicity because it had finally found an inherently canonical group of authors, such as the newly discovered Herman Melville. As John Guillory argues, there is no such thing as an intrinsically canonical text.[17] In the 1920s, new authors were indeed supplanting old favorites and the number of canonical authors was shrinking dramatically.[18] But the fact that "American literature" has reclaimed the sentimental and the genteel in the past two decades as a fresh, exploding, rediscovered, and re-evaluated area of scholarship is a historical marker for the fact that their expulsion in the 1920s was not a necessary but a contingent phenomenon, contingent upon particular social formations.[19] In other words, the curricular canonicity of American literature is not predicated on any

particular construction of the content of the field. The inherent literary quality of American literature – or lack of it – is, simply put, beside the historical point.

The identity of American literature as a knowledge category during the years of my study fluctuated, at times dramatically, in response to a broad array of competing cultural impulses. Lauter points out that

> differing versions of an American canon contested for visibility and power during the decades prior to the First World War. After, an essentially new, academic canon emerged and exerted an increasingly hegemonic force in American culture. A more detailed study of the *institutions* central to canon formation will help clarify these processes.[20]

The following chapters will delineate such contests and fluctuations as they related to the specific institutions of the educational system. There, American literature moved into the curriculum at one type of school, out at another, and sometimes in and then out at the same school. The individual agents involved (including students, teachers, textbook authors, department chairs, university presidents, and so on) did not and could not understand, from their vantage, either the full range of signifying operations in which their action and inaction were embedded or their eventual outcomes. Teleological histories of the field treat the emergence of American literature as if it were the endpoint of a linear process in which its true literary value was finally discovered.[21] But the story of American literature could easily have turned out differently. Nothing about change is inevitable; literature does not stand apart from the historical processes that determine value in any given time and place.[22]

My study follows the case method to recover the actual, local historical processes that are, by definition, lost in studies focused on large-scale national developments. The institutional transitions affecting the status of American literature did not occur in exactly the same terms at exactly the same time across the landscape of higher education. Rather, American literature entered the curricular canon through a historically contingent process of debate that varied from school to school and decade to decade. It emerged as a contested new field by way of a process of erratic gains, losses, and shifts. I thus linger on failures and setbacks as much as on professional advancements. These clashes within the larger domain of American literature's history as a form of knowledge reveal cultural stakes extending well beyond the covers of books. The tumult of the tale bears clear, although certainly not simply analogical, relevance to the current moment in higher education, in which we still uneasily attempt to adjudicate the value and place of "new" fields.

In keeping with the particularity of my local method, I work with an entirely different archive than many histories of the field. I do not focus on the secondary archive of published research about American literature by its early scholars. Instead, I center my analysis in the primary archive of bureaucracy: course catalogues, hiring records, administrative bulletins, presidents' reports, minutes of department meetings, curriculum development materials, and so on. Here, I agree with Lauter, W.B. Carnochan, and David R. Shumway that the vast archive of institutional records is crucial to understanding the genealogy of the curriculum we have inherited.[23] Universities are not Platonic ivory towers preserving and teaching timeless ideas: they are material settings through which ideas are transmitted, understood, and afforded social function.[24] Carnochan points out that transhistorical myths about the curriculum have impeded our understanding of the actual history of universities, with the result that the repetitive crisis-mongering about the curriculum is often an "airless" debate unaware of its own genealogy.[25]

I place my case studies within the larger social history of professional expertise, one of the most dramatic social developments of the post-Civil War period.[26] A rampant spirit of specialization suffused everything from spectator sports (which began to organize itself in professional teams and leagues) to leisure activities (bicyclists, for example, could subscribe to more than half a dozen specialized journals on cycling) to the organization of work life (in which people increasingly identified themselves by their occupations or professions). A flurry of professional organizations reoriented the relation not only between individuals and their work but also between the general populace and the now-credentialized experts whose professional assistance they sought. The formation of organizations such as the American Ophthalmological Society (1864), the American Chemical Society (1876), the American Bar Association (1878), the American Surgical Association (1880), the American Forestry Association (1882), the American Institute of Electrical Engineers (1885), the American Pediatric Society (1888), and the National Statistical Association (1888) became a reflex of the era.[27]

The university was an integral part of this knowledge system, and it was within the broader context of specialization that the American Ph.D. was born to certify the new profession of scholar–professor. Prior to the founding of Johns Hopkins, the small number of Americans in search of doctorates had typically gone to Germany.[28] Hopkins invented the phenomenon of the American Ph.D., thereby utterly transforming the doctorate in the United States. For the first time, the Ph.D. became a

degree with both a social meaning and a professional function. The Hopkins model rapidly spread nationwide and, through its influence, the Ph.D. increasingly became a required credential for college and university teaching. As this new Ph.D. model with its foundational notion of scholarly expertise came to dominate American higher education after 1876, the lives of students and teachers, well beyond the particulars of graduate programs, also changed dramatically. For example, it was not until the 1890s that college study was systematically organized into subject areas called "departments," which is now so standard as to seem inevitable. This specialized conception of knowledge developed in tandem with the emergent job class of the knowledge expert.

I treat four institutions of higher education, which I present as roughly emblematic of disparate educational models: Hopkins, which represented the revolutionary ascent of the research model; Mount Holyoke College (which opened as Mount Holyoke Female Seminary in 1837), emblematic of the old-style female seminary; Wilberforce University (which opened as The Ohio African University in 1856), whose institutional contours had to respond, however uneasily, to competing models of "Negro" education; and The Ohio State University (which opened as The Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College in 1873), founded on and committed to the land-grant model of education for the "industrial classes," as directed by the Morrill Act of 1862.[29] These institutions varied in educational aim, region, faculty composition, and student body. They managed, often struggled, to serve their own local needs alongside external pressures exerted by national developments in higher education and American culture more broadly.

Since the eventual emergence of American literature at any given school was antedated by years, sometimes decades, of institutional phenomena that shaped when and how it later arose, each chapter begins by assessing developments that preceded the appearance of American literature *per se*. These phenomena were nevertheless integral to later developments and should be understood as such. Thus each chapter traces the founding ideology and early history of the institution in question, examining the nature of the faculty and student body and the school's educational goals. Since American literature was typically housed in English Departments, I also attend to the founding conceptions of English that would later shape the kind of space afforded to American literature. When I turn to the ways in which American literature began to carve out a curricular place within these local institutional conditions, I focus on particular curricular turning points, especially the point at which

American literature achieved curricular stability in the English Department. What that stability meant, as well as when and how it occurred, varied from one institution to another; consequently, not all chapters cover an identical time period in the same way or at the same length.

I stress rather than elide local distinctions. Indeed, I argue that differences from one case to another are essential to understanding the competing conceptions of value at work in this historical process. As Mary Poovey argues in her history of New York University, scrupulous attention to local conditions acts as a corrective to large general claims about how universities and curricula actually operate. Laurence R. Veysey too, in his magisterial history of American universities, notes that broad schema are of only limited usefulness, since most actual institutions diverge from large-scale generalizations.[30] My local archives foreground the ragged edges that have been trimmed, hence lost, from other accounts of the history of the field, rendering visible the marginal, disparate, and losing forces that the large-scale narrative has expunged.[31]

Chapter 1 focuses on the birth of the American Ph.D. degree at The Johns Hopkins University and on the vast institutional repercussions of this development. Hopkins reinvented American higher education as the province of professional scholar–experts. It also forcefully promulgated "English" as a new professional field that was the domain of expert "scientists." The ideology of English as a knowledge subject at Hopkins defined American literature there as inferior: I show in programmatic and curricular detail how the new Hopkins ideology of "research" defined American literature as inappropriate to the rhetorically and practically masculine world of the professional research scholar. Far from being a merely theoretical objection, this ideology generated specific curricular and programmatic decisions that marginalized American literature classes, relegating them to the university's most female division, the College for Teachers.

In the institutional turbulence of the late nineteenth century in which the Johns Hopkins model was ascendant, other longer standing educational models met their demise. One of these was the female seminary, a common nineteenth-century form of the school. Chapter 2 traces Mount Holyoke Female Seminary's institutional history in the avant-garde of female education, as well as its historically early American literature curriculum. I then show how this old-style seminary redefined itself as Mount Holyoke College in 1893 in response to new external pressures generated by the changing climate of American higher education. Part of this redefinition included expunging American literature from the

curriculum. American literature's associations with lower schools and the women who taught in them marked the field as anti-professional in the new university culture of the Ph.D.

Chapter 3 turns to Wilberforce University, one of the first institutions founded for the higher education of "Negroes." I show how ideologies of education for African-Americans in the postbellum period illuminate the place of American literature at Wilberforce, where it entered the curriculum by way of the normal school rather than in the "College Division," which was committed to liberal arts training. One of the few professions open to educated African Americans was that of teaching black students. American literature functioned as an appropriate subject for African Americans because it would suit their social and occupational limits. Subjects defined as "liberal arts," on the other hand, functioned ideologically during this period as "equal" to white education. To these white subjects African-American students had restricted access. The installation of American literature at Wilberforce enacted social programs meant to limit curricula, jobs, and status for black people.

Chapter 4 considers the radical innovation of the land-grant movement and its ethos of practical education. Turning to the case of The Ohio State University, I explore how the ideology of practicality affected the liberal arts in general, as well as English and American literature in particular. I trace the early, inherent suspicions toward the liberal arts in the land-grant movement because of their cultural elitism. At Ohio, the curricular status of American literature underwent a steady process of downgrading in the English Department after its emergence in 1890; nevertheless, the consolidating ethos of the English profession that gradually devalued American literature at this time eventually came into stark conflict with the extramural forces of nationalism during World War II. American literature would finally receive an enthusiastic curricular embrace at Ohio State at this time. Ironically, because of the practical services it could render in the cause of nationalism, it even outpaced the status of the field of English that had consistently marginalized it. This case presents a powerful example of the competing and chaotic pressures that often drive institutional change – pressures that institutional rhetoric neither understands nor acknowledges.

I have chosen not to write studies of the schools often construed as American literature's most significant institutional pioneers, such as Duke University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Columbia University. My premise in fact contests the assumption that those are the stories that most require telling. The intellectual point cannot be overstated that, by

definition, every college and university in the United States that was in operation during the period in question engaged the macro-level social and institutional formations that are my subject. In that sense, this book could be expanded thousands-fold and each new case would aid our fuller comprehension, whether the school in question is Duke University and its founding of the flagship journal in the field or the impoverished Wilberforce University teaching American literature to post-emancipation blacks. Two of my four case studies focus on institutions of higher education for African Americans and women, schools that were not, in the terms of their day, elite institutions establishing the major graduate programs and journals or hiring the most prestigious scholars. These are marginal and as-yet untold stories of the field's history that add substantially to what we know about American literature's diverse social and institutional functions. Schools where American literature pedagogy functioned to train students with socially circumscribed opportunities are as important to our understanding of the social functions of the curriculum as the history of Ph.D. programs placing their graduates on the most influential faculties. Even schools that did not teach American literature in any substantial way are as important to a full understanding of the cultural phenomenon of American literature in the higher curriculum as those that taught it aggressively. As I show in the case of Johns Hopkins, for example, the omission of the subject from the curriculum there was as motivated and significant as its inclusion elsewhere.

Just as I have not focused on the institutions typically thought of as leaders in American literature studies, I have also not focused on the major secondary studies or the leading scholars around whom a knowledge community began to converge, especially after 1920. While such subjects come up in passing where instrumental, they are not my focus. As I noted earlier, these topics have been the nearly exclusive focus of work on the history of the field because of the linked phenomena of professionalization and published scholarship, and have already been ably covered at length by others.[32] By the time of the professional turning point in the late 1920s, American literature had already had decades of institutional life that existing studies have not yet assessed. The fact that its institutional life was mostly on the outskirts of English departments who kept it there does not alter the fact that this was a form of institutional life nonetheless. Failures, setbacks, false starts, progress followed by regress, and irregularities from one institution to another across the landscape of higher education are characteristic of American literature's

fortunes roughly until World War II. My detailed focus on the pre-1920 period recovers this mostly unknown prehistory.

My archival research stops at 1950 for two reasons. First, at that point American literature definitively entered the higher curriculum in the wake of World War II. I use the term "definitive" not to mean that its history as a field would no longer change; I mean merely that, from this point until the present moment, American literature would have a regular, standard place in English department curricula.[33] Second, higher education was about to begin a dramatic new phase, one whose structural transformations would require another book entirely.[34]

Seen in its largest frame, the story my book tells is one in which a half century of uncertainty about the identity of American literature as a subject (from roughly 1880 to 1930) was followed by a half century of stability (from roughly 1930 to 1980) that came to an end with the inauguration of the canon wars. Twenty-five years later, the discipline is left searching for a pragmatic core of disciplinary stability. My conclusion, "The End of the Curriculum," argues that we have reached a new turning point in the social history of American literature as a curricular signifier, a turning point that the field's current debates chronically misperceive. The top-down conceptions of the field that drive what Donald E. Pease calls "the field-Imaginary" will, I argue, cede their primacy to a new and urgent surge of bottom-up pressures arising from the changing nature of the undergraduate population.[35] One of the archival lessons of my book is that forms of literature do not achieve curricular legitimation because their canon is great nor because great scholars write great books about them. Books, scholars, and universities do not constitute knowledge solely on their own terms. External pressures are potent and constitutive forces. The University of Texas announced in 2005 that it is eliminating books from its undergraduate library, certainly a harbinger of broader trends. What has been called the new "participation age" of collective intellectual power, emblematized by Google, citizen journalism, and user-generated content, will meet the essential conservatism of the university and its top-down models of curricular knowledge (including but not limited to American literature) and push both into a new era of transformation akin to the upheaval that began in the 1870s. Indeed, I contend that we are on the verge of what I call the post-curricular university: the third most significant change in the history of higher education in the United States.

While the argument of my first four chapters derives from the historical archive, the conclusion instead analyzes debates currently in

progress, typically recorded by the media, at the time the book went to press. The orientation of the conclusion, both in nature and in style, thus differs substantially from that of the preceding chapters. The current trends I trace simply have a different relation to the historical archive than do my pre-1950 materials. The form of the conclusion, which moves from the past to the present in topic and from archival to journalistic in style, intentionally enacts this difference.

Curricular change emerges from a dialectical stew of intramural and external forces, top-down and bottom-up pressures, debate, planning, intention, inertia, guesswork, and chaos. It does not proceed via intelligent design. I do not mean that colleges and educators do not struggle in a serious, well-intentioned way to plan curriculum that will benefit the best interests of students; indeed, they do so on a regular basis in great earnest. My point is that such plans themselves emerge from, and then change again in response to, historical forces that exceed any particular version of a "best" curriculum. The college curriculum undergoes a continuous process of evolution and indeed must do so if college as a social phenomenon is to retain its centrality to American life. Stability, while reassuring, is simply not the lifeblood of the curriculum, regardless of the crisis mentality that invariably greets any major new change. The classical curriculum reigned and died; the elective system redefined what counts as knowledge; coeducation and public universities turned college from a sphere for social elites into a popular phenomenon; and World War II structurally transformed universities again, this time around new government and industrial protocols for sponsoring and funding research. We have reached another transformative historical point at which we face the end of the curriculum altogether. To face its end wisely, we must understand its beginning.

CHAPTER 1

# *The birth of the Ph.D.: The Johns Hopkins research model*

In 1876, The Johns Hopkins University invented the Ph.D. degree that we know today. Both Yale and Harvard had previously awarded doctorates, but they had done so in scant numbers, without programmatic initiative or direction.[1] By 1873, Yale had awarded 90 percent of American Ph.D.s, with an anemic total of twenty-three. The M.A. degree had been more common, but it, too, was an aimless degree awarded without systematic training or clear social purpose. A quip current at Harvard through 1869 reported that you could get the M.A. there for "keeping out of jail five years and paying five dollars."[2] Simply put, graduate school in the United States had no social meaning. Hopkins transformed the pursuit of an advanced degree from an arcane and marginal academic exercise into a necessary and competitive credential for a new profession: the scholar-expert. The Ph.D. scholar-expert became the Hopkins brand. Inspired by the nineteenth-century German conception of pure research, the Hopkins doctorate certified the Ph.D.'s rigorous training, his ability to pursue original investigation, and his capacity to reproduce his professional skills in subsequent generations of advanced students. Within fifteen years of Hopkins' inception, its Ph.D. model had thoroughly saturated and altered the landscape of American higher education, indeed becoming so hegemonic that its revolutionary freshness in the 1870s is now hard to imagine.

Every institution of higher education in the nation had to contend with the Hopkins Ph.D. as a new social force. Abraham Flexner, a Hopkins graduate of 1886 and an influential analyst of higher education, noted that "research was not recognized in America as one of the dominant concerns of higher education until the flag was nailed to the mast on the opening of Johns Hopkins University in 1876."[3] From a more contemporary historical vantage, Edward Shils has concluded, "The establishment of Johns Hopkins was perhaps the single, most decisive event in the history of

learning in the Western hemisphere."[4] According to Harvard's President Eliot, Harvard's graduate school

> started feebly in 1870 and 1871, [and] did not thrive until the example of Johns Hopkins forced our faculty to put their strength into the development of our instruction for graduates. And what was true of Harvard was true of every other university in the land which aspired to create an advanced school of arts and sciences.[5]

The influence of the Hopkins model was particularly notable by the turn of the century. In 1871, national graduate enrollment stood at 198; by 1890 that figure had risen to 2,382; and by 1910, by which point the Ph.D. had become a required credential for many faculty positions, it was 9,370.[6] From 1876 to 1900, Hopkins surpassed all other institutions in the number of doctorates it granted, with only Harvard a close second.[7] Hopkins disseminated its research model throughout American higher education not only by example but also by literally staffing America's colleges and universities with its graduates through the first quarter of the twentieth century.[8] In 1926, one thousand of Hopkins' fourteen hundred doctoral graduates up to that date staffed college and university faculties.[9] For instructors around the country, the arrival of the school's first Hopkins Ph.D. as a colleague was often an event of either messianic or catastrophic proportions.

Hopkins' success in promulgating the new professional model of the scholar-expert made cultural sense in an era obsessed with specialization and professionalism. The birth of "professionalism" as a culture, to use Burton J. Bledstein's apt formulation, was in turn related to other large-scale postbellum redefinitions of occupation. The urgent social conflicts between the emergent forms of monopoly capitalism and its laborers are the era's best-known manifestations of social unrest related to shifts in the nature of labor. For industrial strikes, the peak years were 1877, 1886, and 1892–93, the same era in which the Ph.D. carved out its new social role in the hierarchy of American work.[10] As social historians have pointed out, this was a time of rampant professional self-definition, emblematized by the formation of professional societies, licensing laws, and credentialing organizations.[11] Hopkins' inauguration of the Ph.D. as the credentialing mechanism for the scholar-expert was part of this broader national shift toward professionalism in an era that was redefining work in dramatic ways.[12]

As Hopkins reinvented American higher education, it also reinvented "English" as a new professional field. The newly ascendant ideology of English at Hopkins simultaneously marginalized American literature as

inferior: not rigorous enough to be suited to the scientific training Hopkins provided and not suited to the emergent profession of the English expert. Far from being a merely theoretical objection, this ideology generated specific curricular and programmatic decisions that institutionalized American literature classes there as an inferior knowledge product. American literature was kept out of the scholarly classes for serious students and housed instead in the university's most female branch, which trained not scholar-experts but lower-level teachers: a population marked by both professional status and sex as inferior to the real scientists in English. Nationwide, American literature's institutional venues at this time were predominantly lower-level and otherwise non-elite schools. The emergent profession of English metonymically ascribed the social connotations of inferiority attached to these institutions, teachers, and students to the subject of American literature itself. That is to say, American literature's reputation as a curricular subject inferior in content and inherent value was a function of its place in the school system – not the reverse.

Although programmatic decisions at Hopkins strenuously marginalized American literature, this intramural definition was to come under intense external pressures as a result of the two world wars. Intramural behaviors are never completely self-determined or self-contained, and indeed the nationalist surge generated by the Great War gave American literature a forceful push into the curriculum at all levels, against the resistance of schools such as Hopkins. The additional nationalist impetus provided by World War II compounded these early gains. At this point, the broader uncertainty at the national level about whether American literature was to become a knowledge subject was in part resolved.[13] Hopkins' intramural definition of American literature lost in this wider contest, and American literature moved into the higher curriculum there. I stress the word "lost" here: American literature moved into the higher curriculum at Hopkins not because its English Department finally saw the curricular light, gave up the error of its ways, and embraced the true inherent value of American literature but because it lost a national curricular debate whose terms had never been clear to begin with. The outcome could easily have been different, but the historical accident of World War II decided the debate against the Hopkins position.

## "ENGLISH," DEFINITIONS OLD AND NEW

To understand the eventual emergence of American literature at Hopkins, we must understand the ideology of English, which itself arose out of

contest. English had fought to overcome a lower-school, anti-scholarly curricular past to redefine itself as a serious, professional subject fit for experts. As scholars have noted, philology as a professional method was the historical key to effecting this transition.[14]

We must clarify what the term "English" meant at this historical moment, which differs from its meaning today.[15] Nineteenth-century forms of school consisted of a bewildering array of union graded schools, town schools, free schools, district schools, academies, grammar schools, and so on.[16] Amidst this proliferation of terms, a basic categorical distinction obtained between "English schools" and "classical schools." Sometimes these were distinct institutions; sometimes a single school offered both English and "classical" curricula and students chose one track or the other. The word English simply denoted curricula that were not classical.[17] The classical curriculum centered in Latin and Greek but typically also included subjects such as logic, rhetoric, natural philosophy (later to become physics), and mathematics. The English curriculum included what were called "modern subjects": usually a "modern" (as opposed to classical) foreign language, especially French, German, or Spanish; mathematics; sciences, such as natural philosophy, physiology, chemistry, botany, geology, and zoology; history (American, English, and "modern," rather than ancient); geography; moral philosophy; an array of subjects conceived to be "practical," such as mensuration and astronomy; and the individual subject that was itself called English, which at this time included grammar, orthography, etymology, syntax, prosody, reading, literature, rhetoric, and occasional classes in elocution. All these subjects were parts of curricular "English."[18]

The concept of English thus had at least two identities, which overlapped but were not equivalent. As a kind of curriculum, English denoted new, practical, and modern subjects in general (but note that it still shared some subjects, such as mathematics, rhetoric, and natural philosophy, with the classical curriculum). As an individual subject, it denoted studies concerned with reading, speaking, and writing in the English language. It also denoted a nation, for example, in the teaching of "English" history or literature from England. Teachers and students did not explore the different valences of the term, which sustained and indeed fed the extent to which they could and did function as slippery synonyms. The multivalence of English as a curricular term created a semantic fog in which English would claim, and have ascribed to it, an array of identities and purposes about which there was no particular consensus, discursive self-awareness, or even basic comprehension. This curricular confusion

had profound and lasting implications; for example, the nationalist connotations of the word reinforced a postcolonial mentality in the American curriculum.[19] The clearest curricular identity of English in nineteenth-century America was that of a kind of education that was new, modern, and anti-classical.

What did it mean that English was a new kind of curriculum? Some of its subjects differed, as we have seen, from the classical, and in general they changed focus from the ancient to the modern world. But beyond their contents, these curricula differed most substantially in their social functions, which served to distinguish one population from another. The English curriculum was explicitly targeted to the student population that was not college bound, while the classical curriculum served college preparatory students. Colleges at this time still taught the classical curriculum, and required a college preparatory course for admission. In contrast, the kinds of schools teaching the English curriculum were the non-classical academies (which taught at the elementary or secondary levels) and the public high schools, which were not college preparatory institutions.[20]

For all these reasons, both educators and students understood the social function of the English curriculum to be distinctly non-scholarly. Educators who propounded the English curriculum and the parents who supported it defended it, often passionately, in class terms. Instead of serving the world of the American college with its aristocratic focus on the learned professions, they argued, the English curriculum served personal advancement in the real challenges of a changing social order. Boys from English schools would enter the world of work, often as clerks and bookkeepers, rather than going on to college and the educated professions of law, medicine, and ministry. They could apply their useful subjects, such as penmanship and accounting, immediately in the marketplace. Girls, who were excluded from colleges anyway, could use their useful English training as wives and mothers or teachers of young children. William J. Reese notes that the debates about schooling in this era are replete with admiration for the English branches as suited to "practical" pursuits.[21]

From its social position in these lower-level, non-classical schools, English carved out a bottom-up path that challenged and eventually overtook the classical curriculum. When the transformation of American higher education began in the 1870s, colleges remained the last classical holdouts. Students who wanted access to an elite college thus still needed classical training. But the popular force of curricular change that had

begun in non-elite lower schools was finally too strong. By 1886, President Eliot "figured out how to let someone into Harvard College without Greek and still keep the hurdles equally high," as Frederick Rudolph nicely puts it. Harvard began to accept advanced mathematics and physics as substitutes for Greek. While colleges would continue to debate the merits of the classical curriculum (orthodox Yale finally gave up its Greek requirement in 1903), Eliot's innovation at Harvard really signaled the end of the battle.[22] Since the ultimate demise of the classical curriculum overall had begun with the English curriculum at the lower levels of schooling, the curricular identity of English came to signify not only that which was anti-scholarly, practical, and anti-aristocratic but also that which catered to popular demand and suited lower-level education. Whether or not those were positive attributes depended on who was assessing the matter.[23]

These already complex connotations of English became increasingly gendered as the nineteenth century progressed. The market for the college preparatory schools, as well as for the classical colleges themselves, was exclusively male. English schools not only drew a different stratum of male students but also provided education for the untapped demographic of female students.[24] As the century progressed, the female school population up through the secondary level increasingly outstripped the male. Educators noted by mid-century that girls attended and graduated from high school more frequently than boys, in addition to winning most of the academic prizes. In the post-Civil War period, girls constituted far more than half of the high school population. Educators nationwide observed and struggled to analyze the phenomenon of female dominance in the secondary schools, developing rationales, for example, for why boys did not attend as frequently or perform as well, a subject of debate still hot.[25] The foggy multivalence of English that had long obtained now increasingly carried gender among its grab-bag of connotations. Thus several concurrent trends – the growth of secondary education, its center in the English branches as explicitly and polemically opposed to the classical branches, and its widely noted dominance by female students – became bound up with one another, feeding the idea that English was for girls.

The nineteenth-century English curriculum was thus embedded in major transitions in American education: from classical to non-classical curricula; from college preparatory to practical training; from schools for a small group of young men entering the learned professions to training for "real life"; from elite student populations to broader populations in

both sex and class terms (less so in racial terms, as African Americans were largely denied even public education[26]); and from a male-dominated to a female-dominated form of the school. The semantic multivalence of English resonated with its connection to all these social changes. Among its many transformative social functions, the new research university culture at Hopkins would successfully carve out an alternative identity for English.

## ENGLISH IN THE RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

The new English professionals struggled to overcome the complexly inferior connotations of their field. Although the long demise of the classical curriculum was already in progress at lower levels of the school, proponents of the classical curriculum that still controlled higher education fiercely defended this territory. Warner has noted that the rise of the research university fostered an institutional struggle for "control of the literary" that pitted older belletristic venues such as literary magazines, large commercial publishing houses, and the lecture circuit against the new university departments taking literature as an area of professional expertise. Lauter has trenchantly stressed the importance of venue to control of the literary.[27] To such foci on institutions outside the world of education that competed with university departments, we must add a formative struggle within education: between the lower and higher levels of the school.

In 1884, Th. W. Hunt, a professor of "Rhetoric and of the English Language" at the College of New Jersey (later Princeton University), complained about the place of "decided inferiority" that English occupied in the collegiate system, of the "persistent opposition" to it from "those who are identified with the departments of philosophy and the ancient languages and who are thereby presumed to have a just appreciation of all that pertains to the humanities," and of the "patronizing and cynical" attitudes of this "classical brotherhood." Those who opposed English charged that, as the vernacular language, it was insubstantial, did not offer enough difficulty to foster mental discipline, and did not lend itself to the practice of examination at the core of university study.[28] Although English was defeating classics at lower levels of the school, its upward penetration of the university curriculum required different measures. It needed to dispel the widespread perception that it lacked the disciplinary rigor of the classics and was therefore unsuited to higher education. Hunt's charges significantly appeared in the first issue of *Transactions of*

*the Modern Language Association of America* and served as a battle-cry for the new English professionals.

The primary method that enabled the upward transition in level and prestige was philology. From its inception in Germany, philology had been predicated upon the idea of scientific method. Its focus on historical linguistics, as Allen J. Frantzen has shown, "lent a powerful aura of certitude to language study and textual criticism" and demonstrated how these activities could be elevated to the level of the sciences.[29] Bledstein demonstrates that science functioned as a powerful source of professional authority in this era. A vast array of enterprises promoted themselves as sciences to validate their claim to social power, whether or not there was anything verifiably "scientific" about their actual work.[30] The term "science" also stood for a set of cultural values that distinguished the new higher education from the old.[31] If you were on the side of modernizing higher education, "science" became part of your rhetorical platform, regardless of what the subject or school in question might be. Baym explains that the number of scientists nationwide began to increase dramatically around 1880, and by the century's end "a range of tightly demarcated (albeit provisional) scientific fields requiring expensive and continually updated equipment had been firmly installed in academic institutions." By late century, professional scientists had been clearly distinguished from amateurs, a distinction that had not obtained during the antebellum period.[32] In this climate, the philologist emerged as the scientist of English who would carve out a space of professional authority in the new university culture.

The philological transformation of English into a knowledge subject suited both the postbellum professional agenda more generally and the science-based agenda of the emergent research university. According to Veysey, 1880 was the watershed point at which the idea of scientific research fundamentally altered American higher education; this was also the point at which English began to make significant gains in the new university.[33] "Scientific research" as a general ideology in higher education and as a particular ideology in English thus proceeded as concurrent trends. Of course, as Gerald Graff has stressed, philology was not the only approach practiced in English departments, but its role in professionalizing the field was foundational. When Kemp Malone, Professor of English Philology at Hopkins, wrote in 1926, "The essence of philology is the application of scientific method to the study of literature," he summed up the ideology of English that had, for the preceding half century, provided the field's professional rationale.[34]

Here again we must consider the increasingly feminized image of English at the secondary level as it clashed with the university culture of expertise. As Baym points out, in nineteenth-century America "the authority of science was male."[35] Her history of the nineteenth-century sciences demonstrates that both men and women believed women to be incapable of original scientific work (a debate revisited, in only slightly different terms, in 2005[36]). Women's function in the world of science was what Baym calls an "affiliative" one, in which women disseminated and popularized knowledge created by men. Women eagerly studied science, taught science, and wrote science textbooks in nineteenth-century America, but their specific model of science was one in which men created knowledge and women channeled it from the real experts to the populace, including lower-school students who studied the textbooks written by women such as Almira Phelps.[37] And while scientific careers, including careers in the academy, tentatively opened to women after 1870, the professional contours of scientific labor by the end of the century were still divided along gender lines.[38] In the last decades of the century, male professional establishments closed ranks against women's tentative entry into many venues of American public life, both in and out of the academy. Academic and other professions in this era routinely blocked women from claiming the status of expert readily available to their male peers, although individual women continued strenuously to fight these barriers.[39]

These conditions rendered it crucial that, in their bid for status in higher education, English and the other modern languages distinguish themselves rigorously from lower-school and female connotations. The 1884 meeting of the Modern Language Association (founded in 1883) exemplifies the urgency of this agenda. H.C.G. Brandt, an associate in German at Hopkins and, later, professor of German at Hamilton College, argued that the scientific methods of philology gave the profession of modern languages "weight and dignity." He complained that modern language pedagogy was "justly accused of being too loose and easy, unscientific, and unsystematic. Strict methods, and a scientific groundwork, require teachers specially and scientifically trained for their profession."[40] Brandt's rhetoric revealingly shows the association between the flimsy reputation of modern languages as anti-professional and their cultural femininity: "Modern Languages have not yet had a full opportunity to show their value as disciplinary studies in courses similar to the classical courses in point of time and severity of work. They have been treated as accomplishments like dancing and music," he laments. Brandt

goes on to propose a catalogue of appropriately severe "difficulties," "laws," "drills," and "masterpieces" with which to obliterate the image of modern languages as subjects for girls.[41] In 1887, James Bright, the powerful Hopkins philologist who had also taken his Ph.D. there, described his ideal vision of the university in similarly masculine terms, as a place "where men of liberal training may hear from the lips of a master authoritative utterances … on every branch of human knowledge."[42] The masculinist ideology of science to which Brandt and Bright appealed was underwritten by a long tradition. Evelyn Fox Keller points out that Francis Bacon provided a rhetoric of masculine domination through which generations of scientists conceived of their enterprise. His central metaphor described science as a force virile enough to penetrate and subdue nature, seeking dominion over rather than commingling with the female principle.[43] Philology as a method for the professional validation of English was thus strategically brilliant: it claimed the cultural prestige and professional authority of science and simultaneously dispelled the haunting aura of the feminine that clung to the subject.

Philologists such as Bright found an excellent environment at Hopkins. As a distinguished scientific institution, it both enhanced their studies with the kind of prestige they desired for their work and fostered their conception of themselves as scientists among scientists. Beginning in 1880, for example, Hopkins produced the *American Journal of Philology*, and the University Circulars regularly reported on its research under the heading "Synopses of the Recent Scientific Journals."[44] When in 1905 Bright was offered the newly endowed Caroline Donovan Chair of English Literature, he hesitated to take it because he did not approve of the chair's literary connotations. He accepted with the understanding that he would continue to train young scientists rather than literary artists.[45] This ideology of scientific literary study persisted at Hopkins in 1926, when philologist Malone wrote,

> Literature is indeed not in any proper sense a science (or branch of learning). It is rather the material with which the science of philology deals, much as the vegetable kingdom is the material with which the science of botany deals, and at bottom it is as absurd to speak of a professor of literature as it would be to speak of a professor of vegetables.[46]

English negotiated its place in the university by appropriating science, its professional authority, and its masculine intellectual expertise. It won its upward curricular battle. American literature would wage its own battle for professional legitimation against these newly reigning practitioners of English.

## AMERICAN LITERATURE EMERGES

American literature scholars in the early decades of the twentieth century widely cite the disparagement of American literature in English departments. These reports were structural repetitions of Hunt's laments in 1884 about the status of English with respect to classics, and about the "persistent opposition" by classics professors to the whole idea of English as an advanced subject. Jones reported in 1936 that scholars of American literature were still "struggling with a well-nigh insoluble problem – a problem created by the attitude of professors of English literature and expressed in the policies of English departments and of organized scholarship in this country."[47] Typical English department hostility included resistance to making teaching appointments in American literature, to offering courses in the subject (especially at the advanced undergraduate and graduate levels), and to incorporating or otherwise leaving room for it in requirements for the undergraduate and graduate programs. Jones characterized the standard English department attitude as one holding that American literature "has no Shakespeare, and therefore American literature is scarcely worth studying." According to Jones, "This is a good deal like arguing that football is not worth playing because Samson didn't play it."[48]

Although philology had been a strategic tool for professionalizing English, American literature was construed to be too recent and too thin a body of texts to lend itself to "scientific" philological investigation. Philology need not concern itself only with historically remote eras; the fact that American literature was construed as inadmissibly recent and thin was an ideological phenomenon, not a necessary one. In his MLA address in 1887, "American Literature in the Class-room," Albert H. Smyth (a secondary schoolteacher with an honorary B.A. from Hopkins in 1886) asked, "Is it because its language offers no peculiar attraction to the grammarian that certain learned and successful masters of English pronounce the subject to be 'so unsatisfactory?'" As an anti-philological form of literature, American literature did not pose the kinds of "difficult" problems valued in the English profession, and was thus an implicit challenge to the scientific foundations of professionalization on which English had built its prestige. According to Smyth, however, "American literature may be therefore highly serviceable in education because it admits of a complete severance of literature from philology." Tactically speaking, this was not the argument to win the day. The discussion that followed Smyth's talk was preoccupied with the level at which American

literature should be taught. Bright responded that Smyth had "clearly marked the distinction between the various classes in which American literature could be studied, and the corresponding differences of aim and method in that instruction." Professor A.H. Tolman of Ripon College commented, "In the high-school and in the academy American literature has an important place … . In the intermediate class-room, in the college class-room, which is where I teach,–into my class-room, American literature has not entered."[49] More than fifty years later, John T. Flanagan, assistant professor of English at the University of Minnesota in 1939, cited as an obstacle to American literature in the academy "the latent prejudice against native letters that still lingers in college faculties. This is especially true in schools where the philological tradition has been strong."[50]

Hopkins was the consummate scientific institution for English philologists and it aggressively defined American literature as an inferior knowledge product. A quick summary of the larger national picture will help to contextualize local programmatic decisions at Hopkins as part of a broader curricular contest. When Hopkins was founded in 1876, American literature had begun to receive minimal attention in American colleges. In the 1880s, a few colleges began to offer it as an independent course, among them, in the East, Dartmouth (1880), Smith (1880), Wellesley (1886), and Mount Holyoke (1887), and, farther west, Wisconsin, Nebraska, and Indiana (1882), Notre Dame (1887), and Iowa (1888).[51] In graduate studies, thirteen universities offered American literature in the 1890s. The first graduate class might have been the one taught at the University of Virginia in 1891–92.[52]

As this list indicates, American literature gained many of its strongest academic footholds outside eastern male universities. Women's colleges and western colleges offered early curricular space compared with traditional elite eastern male institutions such as Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Princeton, the University of Pennsylvania, and Hopkins.[53] Just as English and the modern languages had taken earlier root in non-elite, non-eastern, and girls' schools, American literature tended to appear earliest outside elite male establishments.[54] Institutional elitism in the post-Civil War era commonly operated not only via gender but also via region, as Chapter 4 will explore more fully. From the eastern vantage, "western" institutions, which still included what we now call the Midwest, were considered remote from anywhere, much less civilization (to borrow Ezra Pound's regional witticism). More objectively, it was the case that western institutions were typically newly established and poorly staffed, often with

minimal student populations comprised of mostly unprepared students.[55] The fact that American literature made the curriculum at such schools suggested that the subject was readily taught by badly prepared teachers and easily accessible to badly prepared students, which contributed to its image as inferior at the more prestigious schools of the east. In the mentality of late-nineteenth-century education, meanwhile, Greek signified a subject in which such concessions to ill-preparedness simply could not be made. It was the consummate subject of consummate difficulty. American literature, on the other hand, signified a subject that could flesh out course offerings in a curricular pinch with any teacher you could rustle off the street.

By this point, American literature was also commonly taught in the secondary schools, where it had been acquiring curricular space since the 1850s.[56] As had been the case with English, these lower-school associations exacerbated the subject's inferior image. Influential Boston author and editor Horace Scudder, also a prominent educational theorist with a special interest in the place of literature in primary and secondary schools, took a special interest in American literature and vigorously championed its role in lower-school curricula. At Houghton, Mifflin & Company, a major textbook publisher of American literature for lower schools, he worked on such projects as the Riverside Literature Series. Begun in 1882, the series made unabridged American classics available in cheap school editions, selling for fifteen cents apiece.[57] When Scudder was invited to lecture before the National Education Association in July 1888, Henry Oscar Houghton urged him to accept the invitation, stressing that Scudder would "have a great opportunity of preaching sound doctrine to the entire country." Of course, Houghton, Mifflin stood to make a great deal of sound cash from the appearance as well. By the time of Scudder's address, the Riverside Literature Series included thirty-nine titles and had sold 100,000 copies.[58]

Scudder's speech extols the virtues of the men he considered the great American writers: Bryant, Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, Lowell, Hawthorne, Irving, and Cooper.[59] While he argues passionately for the inclusion of literature in the school curriculum, and specifically for the inclusion of works by these American authors, he is careful to stipulate that he construes American authors as appropriate material for lower-school children only. "I am not arguing for the critical study of our great authors in the higher grades of our schools," Scudder explained. "They are not the best subjects for critical scholarship; criticism demands greater remoteness, greater foreignness of nature … . I am arguing for the free,

generous use of these authors in the principal years of school life."[60] Scudder marketed American literature as a knowledge product that was best – indeed, only – fit for lower schools.

Scudder's address thus offered a cultural definition of American literature as a body of texts best suited to the work of elementary instruction. The importance of such a definition of American literature's classroom role, coming from such a figure as Scudder, cannot be overstated, especially at a time when the stratifications of the levels of the school system and their relationships to one another was an increasingly pressing issue among American educators. Literature textbooks were a crucial factor in curricular development, often driving what transpired in classrooms. As Scudder himself points out in his address, "It would be hard to compute the literary force which has found a field for exercise in the construction of school textbooks in America."[61] Indeed, the Riverside Literature Series promulgated and installed as a lower curriculum such works as Longfellow's "Evangeline" and "The Courtship of Miles Standish," Whittier's "Snow-Bound," Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*, Lowell's "Vision of Sir Launfal," Emerson's essays, and Irving's *The Sketch Book*. It successfully marketed a particular American canon as one suited specifically to the lower-school textbook market. One powerful marker of the canonical force of this market is the fact that, when American literature first appeared on college entrance exams, it did so by way of exactly these texts. They had trickled up from the Riverside series and like textbooks, as well as from the lower curricula that those books helped to shape. Between 1906 and 1911, for example, the required texts for the entrance exams to Smith College included "The Vision of Sir Launfal," Franklin's *Autobiography*, *The Sketch Book*, "The Courtship of Miles Standish," Emerson's essays, and other texts from the Riverside canon.[62] It was the lower-school American canon that became the earliest higher-school canon.

This affiliation between American literature and lower levels of schooling hampered the professionalization of the field. It would need to find its own trickle-up pathways into college curricula, as indeed English had done via philology. Its early and often tentative entries into the curriculum were usually not a function of institutional support or programmatic decisions; typically, a lone scholar with an interest in the subject would begin to offer classes and the subject would develop a marginal curricular place. Jones characterized the typical teacher who covered American literature in its early decades as often "a minority of one among a faculty of fifteen or twenty."[63] Whether the institutional

mechanisms at a particular school would then come to support or oppose the development of a programmatic American literature curriculum varied substantially from one school to another.

At Hopkins, American literature's earliest advocate was just such a "minority" teacher, John Calvin French, who took an English Ph.D. at Hopkins in 1905 and then joined the faculty.[64] As American literature was not yet a field in which one could pursue doctoral work, the professors who taught it were, by definition, not trained in it – another and a particularly crucial way in which American literature carried with it both anti-institutional and anti-professional connotations that exacerbated its outsider status. French, for example, did his dissertation on Chaucer. He was the first Hopkins professor to offer undergraduate classes and graduate seminars in American literature. At both levels, Hopkins lagged far behind other schools in introducing American literature classes. This delayed timeline in itself serves as an important index to the way that Hopkins' crucial innovations in many other dimensions of American higher education moved hand in hand with its resistance to American literature as a particular subject. Innovation of one kind does not portend innovation of all kinds, and in this particular case the kinds of innovation for which Hopkins was famous operated antithetically to the curricular status of American literature.

Departmental practice at Hopkins stratified faculty in levels of prestige according to the kinds of work they did.[65] In Hopkins' first decade, President Daniel Coit Gilman had offered professorships of English not only to philologists but also to literary artists Robert Browning and William Dean Howells, both of whom declined the proffered positions. The famous American poet Sidney Lanier was appointed lecturer in English literature in 1879.[66] Gilman's early ideas about what kinds of practitioners might be appropriate as English professors gave rise to a two-tier system. The department assigned faculty who were not philologists but instead more "literary" in their interests (a term of opprobrium for both Bright and Malone) what Malone called "the elementary work." The philological ethos at Hopkins was one in which non-philological interests were automatically defined as unscientific and therefore essentially elementary – in Malone's terms, they were "vegetables" rather than botany.

Malone chronicled the history of English work at Hopkins through this bifurcated lens of elementary/literary v. advanced/philological work. He recounts the story of Gilman's first English hires in 1879, Lanier and philologist Albert S. Cook. Although Lanier was himself what we now

think of as a practitioner of American literature, what he taught in the scant semesters before he died in 1881 was English verse (Shakespeare in particular) and "the Modern English Novel."[67] In contrast to the excellent philological pedigree that Cook had obtained studying in Germany, Malone writes,

> Lanier, on the other hand, was not what we would call a "trained man." He was first of all the poet, not the scientist, and his method was that of the formal lecture. But Lanier by no means lacked scientific interest in the poetry he wrote. Indeed, he had a marked philological bent. His researches into metrics and into literary history show that he was a philologist as well as a poet.[68]

The way Malone retrospectively characterizes 1879 provides a useful gloss on the ethos in the department in 1926, when Malone composed his history: the scientist was still superior to the poet or "literary" man.[69]

This institutional semiotic of prestige aligned French and his interests in American literature with the inferior track of "elementary work" in specific material, programmatic ways. The record of the classes that French and others taught during the first five decades of the twentieth century reveals a great deal about American literature's institutional identity. At the undergraduate level, the first American literature course Hopkins offered was French's elective in 1906–07, more than two decades after other colleges began to teach the subject. Called merely "American Literature," it took Walter C. Bronson's *A Short History of American Literature Designed Primarily for Use in Schools and Colleges* (1905) and Curtis Hidden Page's *The Chief American Poets* (1905) (which contained selections by Bryant, Poe, Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, Lowell, Whitman, and Lanier), among others, as textbooks.[70] The first graduate course Hopkins offered was a one-time lecture series on American literature before the Civil War, given by Professor William Hand Browne in 1901–02. The purpose of Browne's class was to show the "reasons for the singular retardation of this literature, while that of the mother-country moved with such steady progress." While histories of the field have typically treated course catalogues as a metric of progress, Browne's class offers a penetrating example of why the mere appearance of a subject in a course catalogue reveals little unless embedded in its fuller local context.

After Browne's damning graduate-level explication of American literature's "retardation," Hopkins offered no other graduate courses until 1923–24, when French attempted to redefine American literature as a

serious graduate subject. He taught a one-semester survey of American literary history "with special reference to the work and influence of literary coteries" and a one-semester course on the forms of American verse.[71] This was more than three decades after American literature had entered graduate curricula elsewhere. The following year, French was able to give a graduate class in American literature not as a survey but as part of the much more prestigious English "seminary." The antecedent of today's term "seminar," the Hopkins seminary occupied the center of department life at Hopkins. Malone defined it as a place "where lectures are banned and the student learns how to do scientific research by doing it."[72] (When he commented of Lanier that his "method was that of the formal lecture," this meant that Lanier did not teach seminaries, another mark of his "elementary" level.) Hopkins faculty borrowed the seminary as a pedagogical device from German universities, which focused on creating knowledge and on teaching students to develop mastery of their own by working closely with an authority in the field. Like the term "science," the seminary or seminar rhetorically invoked the idea of rigorous method and research without indicating anything exact about actual practice. Hugh Hawkins notes, "So much the style did it become that departments tended to attach the name 'seminary' to some class simply to show that they were not lagging behind."[73]

American literature's accession from "elementary work" to seminary status at Hopkins in 1924–25 was thus a substantial leap in institutional prestige. It was made possible by the retirement of the philologist Bright, who had controlled the English department since 1886. With Bright no longer in charge and new appointments not yet made, French was temporarily the highest-ranking English professor and briefly in a position to redefine American literature's place in the graduate curriculum. He also published a statement promising to produce a "special pamphlet" about the department's plans for the field.[74] By the next year, however, the faculty vacancies in the department had been filled, French was no longer setting the direction of the seminary, and American literature moved back to its subordinate position in the English Department. French soon left the English Department entirely, to become University Librarian in 1927. This job had long been coded at Hopkins as one for "literary men" rather than the more serious scientists and thus, along with French's longstanding commitment to American literature, was just another of his "elementary" enterprises.[75]

## PUSHED TO THE MARGINS

French taught American literature regularly from 1906 until his departure in 1927. When he left, its status further declined. It disappeared entirely from the graduate curriculum, a sign that it was a marginal subject that the department could eliminate without remorse.[76] No self-respecting English department of the 1920s would have allowed the same fate to befall its Chaucer or Shakespeare classes. At the undergraduate level, the process of marginalization had begun earlier and operated by way of far more complex institutional mechanisms. The undergraduate American literature elective that French had been teaching since 1906 was not eliminated in one stroke but was gradually transported out of the department and lodged in the university's most female branch. In 1909, Hopkins and the Woman's College of Baltimore (later renamed Goucher College) jointly established a program called the College Courses for Teachers, designed to provide "courses of instruction to teachers whose vocation prevents their attendance on college lectures and recitations at the usual hours. It is the primary aim of these courses to provide the teachers in our public and private schools with special opportunities for further personal culture and for increasing their professional equipment and efficiency." Hopkins described this project as a "form of public service." Representatives of Baltimore's Board of School Commissioners were also involved in the new program.[77]

Between 1912 and 1919, French taught American literature in both the College for Teachers and the collegiate program. The English department described the work in the College for Teachers class as being "as nearly parallel to that of English literature 4 of the college courses [French's undergraduate class] as circumstances permitted."[78] After 1919, French's class moved completely to the College for Teachers. His course description makes the tenor of the class clear: "Stress will be laid upon the works more commonly used by teachers in elementary and secondary schools."[79] The surge of nationalism generated by World War I pushed American literature further into secondary school curricula. State laws required American literature training for individuals seeking high school teaching certificates.[80] As secondary curricula expanded their American literature offerings, they exerted bottom-up pressure more insistently than before. Many colleges and universities responded by adding at least one American literature course at this time.

This situation provides an excellent example of the conflict we find at Hopkins between intramural and external pressures on the curriculum. As

American literature's presence was growing nationwide at all levels, Hopkins' institutional response was not to expand American literature's place in English studies but instead to compartmentalize the subject aggressively on the margins of the English department amidst a socially appropriate population: (mostly) female teachers for lower-level schools. Hopkins' definition of the field as essentially secondary in nature would eventually lose in the broader contest over the identity of American literature. Higher education nationwide would come to accept the field as adequate to the higher curriculum, although still not on equal footing with the ostensible essence of English studies: British literature.

American literature in fact thrived at Hopkins in the College for Teachers during what was at best a static period for the subject in the English department proper. For almost fifteen years after French's departure in 1927, American literature courses were offered in the English Department only sporadically, usually taught by scholars who had been trained in other fields. Meanwhile, the College for Teachers offered a variety of American literature courses every semester, taught by Hopkins faculty, Goucher faculty, and visiting professors. A few examples of the American literature classes taught in the extension programs between 1927 and 1941 will indicate the vitality of the subject on the margins of a department where it received scant attention. From 1930 to 1943, N. Bryllion Fagin, who had taken a Hopkins Ph.D. in 1931 with an American literature dissertation on William Bartram and then become a junior member of the faculty, regularly taught a College for Teachers class called "Social Forces in American Literature" treating "the social, economic, and political ideas in American life" as reflected in literature, a course in which "[s]pecial attention [was] given to the effects of industrialism; the Indian, the Negro, and other minority peoples; war; religion; the position of woman in American society and conflicts between capital and labor."[81] Courses in American prose, American drama, contemporary American verse, American literature since 1800, and the history of American literature were regularly taught by junior members of the English department faculty and even by Hazelton Spencer, an English department Renaissance scholar who came to Hopkins in 1928.[82] It was not at all unusual for an extension program, since it was free of departments, specialists, and other effective obstacles, to provide an open field for teaching subjects that would be scorned within the academy proper.[83] The contest among these different curricular spaces at Hopkins provides an emblematic instance of the empirical danger of interpreting English department course listings in a vacuum.

It was rare for these Hopkins faculty members to carry their interest in American literature from the College for Teachers over into the College of Arts and Sciences or the graduate school. Spencer offered the department's only American literature courses during the 1930s, and those were offered only sporadically.[84] The scarcity of English department offerings in American literature prior to 1941 was not, then, a function of unavailable or uninterested faculty, since a variety of classes in the subject was being taught in the College for Teachers, and taught by Hopkins-trained scholars who had done American literature dissertations. Rather, there were academic principles involved. American literature's identity did not suit the English department's ideals of scholarship. At Hopkins, the subject belonged elsewhere.

## TENSIONS WITH THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The half-century of institutional uncertainty in higher education about American literature's identity generated tension not only among different curricular spaces at particular institutions (the College for Teachers v. the English Department, to take one example) but also between different levels of the school, especially between the high school and the college. Teacher Mae J. Evans wrote in 1903 that, despite the fact that the college entrance requirements in English that year turned a blind eye to American literature, the high schools were spending a comparatively substantial amount of time on the subject. "Because the priesthood of the college is openly criticized, but tacitly accepted, by the secondary school, one might be justified in the supposition that the high school has no authority of its own in the choice of studies or methods," she wrote. She cited the extent of high school American literature studies as evidence that the secondary school in fact possessed authority of its own, despite the dictates of the college "priesthood" that refused to acknowledge the subject.[85] Evans' polemic testifies to the active competition within the educational system for curricular authority (in which, she reports, high schools are *de facto* subject to college dictates) as well as to a female teacher's perception of gender as a fundamental factor in the hierarchy of school levels. For this female secondary school teacher, the college represented a "priesthood," an all-male enclave empowered by an aura of higher, sacred knowledge.

The animosity that Evans directed at the college in fact moved in both directions. The 1920s saw repeated attacks at Hopkins on work construed as "elementary." One recalls here Malone's derogatory use of the term as well as Rudolph's apt description of the Hopkins ethos as "a successful

assault on the undergraduate course of study."[86] This "elementary" realm included the extension programs and their work on teacher training. The curricular status of American literature was imbricated in this larger dynamic of distinction.[87] In 1924–25, President Frank Goodnow proposed to eliminate the first two years of collegiate instruction at Hopkins completely in order to turn the university entirely over to purely advanced work. The Academic Council wanted the Goodnow Plan to abolish all the extension programs as well. At this time, the creator and director of the College for Teachers, Edward F. Buchner, complained to President Goodnow about a "new attitude" that teacher training was unworthy of endowment. Again in 1929, members of the Hopkins faculty called on President Joseph Sweetman Ames to eliminate the extension programs altogether "as something foreign to the original purpose of the University and inconsistent with its chief aim of scholarly research." French, who reported the incident in his history of Hopkins, attributed this protest to "an attitude of distrust of pedagogy and all its works not uncommon among those who professed the older humanities."[88] A 1934 magazine article about the College for Teachers, polemically entitled "John Hopkins' Bargain Basement," lambasted "the disposition on the part of other departments of Johns Hopkins to look rather contemptuously upon those students who are the University's most profitable customers – school teachers."[89]

Elementary and secondary school teachers in the United States were primarily female by this time, a spiraling demographic trend.[90] By 1910, 78.9 percent of the nation's teachers were female, as were 68 of the 69 enrollees in the first session of the College for Teachers, held that year.[91] Nationally, the typical customer for summer sessions for teachers was a 23.3-year-old unmarried woman.[92] As one commentator noted in 1903, normal training was long considered a "loop-hole through which women were gaining entrance to universities."[93] At its core, the "distrust of pedagogy" directed at the Hopkins extension apparatus was an eruption of what historian Thomas Woody calls fear of the "Woman Peril," a fear of feminized schools that arose after 1880 and that persisted in 1929 when Woody wrote his *History of Women's Education in the United States*.[94] The fear of the "Woman Peril" was a fear not only of woman teachers *per se* but of their increasing prominence at all levels of education. In 1874, Anna C. Brackett wrote that "the fact remains to be considered that the work of school education is, as the result of unavoidable destiny, in America passing very rapidly into the hands of women. We may deplore this, but we cannot prevent it."[95] An article in the *Educational Review* of

1914 warned that generations of American boys had been under women's tutelage with destructive effects upon the country's manhood. "To pursue our present system is to continue to strike at the very root of the best quality of the manhood of a nation, its masculinity," the writer stated, bemoaning "our general want of stand-upness," the "violence" done to the boy's "most precious possession, his masculine nature," and the irreversible damage done to the woman-tutored boy who "goes through life a maimed man." The author attributed this lamentable phallic duress to the "evil" practice of "woman tutelage."[96]

By 1922, 87 percent of the public elementary school teachers, 64 percent of public high school teachers, 86 percent of private elementary school teachers, 61 percent of private secondary school teachers, 60 percent of teachers in teacher training schools, 52 percent of teachers in commercial and business schools, 100 percent of kindergarten teachers, and 71 percent of teachers in "other schools" were women. In fact, only universities, colleges, and professional schools (theology, law, medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy) had withstood the movement of women into teaching.[97] Institutions of higher education might have been holding out against employing female teachers, but they were in many cases simultaneously eager for female students, at least at the schools that could not afford to turn away tuition dollars. Much of the absolute growth of universities in the 1920s was a direct result of surging numbers of what Roger L. Geiger calls "actual and future teachers," a population that included a sizeable number of women.[98] The fear of encroachment among "those who professed the older humanities" at Hopkins resonated with these larger-scale changes across the landscape of higher education, and was perhaps all the greater because Hopkins had, in 1907, at last given in to broader trends and conditionally admitted women to graduate study, as Yale, Brown, Columbia, and Harvard had done in the 1890s.[99]

Even the women's colleges, which largely trained their students as teachers, were not exempt from institutional expressions of the fear of women's encroachment into education. President Eugene A. Noble of the Woman's College of Baltimore wrote in the college newspaper in 1908 of his "disapprobation for some of the unfortunate results of higher education for women" and went on to lament the "spirit of rivalry" and "feminine intellectual jealousy for men" that inspired some of the women's colleges. "An over-educated woman whose consciousness of power is a sort of perverse spirit … has become a sort of type because she is an actual ogre," he factually revealed.[100] Other reactions to the "Woman Peril" included efforts by the University of Wisconsin, the

University of Chicago, Tufts, and Wesleyan to reverse or modify their policies on coeducation around the turn of the century.[101] As Nan Johnson has shown, the turn of the century saw a concerted effort to restrict and close down rhetorically public spaces that women had appeared to penetrate earlier in the postbellum period.[102] American literature's status as knowledge at Hopkins was culturally tied to these epiphenomena of the "Woman Peril": institutionally located not within the higher and most intellectually prestigious realm of university research and its methods (the domain of Evans' "priesthood") but within the lower and less prestigious levels and kinds of schools.

Early proponents of American literature scholarship in these decades faced the many-sided problems of the institutional femininity of American literature as a classroom subject and the cultural femininity of American literature as a body of texts, problems that were neither simply equivalent nor entirely distinct. American modernist male poets – T.S. Eliot, Pound, and Robert Frost among others – painfully and antagonistically rued the cultural feminization of literature that, in Pound's words, turned American poetry into "a sort of embroidery for dilettantes and women."[103] American literature's proponents widely conceded American literature's inferiority to British literature. The editor of *American Literature* granted in its 1929 premier issue that "our authors have produced a body of writing … [that] does not rival the great literatures of the Old World in artistic value." Even Howard Mumford Jones granted in the same issue that the "superior richness of British literature is undeniable."[104] These ready admissions of aesthetic inferiority exacerbated the institutional identity that attached American literature to socially inferior populations.

In 1931, Clifton Joseph Furness took an integrative approach to the problem of gendered inferiority, editing an anthology entitled *The Genteel Female* that celebrated rather than damned the feminine as one of the primary governing forces in America. Furness argued that "the trend toward feminization … has been at work in the fiber of our national character during the past century." Because so much of American writing was conditioned by a female readership, Furness argued, the American voice was fundamentally female: "Our American voice has from the beginning bordered upon a feminine falsetto. Even when an occasional virile bass sounds from the throat of a Whitman or a Sandburg, the inevitable soprano of the female is heard ringing through it, as undertone or overtone."[105] The femininity of the American voice that Furness celebrated was the image that artists and scholars alike were struggling to

overturn. From a purely hypothetical standpoint, Furness' celebration of American literature's femininity was one possible solution to the subject's image problem: embracing an alleged weakness to convert it into a strength.

But this was a tense moment indeed in the history of American literature's image. Within the semiotic of the 1930s, Furness' approach was doomed. Richard H. Shryock of Duke countered Furness with the judgment that would become hegemonic. *The Genteel Female* was a useful collection of primary materials, Shryock noted, but he criticized Furness for ascribing so much cultural influence to his "fair subjects": "Such dubious literary criticism is made to support what amounts to a sort of apotheosis of our grandmothers. The truth of the matter would seem to be that, while women were obviously making themselves heard in the nineteenth century, it is an exaggeration to claim that they actually outtalked the men." Shryock finally cannot bear Furness's claim that America is "the woman's own land." His retort to the beset manhood of American literature is a perfect emblem: "The only proper retort to all this would seem to be a simple 'Oh, yeah?' or academic words to that effect."[106] Other early defenders of the field also struck rhetorically masculine postures, as Flanagan did in his 1940 report that American literature was "gaining increasing size and virility."[107] As Lauter has shown, masculinization was crucial to the institutionalization of the field, including the establishment of a masculinist canon of literary texts.[108]

## CONCESSION

Given Hopkins' formative influence in higher education, its programmatic marginalization of American literature might have indeed shaped the subject's long-term fate across the nation. As we have seen, in the 1910s Hopkins tentatively resolved the tension between intramural and external pressures on the curriculum by granting American literature an active place in a marginalized program. But this intramural definition of the field ultimately lost to external pressures, and Hopkins conceded. Although historically accidental, the nationalism surrounding the two world wars changed American literature's image nationally and created a stable space for it in the higher curriculum that Hopkins could no longer successfully contest. It was, of course, impossible at an earlier point to see that twentieth-century history would produce not only one but two great wars that would change both the status of American literature in

the curriculum and the entire course of American higher education in dramatic ways, including a thoroughly new model of government funding for research after 1940.[109] The larger history of higher education and of the knowledge system in which its institutions deal is replete with instances of accident, trial, failure, compromise, inertia, rhetorical spin, scrambling to keep up with trends, and guesswork. At the moment in which curricular decisions are made, it can never be clear what later fate will befall any particular definition of knowledge.

The surge of nationalism produced by World War I that drove the growth of American literature studies in the secondary schools also exerted pressure on the college curriculum for what Pattee called "patriotism-inciting subjects."[110] Academic gains in the colleges were modest during this period; nevertheless, by the conclusion of the war there were nearly twice as many classes in the subject as in 1900.[111] In practical terms, the war curtailed research visits abroad for American scholars, and blocked access to European materials indirectly encouraged the study of American literature. European scholars fled to America and then brought their new interests back home with them afterward. A 1932 issue of *American Literature* reported that the study of American literature was no longer sneered at in France and Germany. Indeed, it had become a vital and respected field in both countries as a result of the interest in American civilization, institutions, and problems that the war produced. This new surge of interest in American literature abroad was institutionally legitimated through the establishment of an assistant professorship of American literature at the Sorbonne and a chair for the study of American civilization at Berlin University, signs of new international status.[112]

The powerful force of nationalism was ready ammunition for the American literature scholars in America who were still seeking gains in the academy. Pattee noted that the debate over American literature had had patriotic bearings from its beginning in the nineteenth century: "a kind of educational Monroe doctrine was involved: for Americans American literature." Now this ammunition had more fire-power than ever before. Although in 1924 Pattee claimed that "the battle" to establish American literature had been "completely won," he did add, "and yet even now in certain entrenched corners of the old field the smoke of the battle still hovers."[113] In *The Reinterpretation of American Literature* (1928), Foerster wrote that "our increasing awareness of our world supremacy in material force has more and more evoked a sense of need of self-knowledge. In Europe, similarly, the feeling is growing that the power of America renders it perilous to remain in the dark as to what she really is."[114]

Foerster attacked, here and elsewhere, the research scholars who controlled English studies and who patronized or opposed the study of American literature for its thinness.[115] Graff points out that, even after philology had ceded academic prominence to its research-based descendant, literary history, between 1915 and 1930, American literature was still found wanting by influential research scholars such as Edwin Greenlaw of Hopkins, who found it too thin.[116] But even Greenlaw – who controlled English studies at Hopkins at the time and who found American literature inferior to English in age, complexity, philosophy, and greatness – published secondary-level and college textbooks (the latter predictably at the elementary level) that included American literature selections. His preface lauded America's achievements in self-government and placed them in a continuous tradition with prior such achievements by the Anglo-Saxon race in Britain. "In the great war this heredity met and conquered the heredity of brute power," he wrote.[117] Other American literature scholars increasingly argued that the literature of one of the most powerful nations in the modern world was certainly worth studying.[118]

World War II reinforced these tendencies toward cultural nationalism and finally consolidated the "size and virility" of American literature studies.[119] The field achieved institutional maturity during this period not because the war brought American literature's inherent quality to light but because the historical accident of the war redefined its value. The early images of femininity, inferiority, and lack of seriousness that clung to American literature gave way under the pressures of military conflict. Both Floyd Stovall and Robert E. Spiller, for example, wrote essays in the early 1940s describing the war's beneficial effects on American literature studies at home.[120] Philip Gleason points out that it was World War II that raised to prominence the idea of "American identity," forging a link between culture and democratic ideology that became a central tenet in the American Studies movement, which formally began in the postwar period.[121] One need only think of F.O. Matthiessen's paradigm-shifting *American Renaissance* (1941) and its thematic focus on democracy to realize how essential cultural nationalism has been to the consolidation of American literature studies. Indeed, from the late 1930s on there was an outpouring of interest in the "American" element in "American literature."[122]

The emerging external impetus for the study of American literature fostered by the war finally overcame earlier intramural resistance at Hopkins. In 1941, Hopkins hired its first Americanist, Charles Anderson,

an appointment that permanently established American literature in the English curriculum there. This concession was one dramatic historical marker of the broader resolution of American literature's identity as a higher subject. Hopkins pitched the change by adopting the nationalistic rhetoric that had forced its curricular hand. The official statement announcing Anderson's appointment referred to the "growing importance" of American literature, "which not only in intrinsic merit and scholarly interest but also in the cultivation of an awareness, on the part of American students, of our country's history and ideals needs no emphasis in the world of today."[123] The statement was published in November of 1941. The world was again at war. One month later, Pearl Harbor would be bombed.

By the 1890s, English had overcome its disciplinary struggles and reinvented itself as neither a lower-school subject nor the province of female teachers. It had done so by turning itself into a science and redefining its curricular value in the new national culture of expertise. Regardless of how many actual lower-level English teachers might still be female, serious English became the province of Evans' "priesthood" of male university professors, who, in turn, marginalized American literature. Half a century later, nationalistic trends rewrote American literature's feminized inferior image as one of masculinized "democratic citizenship."[124] The institutional world of English professionals – even at Hopkins – had no choice but to make ampler room for this long-resisted subject with its powerful new identity.

CHAPTER 2

# *Seminary wars: female teachers and the seminary model at Mount Holyoke*

As the research university with its Ph.D. credential spread throughout American higher education, it coexisted, often uneasily, with competing educational models. Of course, it was only from a later historical vantage that the outcome of these contests would become clear. No one could have known in 1876 that within 15 years the research model would thoroughly redefine American higher education. During this era of flux, one intense form of institutional competition transpired between the new research university and the traditional old-style female seminary, a common form of the school in the United States before the Civil War.[1] The female seminary trained young women to become teachers, mostly for lower schools but also for the female seminaries themselves. Female seminary teachers taught a prescribed curriculum of the kind they had themselves learned, acting as conduits of textbook knowledge for students who would go on, as teachers, to replicate the same pedagogy. This model of the teacher faced new and previously unimaginable pressures in the last decades of the nineteenth century. By that time, Johns Hopkins was redefining college teachers as credentialized experts and putting forth its new style of "seminary" pedagogy. The purpose of the Hopkins "seminary" was of course not to produce lower-level teachers who would transmit standard textbook knowledge, but rigorously to train new generations of knowledge experts who would produce the next wave of original research. In the postbellum battle between these opposed seminary models, the old-style seminary would become one of the institutional casualties of the era.

This chapter will explore the contours of change at Mount Holyoke Female Seminary as it struggled to decipher and accommodate the specific challenges posed by the new research university culture. Eventually, the school legally changed its institutional status from that of a "seminary"

to that of a "college" to alter its identity and thus to adapt. The curricular status of American literature at Mount Holyoke fluctuated in response to this larger crisis of institutional self-definition. Although the subject had been taught comparatively early there, the pressure exerted by the Ph.D. model pushed it temporarily out of the curriculum in the 1890s. The significance of this kind of temporary change is overlooked in broad teleological studies of national trends, which focus on long-term outcomes.[2] But the exclusion of American literature at Mount Holyoke, although temporary, was not a meaningless statistical accident. Indeed, it was a symptom of flux in the status of the field that occurred at a particular time for specific historical reasons. As Chapter 1 demonstrates, Mount Holyoke was precisely the kind of school that had long been one of American literature's curricular homes; now, Mount Holyoke too eliminated the subject as part of its efforts to copy the trends in Ph.D. culture. Paradoxically, then, the image of American literature as a subject fit for female students and their social roles as mother and teacher became the very image that pushed American literature temporarily out of the curriculum at the very type of school that had previously served exactly those goals. This dramatic instance of educational false consciousness was emblematic of the postbellum death gasp of the old-style seminary.

During the crisis decades of the 1880s and 1890s, Mount Holyoke Female Seminary had to face and respond to its own institutional demise. It made early, partial attempts to mimic the research model, mixing its sometimes contradictory influences with lingering seminary practices. This late-century scrambling to figure out its place and role in a new culture of higher education would begin to calm in the first years of the twentieth century. Although the emergence of new-style serious colleges for women such as Vassar (1865), Smith (1875), and Wellesley (1875) had originally threatened Mount Holyoke's ability to survive, Mount Holyoke eventually joined this breed of school as a "sister." When American literature reemerged in the Mount Holyoke curriculum, it did so in ways clearly marked by its specific institutional affiliations with the curricular traditions, teachers, and graduates of these newly kindred schools. This new curricular vitality was double-edged. An energetic subject in the world of the women's college, American literature remained marginal to the culture of research expertise. Indeed, its very vitality in one educational sphere fed its negligible status in others.

## MARY LYON AND THE SEMINARY MODEL

One of the most culturally transformative historical changes of the nineteenth century was the rise of female education. The new women's colleges and the land-grant institutions of the postbellum period made higher education widely available to women for the first time. Previously, colleges were almost uniformly hostile to the idea of admitting them.[3] The education that was available to a young woman in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries focused mainly on what Woody calls "the acquisition of accomplishments, that she might embellish the home and society of her husband." The prevailing institutions of female education from about 1750 to 1865 were the female academy and seminary.[4] (The potentially confusing terms "academy" and "seminary" were synonyms. The difference was mostly one of linguistic vogue, with "academy" chronologically preceding "seminary" as the more fashionable term.[5]) Seminaries aimed to educate beyond the rudimentary or elementary level, conforming roughly to what would later become secondary school. Since both the colleges and the preparatory schools were closed to females, the academies and seminaries became the primary sites of female education.[6]

The conception of female education as training in "accomplishments" such as embroidery and parlor French only changed once new fields of activity outside the home began to open to women. The new field that first emerged was teaching, and a new breed of female seminary arose to train women for the job.[7] The Troy Female Seminary in New York, the Hartford Female Seminary in Connecticut, and the Ipswich Female Seminary in Massachusetts, all founded in the 1820s, were among the leaders in what Woody calls "the seminary movement" that changed the course of female education in the United States.[8] These and like teacher-training institutions provided the teachers desperately needed for the rising common schools.[9]

The common schools garnered more support from taxpayers when a cheap labor supply could keep costs down. Women were cheaper employees than men and, by the gender ideology of the day, they were also the natural nurturers of children. In the words of female education maverick Catherine Beecher: "It is WOMAN who is to come at this emergency, and meet the demand – woman, whom experience and testimony have shown to be the best, as well as the cheapest guardian and teacher of childhood, in the school as well as the nursery."[10] Influenced by her predecessors at Troy, Hartford, and Ipswich, Mary Lyon opened

Mount Holyoke Female Seminary in November 1837. Like other seminary educators, she hoped to address the pedagogical paradox creating pressure in an expanding educational market: where was a supply of well-qualified female teachers to come from when educational opportunities for females were limited? Her goal was to provide an academic curriculum for the higher education of women rather than a superficial and ornamental one.[11] According to Lyon, the "sound & useful learning" Mount Holyoke imparted would supply "our country with well qualified female teachers" in an era when teachers often had no training at all.[12] Troy, Hartford, and Ipswich were widely known to produce good teachers and Mount Holyoke quickly acquired a like reputation.[13] While the most influential schools in the seminary movement were concentrated in the Northeast, their pupils often became founders or principals of schools in the South and West, where teachers were more desperately needed.[14] Mount Holyoke graduates fanned out to teach and found schools not only throughout the United States but also throughout the world.

In addition to Lyon's goals to provide the finest in female education and to produce "well qualified female teachers," her plan was also founded on a third mission: to infuse education with thorough dedication to evangelical Christianity, fostering a salvation experience in which the heart turned to Christ. Those who were saved could teach and convert others, ultimately creating a network of believers who would redeem the sinful world.[15] Woody notes that "at Mount Holyoke there was probably more personal religious fervor than in any other single institution."[16] Its evangelical goal to teach and to save permeated the life of the institution at every level. Indeed, the principal concern of its teachers for the first 50 years, at least until the mid-1880s, was that students have a conversion experience.[17] At Sunday services, students took their places in different pews according to whether they were already saved, had some hope of being saved, or were unrepentant. (The latter category was the one in which, legend holds, Emily Dickinson placed herself in lonely rebellion while a student there.) The Principal's Report each year contains a statement of account like this one of 1869: "Out of about forty entering school without hope in Christ more than twenty now class themselves among His followers. All among our Senior Class consider themselves Christians."[18] These tabulations were always rhetorically presented as a high point of the annual reports, a subject of great interest to the seminary's graduates, staff, and supporters, and usually cause for great rejoicing.

Charlotte King Shea aptly characterizes Lyon's enterprise as a paradox: Mount Holyoke offered women "both self-sufficiency and the possibility

of control over their own lives" by providing serious education and the prospect of an independent teaching career, and at the same time did so in a deeply religious and traditional manner, a manner that observed social conventions ensuring that women did not compete with men. It was thus both radical in its aim of providing higher education for women and respectful of conventional ideas about woman's role as pious nurturer and teacher, a domestic ideology centered in the home but moving outward into the wider world of educational, missionary, or philanthropic service.[19] The missionary zeal Mount Holyoke inspired might indeed have been crucial to sustaining its graduates through their lives as teachers. In Woody's words, "Though much has been said, and done, to exalt the profession of teaching, it nevertheless remained true that it was one of the most lowly, lonely, and unattractive means to a living. Probably only those who were filled with a missionary and philanthropic zeal for service came to love it."[20]

## A NEW NATIONAL CULTURE OF THE SCHOOL

Although Mount Holyoke was, at the time of its inception, in the avant-garde of women's education, after the Civil War it had to confront a new national culture of the school. A different brand of female college emerged to compete with Mount Holyoke. Vassar College opened in 1865 and Smith and Wellesley Colleges opened in 1875, dramatically altering the marketplace of female education. They quickly transformed Mount Holyoke Female Seminary into a dated, inferior, and virtually obsolete institution. For example, while the founder of Wellesley College had initially petitioned the legislature of Massachusetts in 1870 to charter an institution called "Wellesley Female Seminary," in 1873 he re-petitioned and changed the name to "Wellesley College." His initial model had been Mount Holyoke but he became increasingly interested in Vassar College instead. This story in itself crystallizes shifting trends in women's education away from the seminary model and toward the new women's college model.[21] Principal Julia Elizabeth Ward later recalled that when she was appointed Principal in 1872,

> Mount Holyoke was on the eve of a crisis in her history. … Many persons, and among them some of our good friends, maintained that Mount Holyoke had no future … that she was to sink to the level of a preparatory school, while other institutions were to do the higher educational work, for which the public was now clamoring.[22]

As Shea points out, the women who labored at Mount Holyoke "loved the Seminary as a home, and thought of their special work there as service to God."[23] But this vision could not withstand the changes in the national landscape of education. 1872 was indeed, as Ward sensed, the "eve of a crisis" for the seminary model. In addition to Vassar, Smith, and Wellesley Colleges, Bryn Mawr College would open in 1885, Barnard College in 1889, and Radcliffe College in 1893. Among these "Seven Sisters," as they would later be called, Mount Holyoke Female Seminary alone had been founded before the war.[24] It was thus the only one of these women's institutions that had to adapt to an entirely new model of education in the postbellum period.

Mount Holyoke could not remain static if it hoped to survive. The boundaries between higher education and lower schools were becoming more definitive than ever before. As a "seminary," Mount Holyoke and like institutions lost secondary students to the new high schools and lost college students to the new women's colleges and coeducational universities. Mount Holyoke had to move out of the middle ground, either to rise or, as Ward put it, to "sink to the level of a preparatory school." Ward's rhetoric makes it clear that the latter would be a disastrous loss of prestige. Helen Horowitz points out that Lyon had called Mount Holyoke a "seminary" to emphasize that it would offer serious professional training for teachers, but the national semiotic of higher education was changing. Now the position of Mount Holyoke as "seminary" had "eroded to that of a preparatory school for the colleges."[25]

In her 1875 Report, Ward wrote, "Some have said, 'Do you not expect the new institutions to interfere with Mt. Holyoke?' Others have gone farther, and have told me that we must not expect the same prosperity in the future as in the past."[26] Two years later she presents her report in a tone of great disappointment with the progress of the institution, yet she is quick to assign its causes elsewhere than the declining institutional capital of Mount Holyoke itself:

> During the first half of the school year we were constantly pained and perplexed by a lack of earnestness on the part of many professing Christians. Something, we knew not what, appeared to be sapping the spiritual life of the school, and hindering the blessing that seemed to be hovering over us. For a long time we sought the cause in vain, but at the close of the second term, the fact came to light that card playing had been indulged to quite an extent.[27]

"Card playing" is her explanation by way of local sin for a much broader cultural change exerting force from without. In 1880 she reports, "The school has been smaller this year than for a long time."[28]

By the early 1880s, anxieties about the seminary's identity had become chronic. Debates over whether the institution should change its name emblematized the crisis. Principal Ward addressed with some exasperation the demands that Mount Holyoke raise its level to that of a "college," explaining that it was the vocabulary of higher education that had changed, not the quality of her school. Old and new definitions of the words "seminary" and "college" had created a rhetorical muddle that nevertheless had real social meaning. In 1880, she wrote:

> For some time I have been impressed with the importance of our taking measures to correct certain wrong impressions which prevail in some quarters. These refer to the standing of the Seminary, or rather to the character of the intellectual work done here. The name of the institution may have some connection with these wrong impressions. Forty-five years ago it would have been thought unfeminine, or, at least in bad taste, to call an institution for young ladies a college. Yet Miss Lyon and those who built with her, constantly expressed themselves as intending to provide for young ladies advantages equal with, and corresponding to those furnished by the colleges for young men.[29]

In his report for 1876, the U.S. Commissioner of Education noted that many so-called "colleges" were barely providing high school training, while the best seminaries matched real college curricula.[30] Mount Holyoke was caught in this national crisis of definition and Ward resigned in 1883 because of it. The next principal, Elizabeth Blanchard, inherited the problem. She reported that graduates were finding that their "certificates" of graduation (the school's term for its credential) could not compete with the "degrees" possessed by those who had attended other schools. This stumbling block for graduates became a crucial factor in decisions to change the institution's name.[31]

In 1888, Mount Holyoke Female Seminary sought and received a new charter from the state of Massachusetts, becoming "Mount Holyoke Seminary and College." The charter allowed Mount Holyoke to change its name and gave it the power to confer degrees instead of its customary certificates.[32] After the new charter, Mount Holyoke added three new "collegiate" courses that led to the crucial new "degree" credential: a classical course for the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree, a scientific course for the Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree, and a literary course for the degree of Bachelor of Literature (B.L.). (An array of kinds of degrees unfamiliar to our ears today, such as the B.L., was typical of the period. Toward the end of the nineteenth century the profusion of degrees would move toward standardization via the B.A. and B.S. in particular.) Students who were already adequately prepared for entrance to college-level

studies could complete one of the four-year college courses, while less advanced students or those desiring less advanced work could take the seminary course and receive the traditional certificate instead.[33] This new system institutionalized the hierarchy Mount Holyoke had been fighting, whereby its traditional course and certificate were relegated to a provincial and lesser status; simultaneously, it adopted the increasingly national credential and nomenclature of the college degree.

By 1891, the majority of applicants wanted to enter the collegiate department. At this point, President Elizabeth Storrs Mead argued that the seminary course, since it served as a preparatory department, lowered the standard of scholarship at the College and should be discontinued. Once Mount Holyoke eliminated the seminary course it could turn itself wholly to collegiate work.[34] One cannot stress enough that Mead's rhetoric about the inferiority of the seminary course would have been utterly unthinkable to Mount Holyoke administrators just a decade earlier. The trustees approved her plan and another new charter, this time for "Mount Holyoke College," took effect in 1893.[35] Mount Holyoke Female Seminary stopped fighting the emerging semiotic of education and instead merely adopted its terms.

## COMPETING MODELS OF THE ADEQUATE TEACHER

But bringing Mount Holyoke into the new era of female education would require more than a change of name and curriculum. After 1875, Mount Holyoke placed increasing pressure on teachers to professionalize, an ideology that came into greater and greater conflict with the Christian ethos formerly at the institution's core.[36] Shea has demonstrated that in roughly the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a number of teachers at Mount Holyoke sought "to meet the new criteria of professionalism and credentializing in American education and to maintain an intellectual status equal to the new women's colleges."[37] Mount Holyoke had always hired only female teachers, typically its own graduates. It had never before had a reason to require graduate degrees. In addition, opportunities for women to get advanced degrees had long been limited.[38] So while in 1837 Lyon had seen that the nation needed female teachers but none had been trained as such, now the women's colleges suddenly needed professionally trained women who did not exist.

Schools struggled in various ways to fill the gap. An immediate shift to the Ph.D. model would be impossible without replacing the entire faculty – and, in any case, female Ph.D.s did not exist in adequate numbers to do

so. Instead, institutions had to grapple with several kinds of models coexisting at once. At Mount Holyoke, what Shea calls "the old guard" declined in numbers as the new faculty grew. Mead moved the composition of the faculty in a new direction, away from the provincial model that had succeeded for decades. When she took office in 1890, more than a quarter of the faculty had been at Mount Holyoke for more than 20 years; when she retired in 1900, that figure had dropped to 16 percent.[39]

One avenue for teachers' professional development was to return to school for advanced training. Most of Mount Holyoke's teachers changed their professional status by completing graduate degree requirements at universities over several summers.[40] The University of Michigan was an early leader in university coeducation and a favorite graduate institution for many Mount Holyoke teachers. President Mead reported in 1895–96, "We cannot afford now to put any teacher in charge of a department who has not prepared herself for this special work by graduate study."[41] Although Mount Holyoke had always unapologetically done so before, the school could not "afford" to do so now because of new professional standards. The school could no longer indulge itself in the intramural definitions of the adequate teacher to which it had formerly subscribed.

In some cases, Mount Holyoke and other schools awarded graduate degrees on a merely honorary basis to smooth over some of the awkwardness in this era of transition in the nature of academic labor.[42] In 1897, the height of institutional scrambling nationwide to adapt to the new criteria driven by Ph.D. culture, President Gilman of Hopkins coined the term "irregular promotion" to designate the practice of granting Ph.D.s for reasons other than high attainment in scholarship.[43] Rudolph calls it "the sham Ph.D."[44] The peak year for awarding honorary doctorates nationwide was 1890, in which thirty-nine were awarded; by 1910, the figure had dropped to two.[45] The spectrum and number of other kinds of degrees awarded on a honorary basis (the M.A., the Litt. D., the M. Pd., etc.) far exceeded the number of honorary doctorates alone. The chapters that follow will present many individual instances of honorary degrees serving this institutional function.

"Irregular promotion" is one epiphenomenon of the clash between competing models of the adequate teacher in the changing culture of higher education. Another such institutional marker is that of faculty titles. The Mount Holyoke trustees decided in 1900 that they had better rank the faculty according to the new hierarchies of title that reflected kinds of training lest they open the institution to professional suspicion. Nevertheless, the titles they instituted were not based on training but on

the permanence or transience of the teacher's relation to Mount Holyoke.[46] Mount Holyoke's gesture to abjure "irregular promotion" in this way was thus transitional, and like many of the transitional phenomena of this era, it mixed its models. It both copied the new national trend of using the particular ranked titles that sprang from Ph.D. culture (Professor, Associate Professor, etc.) and simultaneously retained much of its old provincial system, granting the titles not for research output but for length of service to Mount Holyoke. By 1910, the roster of teachers' titles still mixed the criteria of old and new systems. Some teachers retained the traditional "Miss" of Mount Holyoke's past, while others were "Associate Professor" or "Professor"; there was also a rare "Dr.," a reflection of the still-uncommon phenomenon of the Mount Holyoke teacher with the Ph.D.[47]

A useful exemplary case of professional transition for the female teacher of this time is that of Clara Stevens, a Mount Holyoke graduate of the Seminary era (1881) who then taught there until her retirement in 1921. Her history at Mount Holyoke straddled these decades of change. In her first 3 years as teacher at Mount Holyoke she taught mathematics, ancient history, modern history, introduction to natural theology, and the history of ancient literature, moving finally to English in 1884. She emblematized the kind of college teacher that Gilman specifically wanted his research model to replace, the non-specialist who, Gilman said, was "willing to teach anything or to take any chair."[48] During the spring of 1893 and the year 1893–94, at the age of 45, Stevens did graduate work in English under Fred Newton Scott and in philosophy under John Dewey at the University of Michigan, receiving a degree of Master of Philosophy in 1894.[49] In 1904, Mount Holyoke made her "Professor," the first case in which they awarded the title.[50] Stevens' career shows in miniature the transition from the teacher without specialized training who was expected to cover a variety of subjects to the professor with a graduate degree who specialized in one subject alone. She never did make the third transition, to the research and publishing scholar with the Ph.D.

Another major push toward change at Mount Holyoke came from a change in leadership. Mead was succeeded in 1901 by Mary Emma Woolley, who graduated from Brown in 1894 among its first class admitting women. Woolley took an M.A. at Brown in 1895 in Latin and Biblical literature and history; then went to Wellesley in 1895 to organize the new Department of Biblical Studies.[51] She came to Mount Holyoke at the end of an eventful period: in the preceding 13 years, the Seminary had become a College and had replaced its longstanding system of required

courses with the elective system, following Harvard's earlier lead and further keeping up with modern trends.[52] Woolley pushed modernization. She continued Mead's policy of encouraging faculty to undertake graduate studies, pressured older teachers to retire early, and replaced them with younger women who already had graduate degrees or who were working toward them. It was she who finally dispensed with the traditional practice of counting how many students professed to be saved.[53] One faculty member described Woolley's early years as "the heart-break days." The point of studying and teaching at Mount Holyoke had previously been "as much to train our characters and prepare us for leadership in the world of Christian women as to learn something about chemistry or Greek," she said, but that era had ended.[54] With the end of the nineteenth century, the seminary wars were indeed over. The old Mount Holyoke finally expired.

## AMERICAN LITERATURE, CURRICULAR SIGNIFIER

Curricular and institutional identities across the nation were indeed fluctuating not only rapidly but also chaotically at this time. At Mount Holyoke, American literature emerged in the curriculum in 1887 as a seminary subject that was part of the school's commitment to lower-level teaching. Merely a decade later, it was expunged as a specific and strategic casualty of the seminary wars. The content of the American literature canon was irrelevant to this situation. The subject's institutional meaning inhered in its identity as a knowledge product for lower schools, pre-professional teachers, and non-elite students rather than for serious, advanced students and scholars.

If one were merely to read course catalogues, Mount Holyoke's elimination of American literature offerings might appear accidental. On the contrary, the particularities of this shift provide an excellent example of how course catalogues mean little unless we embed them in their complex local contexts, which reveal the specific institutional stakes underlying curricular shifts, gains, and losses. Mount Holyoke briefly attempted to mimic Ph.D. culture and did so in part by eliminating American literature from its curriculum. A curricular coin, American literature was compatible or incompatible with different models of the school.

The first "American literature" class as such at Mount Holyoke was taught in 1887–88 by Ellen P. Bowers, an 1858 Mount Holyoke graduate who in the late 1860s became the "head" of English Literature studies. She

held this position for more than two decades. ("Departments" as such would not become firmly organized until later. The term "head" would eventually become "chairman," a title that Mount Holyoke's chair Jeannette Marks in 1930 wittily recast as "charwoman."[55]) Although an account of its content does not survive, we know that the 1887 class was a required second-year class, offered under the rubric of "English Literature," and that it served as the student's introduction to the advanced study of literature in English that would follow in the next 2 years.[56]

It was common in higher curricula for American literature to precede English literature in this way, indicative of American literature's status as introductory or preliminary to the more serious, advanced, and difficult body of English literature.[57] In addition to its definition of American literature as a lower-school subject, Scudder's 1888 address recommended that lower schools teach American literature prior to English literature. "I am convinced that there is no surer way to introduce the best English literature into our schools than to give the place of honor to American literature," he remarked. "In the order of nature, the youth must be a citizen of his own country before he can become naturalized in the world. We recognize this in our geography and history; we may wisely recognize it in our reading."[58] The teleology that Scudder recommended for grade schools also commonly obtained in college and university curricula at this time.

The next year, 1888–89, was the first year of the dual Seminary and College charter at Mount Holyoke. Both curricula required an American literature class, a sign that American literature was initially to be included in Mount Holyoke's vision of higher level studies.[59] A second class, an elective on "our leading authors," was added in 1890–91.[60] When the Seminary was abolished in 1893, the curriculum changed substantially. Bowers, a member of the old guard, left that year, a departure that official reports attributed to "illness." Given the wide-ranging meanings of the term "illness" as applied to women in this period, including its broad euphemistic functions, it is hard to tell exactly what prompted Bowers to leave; it is also unclear whether she resigned or was terminated. She was teaching at least part time again in 1896–97 but did not return to her former leadership of English literature studies. The timing of her departure is likely not incidental: with the demise of the Seminary whose ethos her career embodied, Bowers as a kind of "head" of English studies was also obsolete.[61]

When Bowers left, the new American literature teacher was Ella Adelaide Knapp, who was now in charge of the English literature program.

Knapp represented a significant shift in the teaching of American literature: unlike Bowers with her Mount Holyoke "certificate" and her career-long dedication to the seminary, Knapp had a college degree (an 1888 A.B. from Kalamazoo College in Michigan) and an advanced degree as well (an 1890 A.M. from the University of Michigan).[62] Knapp added two new American literature courses in 1893–94, one a required introductory series of lectures and one a more advanced course. The introductory lecture class surveyed American literature from the colonial period through Longfellow and Bryant, with special attention to Irving, Poe, Hawthorne, and Emerson. Pedagogically, it focused on biographical and historical facts. The advanced course, meanwhile, was called a "seminary," in keeping with the nomenclature already by this time rendered both fashionable and prestigious by Hopkins. More important, the term signified keeping up rather than falling behind, regardless of what was actually going on in the classroom.[63] Mount Holyoke defined the seminary as an advanced course open only to students who met prerequisites. Of the fifteen courses offered in English literature that year, two alone fell into this category. American literature's place as a "seminary" marked it as part of Mount Holyoke's curricular upgrade.[64] Ironically, Mount Holyoke adopted "seminary" terminology for advanced courses in the very year its own status as an institution called a "seminary" was abolished because of insufficient prestige.

The American literature seminary of 1893 offered a "critical study of the principal writers of America." Even as it installed the nomenclature of the "seminary," it mixed its educational models, using secondary-school-teacher Albert H. Smyth's 1889 *American Literature* as its textbook.[65] Smyth's preface notes, "I have tried to make a book from which teachers can teach." He explains that he spends only a few pages on the pre-1765 period because it "has no place in elementary instruction," thus defining the book as intended for "elementary" pedagogy. The clear lower-level pitch of the book simultaneously points to the equivocal level of the Mount Holyoke class.[66] The nature of Mount Holyoke as a school, the kind of American literature teacher, and the textbook all marked the subject as secondary in nature, despite the fact that it was being taught under the new rubric of the "seminary."

Scudder stressed the importance of the material history of the textbook to the American classroom, about which he was surely correct. A detailed, intelligent student notebook from Knapp's class survives. It reveals that she relied heavily on Smyth's book for the content of her lectures.[67] Part of American literature's institutional identity at this time was its

association with lower-level handbooks such as Smyth's. Pattee would lament in 1928 that what American literature needed most was to liberate itself from the "classroom thinking" represented by the handbooks.[68] Pre-professional teachers, who typically taught across a broad curricular range, needed such handbooks to prepare the often dauntingly miscellaneous range of materials their duties demanded.

Both Smyth's book and Knapp's seminary focused on biographical and historical facts. Indeed, although Knapp lectured about authors and assigned handbook reading about them, the students read relatively few of the primary texts that they learned about through the lens of contextual facts. When Knapp's student took notes about *Wieland*, for example, which she had clearly not read or been expected to read, she (presumably) transcribed from Knapp's lecture that it was "A horrible story drawn out to a great length just as the novel[s] in Eng[land] were at that time." Alternatively, in cases in which the class actually did read the works discussed, neither the lecture nor the student's notes interpreted the reading; they merely listed facts about it. For example, Knapp assigned five stories from Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales* and nine tales from *Mosses from an Old Manse*, but the lecture did not discuss any of this reading. Interpreting the content of the texts as we do today was simply not part of classroom work. (It is additionally notable that almost none of the assigned tales remains in today's Hawthorne canon.[69]) Thus although Hawthorne, perhaps the first canonical American author, remains a canonical author today, his individual texts have an alternative canonical history. "Hawthorne" as a signifier of the canonical is not synonymous with the specific canonical history of Hawthorne texts, another historical instance of the gap between the two orders of the canonical that I address in my Introduction. Meanwhile, although the students did not read *The Scarlet Letter* for the class, Knapp briefly touched on it in her lecture. She summarized its importance by saying that it records "soul conflict" and that "Hester closes her life in great usefulness to others"; however, Knapp added, "would not advise anyone to read Scarlet-Letter before 25 years old."[70]

Knapp's approach in this regard was typical of her era. Since inexpensive school editions of literary texts were often not yet available, it was common pedagogy to lecture on texts that had not been assigned or that were assigned only in excerpted form. Textbook hack Albert P. Southwick, for example, produced an array of schoolbooks that extracted, among others, "leading American authors" for memorization and recitation. The pedagogy he advocated was one in which the

students' work of memorization was to be aided by "reference and information from the instructor," the kind of approach Knapp was using in her classroom. Southwick advocates the "gems" approach to literary study, a term common in pedagogical thinking in this era. This was a kind of "greatest hits" conception in which teachers introduced students to the rhetorical high points from an array of literary texts, further packaging them with slogans for memorization that would encapsulate the relevance of the author in question. According to Southwick, for example, Bryant is "the Wordsworth of America," Whittier "the bachelor poet," Poe "the poet of morbid anatomy," Irving "the American Goldsmith," Hawthorne "the great American romancer," Emerson "the sage of Concord," John Neal "the Nestor of American magazinists," and William Hickling Prescott, perhaps most unforgettably, "the historian who achieved distinction despite the loss of eyesight."[71]

In Knapp's class we find a kindred focus. Washington Irving "was not good at books + not very obedient to his mother" and "One can get a knowledge of him from his books." Cooper "is the Sea novelist of America." Indeed, the class traces the lives and personalities of one author after another, particularly Poe, Emerson, and Hawthorne, who receive more attention than any other authors or periods. Of Emerson, the student writes: "He voices thoughts that awaken us fifty years later. He had blue eyes, dark brown hair, fair complexion, six feet tall, neither fleshy nor slim, voice like Wendell Phillips." The student notes, "We place Hawthorne at the head of letters" and goes on to express Knapp's rueful classroom remarks that the house he was born in "is now occupied by people who do not appreciate it." Poe, on the other hand, "inherited his love for drink," which no doubt, in keeping with stereotypes of the day, follows from her earlier remark that "His father was Irish." Additionally, we learn that Hawthorne "was not at all exclusive at College" but "got in to as many scrapes as are good for a student." At the same time as the class records a biography-based assessment of American literature in keeping with the methodology and content of the handbooks, one also finds a glancing awareness of emergent alternative criteria in English studies. The student reports of Thomas Jefferson: "He not only displayed his literary power in his private letters but also introduced the study of Anglo Saxon," a teacherly point that showed Knapp's awareness of English department preoccupations with philology, however roughly integrated into her own class.[72]

Both of Knapp's classes remained constant until 1897. That year, she followed the trajectory of professionalization, leaving to take a Ph.D. at

the University of Michigan. She received the degree in 1899 with a dissertation entitled, "A Study of Thoreau."[73] She then became head of the Department of English at the Pennsylvania College for Women. In 1904, she moved to the Woman's College of Baltimore (now Goucher College) as Associate Professor of Rhetoric. Thus, although Knapp eventually acquired the Ph.D. credential, she remained within the world of women's education for the rest of her career. Many women Ph.D.s either chose or were forced to accept such employment restrictions because of impenetrable professional barriers in the world of academe, and Knapp was thus one of many female teachers of American literature whose careers were limited to the world of female schools.[74] The complex social semiotic by which American literature connoted academic inferiority was rooted in part in the social history of its teaching corps.

In this larger context, it is not surprising that, after a decade of regular requirements that its students take classes in American literature, Mount Holyoke suddenly dropped its American literature offerings in 1897, entirely and at once. Several crucial factors illuminate this sudden change. First, Knapp left. As we saw in the case of J.C. French at Hopkins, the teaching of American literature was often dependent on a particular faculty member. Second, Mount Holyoke was working hard to upgrade its collegiate image and shed its seminary past, an historical transition that pushed women such as Bowers to leave and women such as Knapp to leave for further graduate study. American literature was a subject associated with the pre-professional teacher population that was increasingly under the pressure of displacement and redefinition. When these teachers were displaced, American literature sometimes went with them. Third, it was 1897. The 1890s was the decade of the greatest institutional chaos American higher education has ever seen. Hopkins had won the seminary wars. Mount Holyoke Female Seminary was obsolete. Mount Holyoke College had to behave as it imagined a viable institution would behave in the new culture of English.

Thus, when Knapp departed to pursue her professional credential, the college hired a new faculty member to take over English literature. Marguerite Sweet, the first Ph.D. ever to be hired as faculty in Mount Holyoke's divisions of Rhetoric, English, or English Literature, joined Mount Holyoke in 1897 and made sweeping changes in course offerings.[75] Sweet took an A.B. at Vassar in 1887 and a Ph.D. at Bryn Mawr in 1892 with a dissertation entitled "The Third Class of Weak Verbs in Primitive Teutonic, with Special Reference to its Development in Anglo-Saxon."[76] (Bryn Mawr had opened in 1888 as the first women's institution

modeled on the university standards and research rigor of Johns Hopkins.[77]) Ada Snell, an 1892 Mount Holyoke graduate who then joined the faculty, commented that the 1890s saw more changes at Mount Holyoke than at any previous time or than it would see for the next 50 years. Previously, each subject was represented by a single course; "now each subject unfolded into many courses clustered in departments administered by highly specialized instructors."[78] In English, Sweet embodied this change.

Knapp had been teaching both literature classes such as "American Literature" and "Shakespeare's Plays" as well as language-based classes such as "Old English" and "Old English Poetry." Sweet shifted the balance of the program. She eliminated some literature classes, added others, and in general pushed the curriculum further in the direction of philology, both by way of the content of the classes she taught and by way of the departmental rhetoric through which she presented English studies overall. For example, Knapp's "Old English" offerings were recast in the Ph.D. vocabulary of "Anglo-Saxon," and the course descriptions for the first time use the term "linguistic" to describe their method. While Chaucer and Beowulf appeared on the reading lists for classes that Knapp offered under more general titles, Sweet introduced a class called "Chaucer" and another called "Beowulf," as well as a new class in Gothic grammar and a "Seminary in Language" that would focus "either in Middle English or in Anglo-Saxon." A student wrote of the Beowulf class in 1898: "Dr. Sweet told us that our class in Beowulf is the largest in the country: we will have twelve in the class. But I'm sure I shall enjoy it because we will get so much out of it. There is no doubt but that Dr. Sweet is one of our strongest if not the strongest among the faculty."[79]

Sweet also kept but altered some of Knapp's literature classes, including classes in Shakespeare and eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English poetry and prose. She added entirely new literature classes, such as one on the English novel. The only courses from Knapp's curriculum that Sweet eliminated entirely were the two American literature classes, at both the introductory and the seminary levels.[80] This new omission of the previously standard American literature courses is all the more notable as literary (as opposed to linguistic) courses themselves did not disappear when Sweet arrived, although American literature as a type of literature disappeared entirely. In so devising the curriculum, Sweet reiterated the dominant ethos of the philologically based English department of the 1890s.

The dramatic institutional change that she represented among the teachers' culture at Mount Holyoke is recorded by the same student in another letter of 1898: "On Tues. evening Dr. Sweet gives a Lecture under the auspices of the Junior class. None of the Faculty will buy tickets they dislike her so because she is so independent and different from the rest of the ancient band."[81] While Bowers and Knapp, the two preceding teachers responsible for the English literature curriculum, taught and in fact required American literature classes, neither was a professional as defined by Ph.D. culture. Bowers was the old-guard seminary teacher and Knapp a transitional figure, with degrees up through the level of M.A. Bowers left under the pressure of the new college charter; Knapp left to acquire her Ph.D. credential. Sweet, a third and competing synchronic model of the female teacher in this era, brought to Mount Holyoke along with her Ph.D. and her Teutonic dissertation a new definition of what a serious college curriculum in English should look like. When Mount Holyoke shifted to a professor with the Ph.D. credential, revamped the English curriculum around entirely new courses that are identifiable as Ph.D. areas of expertise, and dropped American literature, its intramural behaviors were responding to the contours of change in higher education in the 1890s. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the momentous shift she represented as well as the hostility with which the other faculty treated her, Sweet remained on the faculty for only 2 years. We have no record of why she left, whether voluntarily or involuntarily. Nevertheless, as a signifier of Mount Holyoke's relation to broader changes in higher education, her role is a stark one.

In his 1941 dissertation, John Smith Lewis, Jr. documents eleven colleges and universities that had taught American literature in some form by the 1870s that also dropped or cut their work in the subject within the next two decades. Lewis concludes that he cannot assess the downturn; in fact, given his teleological focus, the temporary downturn is not a major concern of his study, since American literature would eventually rebound and achieve the standing he believes it deserves. He speculates that the cuts of the late-nineteenth century occurred either because a particular faculty member who taught the subject left or because the philological approach was becoming more prevalent.[82] On both grounds, his assessment is correct; what he misses is the more foundational cultural logic by which American literature was not an accidental but, rather, a strategic casualty.

## REDEFINITIONS: INSTITUTION, SUBJECT

What is less typical about the Mount Holyoke case than some of the other curricular downturns is how soon American literature reappeared in the curriculum after the Ph.D. model expunged it. Sweet's biography exemplifies the partial failure of the experimental Ph.D. model at Mount Holyoke. She did not last there, nor did she pursue elsewhere her career as a philologist-expert. When she left Mount Holyoke, she left higher education entirely and returned to her pre-Ph.D. career as a teacher in girls' and other lower-level schools.[83] Sweet never built a career in the world of university research, nor in the women's colleges. Given her miserable fit among her female colleagues at Mount Holyoke, her path is perhaps not surprising. It serves as a kind of object lesson indicating the era's complicated negotiations between academic women and institutional change. At this uneasy juncture, the tentative institutional shift to the Ph.D. model predicated upon the labor of the expert philologist failed at Mount Holyoke, yet the old seminary was also dead. Mount Holyoke had to carve out a new, and newly stable, identity.

It did so by affiliating itself with women's college culture as a particular institutional sphere that was neither the seminary nor the research university but an alternative to both. During "the heart-break days" when President Woolley took over in 1901, Mount Holyoke changed its standard hiring practices. While Mount Holyoke Female Seminary traditionally retained its favored students as teachers, it now began pushing toward hires with external credentials as a matter of routine rather than exception. Teachers of Freshman English were still Mount Holyoke graduates, for example, but now they were only hired if they had also gone on to do advanced work at other colleges and universities. The next gigantically symbolic change took place in 1905, when the college for the first time hired its first non-Holyoke graduates as teachers of Freshman English. They were Vassar graduates and were considered "outsiders"; but they were followed by increasing numbers of English teachers who had been trained elsewhere.[84] Hiring "outsider" Vassar graduates as a mark of institutional progress indicated that Mount Holyoke was joining women's-college culture, although this transition too would not be seamless.

American literature then returned to the curriculum under yet another model of the teacher: neither the female seminary teacher nor the Ph.D. expert but the women's college teacher. The women's college teacher was not obsolete, as was the seminary teacher; nevertheless, she

operated in a sphere separate from the circles of research prestige open to male faculty at other kinds of institutions. Such marginal status fostered curricular openness to fields not construed as part of the standard research program. Jeannette Marks, a new B.A. from Wellesley, joined the faculty in 1901–02 and became the next American literature teacher. (She had been Woolley's student there for 3 years and was shortly to become her life partner; she lived with Woolley in the President's House until Woolley was forced to resign in 1937, in part because of the relationship between them that an era of new sexual definitions found increasingly unsavory. In light not only of the history of sexuality but also of gender politics in higher education, it was unsurprising that Woolley was replaced by a man, the first male president in the school's history.[85])

Marks had been at Wellesley in the era of Katharine Lee Bates, a poet and early scholar and teacher of American literature. Bates was author of the 1897 textbook *American Literature*, which covered "our literary progress" from the colonial period through the "new realism" of Howells and James. The appendix, "Suggestions for Classroom Use," addresses itself in part to high school teachers and thus presents another example of the fluid boundaries between secondary- and college-level courses in this era, a fluidity that troubled the curricular status of American literature in particular. Bates proposes fifteen authors as "our most eminent": Franklin, Bryant, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, Whittier, Emerson, Poe, Lanier, Irving, Cooper, Hawthorne, Thoreau, Webster, and Parkman, a conventional list at this time. Bates was also a poet who wrote, among other things, patriotic verses about Wellesley College and about the United States, including "America the Beautiful." She was to become an editor of Hawthorne around the turn of the century.[86]

As a poet and pre-professional teacher of American literature, Bates was one of the era's women of letters rather than its scholar–experts. Lauter has persuasively argued that "dominantly male academic accounts of the American canon were far less weighty around the turn of the century than they became in and after the 1920s." Previous to that, he argues, their authority was offset "by that of other cultural institutions, from the vast network of women's literary clubs to the magazines that spoke to primarily female audiences."[87] I concur with Lauter; I also want to add to his account the significant presence of female teachers of American literature within the academy, not just extrinsic to it in other cultural institutions. These women were soon to be displaced by the new generation of male professional scholars.

Marks' 1901 American literature class used Bates' textbook. The class studied "three centuries of American life. The work is developed through topical studies of periods, and the reading of individual authors. The class required reading in the colonial and Revolutionary periods, but chiefly in the following authors of the nineteenth century: Irving, Cooper, Hawthorne, Poe, Bryant, Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, Lowell, Lanier, Whitman."[88] A student notebook from 1902 survives. The class idolized Hawthorne as the "most distinguished" of American novelists, whose "Character [is] one of the rarest, deepest of natures," a gushing virtually unchanged from the way that Knapp's 1893 class treated him. "Never in life of H – the least taint of morbidness + unwholesome [sic]. We cannot say he never treats of such subjects but was not subject to them," Marks assured the students.[89] This class remained on the books (although not always taught by Marks) almost unchanged from 1901 till 1928–29, an unusually early and consistent American literature offering compared with those of other institutions. Marks also produced a handbook in 1901, soon after she arrived at Mount Holyoke, entitled *A Brief Outline of Books and Topics for the Study of American Literature* (Pawtucket, RI: John W. Little, 1901).

Three institutional factors thus facilitated the resurrection of American literature studies at Mount Holyoke in 1901 after the philological turn temporarily eliminated the subject in 1897. First, Mount Holyoke was a female institution that only hired female teachers. Once it began to hire "outsiders," they were often graduates of other women's colleges who were relatively likely to have been schooled in American literature, as Marks had been by Bates. Of the schools dropping or cutting American literature between 1870 and 1890 that fell within Lewis' study, none was a women's college.[90] Second, while Mount Holyoke in part modeled itself with an eye toward broader trends in higher education, it was also in part independent of them because it operated in a related but separate institutional sphere. Thus the drop in American literature at Holyoke in the late 1890s was susceptible to a quick turnaround, even though the subject's curricular image in the broader national picture had not changed by that point. Third, as a women's college hiring women, Mount Holyoke took longer to convert entirely to a faculty of Ph.D.s than did other kinds of institutions. An influx of Ph.D.s often changed the curriculum in the direction of standard research fields ("standard" defined by way of Ph.D.-granting programs), which would not include American literature until much later. The point at which coursework in American literature disappeared was in some cases the

point at which a program became professionalized – as it had only tentatively done at Mount Holyoke when Sweet was hired. Mount Holyoke's tangential relationship to research culture fostered a place for American literature.

In 1909, leadership in American literature instruction at Mount Holyoke passed from Marks to its first Mount Holyoke teacher with a Ph.D.: Carrie Harper, a Radcliffe A.M. (1896) who took a Ph.D. at Bryn Mawr in 1908. Her dissertation was entitled "The Sources of British Chronicle History in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*."[91] At the time of her hire, Harper was the only Ph.D. in the English Literature division. As had been the case with J.C. French at Hopkins, it was routine for those Ph.D.s who did teach in the field of American literature to have written dissertations in other areas of specialization, since graduate training in the subject did not exist. At the same time, Harper's credential, still unusual at Mount Holyoke, placed American literature under the Ph.D. imprimatur. Like Ph.D. Sweet before her, Harper ran the department.[92]

Although the female Ph.D. was a nationally marginalized professional figure, she stood out in the local culture of Mount Holyoke for her exceptional training. Historians of women in the academy have explored the unique and limited professional space of the women's college, which, according to Goggin, "both affirmed and denied women's status in the profession."[93] Once a woman had spent a considerable part of her career at a women's college, it became difficult and often impossible for her to obtain a position elsewhere. Within the academic profession, women's colleges were separate spheres that provided daily confirmation of women's limited professional opportunities.[94] Thus Harper's Ph.D. status, although exceptional among her colleagues at Mount Holyoke, did not grant her the external professional status held by male Ph.D.s teaching at other kinds of institutions. Those female faculty who did take the credential of the Ph.D. were freer to pursue anti-professional subjects such as American literature at schools on the margins of research culture. Their careers transpired under a distinct set of professional expectations than the male Ph.D.s who had the opportunity to build mainstream careers. When I asked Aaron why so many of the early teachers of American literature were female, he commented that, at that time, no self-respecting man with professional ambition would have chosen the field.

Marks, meanwhile, took leave for several years to devote herself to her work as an author of fiction, poetry, and drama. She decided to move out of scholarship and to focus instead on her career as a writer because

she didn't want to compete with Harper and her other colleagues with Ph.D.s.[95] Although Marks had taken an A.M. at Wellesley in 1903 and would eventually become head of the English Literature Department at Mount Holyoke, she did not have the advanced professional training that Harper had. Many of Marks' colleagues believed that she continued to hold a position of power only because of her intimate relationship with President Woolley, which left them seething with resentment.[96]

Harper continued to teach the American literature classes until 1920. The subject would face no more of the risky curricular fluctuation it had in the 1890s.[97] In fact, the 1920–50 period was one of stability and gradual expansion, rather than the more contentious kinds of shifts and omissions that occurred at Hopkins during the same decades. Such differences are a function of the different kinds of institutions in question and the identity status of American literature at each. Its curricular adequacy was simply no longer an issue in the world of this women's college. In fact, from a programmatic standpoint, Mount Holyoke showed consistent interest post-1920 not only in maintaining but also in building the number of American literature classes and developing its identity as a comprehensive program, particularly in response to the bottom-up force of steady student demand. In the early 1920s, for example, the Student Committee on the Curriculum drew up a short list of recommendations requesting additional courses in American literature as a top priority. Enrollment in American literature courses rose steadily after 1920, and it remained a consistently favorite subject for students. Enrollment downturns during World War II affected all English courses except American literature.[98]

American literature thus had several institutional identities at Mount Holyoke: as a seminary subject taught by pre-professional teachers, tailored to students who would themselves go on to teach in lower-level schools; as a subject that was inappropriate to the redesigned expertise-based English department of the 1890s, and that was therefore eliminated; and as a rejuvenated women's-college subject, thriving on the margins of research culture and indeed contingent upon such a space for its curricular vitality. Ph.D. culture briefly extinguished American literature at Mount Holyoke in 1897 because the old-style seminary model had become obsolete. But Mount Holyoke also could not and did not become a research institution, despite the various confused and mixed institutional behaviors it adopted in the 1890s. When Mount Holyoke resurrected American literature in the early

twentieth century, it did so by way of the subject's affiliations with the teachers, graduates, and curricular traditions of other women's colleges such as Wellesley and Bryn Mawr.[99] It was in these once-again redefined institutional terms that Mount Holyoke rebuilt American literature as a curricular subject on the margins of the world of research professionals.

CHAPTER 3

# *Higher education for African Americans: competing models at Wilberforce University*

Located in the small town of Xenia in western Ohio, Wilberforce University was founded in 1856 with an aim almost inconceivable at the time: to provide higher education for "Negroes."[1] A decade later, the cataclysmic social changes of the post-emancipation period would generate a surge in the number of Negro colleges, universities, and normal schools, hundreds of which were founded between 1865 and 1900. These schools attempted to succeed in an ideological climate that primarily supported two kinds of Negro education: training in manual labor and training as teachers, specifically as teachers for other Negroes. In the parlance of the time, "industrial," "manual," "trade," "vocational," "agricultural," "mechanical," and "normal" education were kinds of training considered suitable for black students, part of a larger effort to train them for subordinate positions in American society.[2] This chapter will show how the installation of American literature at Wilberforce University enacted the social programs meant to limit curricula, jobs, and status for black people.

The programmatic location for American literature at Wilberforce was the normal program, and its social function as a subject was of a piece with the normal curriculum that housed it: to train teachers for lower-level Negro schools. It was not the content of the American literature classes but their institutional location that acted as the lens through which they acquired meaning. From the standpoint of the social history of the curriculum, American literature's identity at Wilberforce was simply not that of a "liberal arts" subject signifying the forms of social empowerment associated with liberal arts education. Rather, it was a vocational subject construed as appropriate for black students precisely because it would suit their social and occupational limits. In this sense, American literature served Jim Crow.

The subject would later move outward from the normal curriculum at Wilberforce and achieve a stable place in the liberal curriculum by the 1920s, the same decade in which American literature was solidifying curricular gains nationwide. Yet again, we must carefully balance the meaning of large-scale national narratives against local cases, whose very particularity complicates and challenges such seamless tales. American literature's eventual redefinition as a liberal subject at Wilberforce was not a curricular triumph, although teleological histories of the field define curricular gains *a priori* as a mark of progress. Indeed, the meaning of its emergent stability at Wilberforce differed radically from what it meant at other kinds of institutions. At Hopkins, for example, American literature's ascent to stable curricular status in the English Department rather than in the College for Teachers meant a leap in prestige with a host of attendant consequences tied to Hopkins' institutional identity. The student population that had access to one of the nation's top research universities could study the subject as part of serious, amply supported, and socially empowered college training; at the graduate level, the improved availability of American literature training at such a prestigious institution fed the market for jobs and publications in the field. American literature's programmatic move to the liberal arts curriculum at Wilberforce had an entirely different meaning. National ideologies, powerfully enacted by white philanthropic agencies and emerging bodies of college accreditation, blocked and opposed liberal arts education for African Americans. In doing so, they also blocked the presumed social applications of the "liberal" curriculum: advanced professional training, personal empowerment, and civic participation. Longstanding attempts at Wilberforce to build a liberal arts curriculum that could compete with its own programs in normal and industrial training consistently failed. American literature's final ascent from the normal program to the English Department curriculum at Wilberforce was thus hardly a triumph: it was, rather, a pyrrhic curricular victory.[3]

## EARLY HISTORY

The founding of Wilberforce University was the eventual result of initially distinct efforts by the (black) African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) and the (white) Methodist Episcopal Church to establish black schools. In the mid-1840s, the AME Church established Union Seminary in West Jefferson, Ohio, as a Negro seminary on the manual

labor plan.[4] The Seminary could not sustain its enrollment, and closed in 1858.[5] Meanwhile, the Methodist Episcopal Church resolved in 1853 to establish a "literary institution of a high order for the education of the colored people generally, and for the purpose of preparing teachers of all grades to labor in the work of educating the colored people in our country and elsewhere."[6] In 1856, the Church purchased the property of a health resort, including a 200-room building, and established there "The Ohio African University," whose name it soon changed to "Wilberforce University."[7] University publications later called the period of its founding "one of the darkest periods of the Nation's history," "that intervening the passage of the Fugitive Slave Bill, and the breaking out of the Civil War."[8]

Methodist Episcopal Church committee reports noted that "prominent friends of the colored race" and "the colored people themselves" were "delighted" with the prospect of the institution. The Church also reported that plans for the institution "attracted the attention of some wealthy gentlemen in the South, who have slaves whom they wish to emancipate and educate; and two such slaves have been emancipated already, and are now in Xenia, awaiting the opening of the school."[9] These slaves, as the Church indicated elsewhere, were the children of the "wealthy gentlemen" who owned them. Thus while the name "Wilberforce" connotes abolition (William Wilberforce was instrumental to abolishing the slave trade in Britain in 1807), "The Ohio African University" as originally founded was complexly woven into the fabric of American slavery, miscegenation, and manumission. University literature reports that not only the two slaves mentioned above but "the majority" of the 207 initial students at the new university were "the natural children of Southern and Southwestern planters":

> These came from the plantation with nothing mentally but the ignorance, superstition, and vices which slavery engenders but departed with so much intellectual and moral culture as to be qualified to be teachers in several of the Western States, and, immediately after the overthrow of slavery, entered their native regions as teachers of the freedmen.[10]

Frederick A. McGinnis, author of the only comprehensive history of Wilberforce University, noted that both of his grandfathers, although neither was a Wilberforce student, had been slaves whose slaveholder fathers manumitted them and settled them as freedmen in Ohio. His family history is a tangential example of the kinds of practices of manumission to Ohio that also underlay the early influx of Wilberforce students from planter fathers.[11] McGinnis further reports that when the

Civil War broke out, the student population at Wilberforce was decimated because most were called home to the South:

> No longer could the Southern planters and slave-holders support their children in an institution of this kind, for they were all drawn into the service of the rebel cause. Soon the income of the institution was greatly reduced; and the situation was so discouraging that the trustees met and decided to pay the teachers as best they could and suspend operation.[12]

The Board of Trustees closed the school in 1863.[13] William Sanders Scarborough, who joined the Wilberforce faculty as professor of Latin and Greek in 1877 and later became the university's President, also reported that the original Wilberforce closed "because most of the pupils were the children of Southern white planters who could no longer support them there after the Civil War began."[14] Additional primary records that might flesh out the tantalizing profile of this early student body are not currently known to exist.[15] The fact that one of the first universities for African Americans in the United States closed when the Civil War broke out because its ex-slave students returned to the South while their fathers served "the rebel cause" bends the mind with its layers of irony.

These two educational failures finally resulted in the new Wilberforce University. When the original Wilberforce University closed in 1863, by which point Union Seminary had also failed, Bishop Daniel A. Payne of the AME Church bought the Wilberforce property to establish another school. He reopened Wilberforce University later that same year and served as President.[16] In this transition, the administration of the school also changed from white to black.

While on paper the Wilberforce curriculum stretched from elementary instruction to early college studies, in reality it taught mostly lower-level classes. The university reopened with only six students, all of whom were studying elementary English.[17] In this respect, the history of Wilberforce is typical of the history of Negro higher education nationally. Even after the war, when hundreds of Negro institutions calling themselves colleges and universities were founded, most were, in practice, largely elementary and secondary schools. Wilberforce and other institutions adopted the names of "college" and "university" because of their aspiration to provide higher education as soon as circumstances would permit. That goal required that they first address the immediate and pressing problem of basic literacy in the black population. They began by offering elementary and secondary work, trying to push as soon as practicable toward higher studies.[18] Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, for example, which by the 1920s was the nation's preeminent liberal arts college for blacks, had

begun after the Civil War as essentially a secondary school offering a few college courses.[19]

Under the leadership of President Payne, the new Wilberforce focused on training black teachers to teach black students. By 1876, Wilberforce had graduated six classes: three students in 1870, one in 1871, five in 1872, six in 1873, six in 1874, and four in 1875. "In addition to these," Payne wrote, "we have partially educated scores of young men and women, who are now usefully employed, north and south, east and west, as preachers, teachers, and housekeepers – that is, heads of families."[20] This pattern was to continue to hold true. Records from the classes of 1870 through 1892 show that most graduates who achieved employment became teachers, followed by pastors. In their self-descriptions, thirty-seven listed "teacher," nineteen "pastor," nine "principal," six "professor," four "bishop" or "elder," and two college "president."[21] As of 1895, many of the student essays that appeared in *The Wilberforce Graduate*, a yearbook of literary exercises, focused on issues of education and teaching, evidence of an institutional culture focused on moving students toward careers in pedagogy.[22]

W.E.B. DuBois, a Professor of Latin and Greek at Wilberforce from 1894 to 1896, wrote numerous articles in *The Crisis* about Wilberforce in particular as well as about the emergence of black colleges more generally.[23] The great problem of education for freedmen, he noted, was the problem of providing teachers to teach them in the common schools. There was a paradox here: blacks had to raise up their own teachers. They had to find a way to provide more advanced training for the students who would go on to teach the others. But no such advanced training was yet available. (This was similar to the problem faced by the early generations of female college teachers discussed in Chapter 2, except that blacks had even more limited access to higher training.) As DuBois put it,

> no adequate common schools could be founded until there were teachers to teach them. Southern whites would not teach them. Northern whites in sufficient numbers could not be had. If the Negro was to learn he must teach himself, and the most effective help that could be given him was the establishment of schools to train Negro teachers. This conclusion was slowly but surely reached by every student of the situation until simultaneously, in widely separated regions, without consultation or systematic plan, there arose a series of institutions designed to furnish teachers for the untaught.
>
> Above the sneers of the critics at the obvious defects of this procedure must ever stand its one crushing rejoinder: in a single generation they put thirty thousand black teachers in the South; they wiped out the illiteracy of the majority of the black people of the land …[24]

The phenomenon of black teacher training was unequivocally related to racial uplift, as DuBois stressed. But it was, of course, simultaneously constrained and shaped by the more general context of American racism which, while it grudgingly allowed black people to become teachers for other blacks, also limited their professional choices to that arena. The paradox of black teacher training was that it fostered racial uplift by advancing the cause of black education but simultaneously took on the racist contours imposed upon it by a white supremacist culture.[25]

Teaching was the primary profession open to blacks through the mid-twentieth century. Training for other professions such as medicine and law was restricted by an array of formidable hurdles: the paucity of black schools that could provide graduate and professional education and of white schools that would accept black students; the poor quality of lower-level black schools that in turn did not train most students adequately for the few graduate and professional schools to which they did have access; and white society's hostility to black professionals, who were understood to have entered professions only to serve in their segregated world. Because alternate professional opportunities for blacks were so limited, Negro colleges largely became teachers' colleges. As of 1938, more than 60 percent of black college graduates entered professions tied to lower school education.[26] It is in this national context that we must understand the local particulars of Wilberforce's history as well as the social functions of its American literature curriculum.

## NATIONAL IDEOLOGIES OF NEGRO EDUCATION

Payne and his staff struggled to establish Wilberforce as a viable, respectable, and serious institution of higher education. Negro institutions often tried to establish themselves by emulating white models and adjusting to white educational standards, but they had little access to how white institutions actually operated internally. According to Frank Bowles and Frank A. DeCosta

> There were no common guidelines for white and Negro schools. The teachers were trained in different institutions. The standards and requirements were determined internally and separately within each system. There were no cross-overs of administration, teachers, or pupils. The white system was all white, and the Negro system was all Negro. It is true that at some point in the government hierarchy there was to be found a person such as the state superintendent of schools, who had nominal responsibility for both systems, but in practice even this responsibility was delegated to a functionary. The consequence

of this practice was that the Negro system, without contact with the rest of the educational system, had to develop itself according to what it could see of that system. In so doing, it tended to copy visible aspects of the white procedures, such as the announced program of studies and formal requirements, academic ceremonies, athletic events, and social activities – without knowledge as to the internal workings of the system.[27]

The efforts of black schools to establish themselves on the white models mostly hidden from them were thus not only Herculean but also Sisyphean. The result was that they tended to develop as what Bowles and DeCosta call "distorted mirror images" of white schools.[28]

We can see the Wilberforce administration's frantic efforts to keep up with rapidly changing educational trends by copying visible aspects of white school procedures. The various institutional divisions at Wilberforce changed with dramatic and bewildering frequency in its early decades, a sign of its attempts to organize itself according to national models of university behavior, albeit while educating a mostly lower-level student body. A "Sub-Academic Department" covered elementary-school studies roughly equivalent to seventh and eighth grade; the "Academic Department" provided 3 years of roughly secondary studies; and the "Classical" and the "Scientific" Departments provided two different college programs. While struggling to teach a student body that remained mostly elementary in nature, Payne also opened Theological, Law, and Normal Departments.[29]

In addition to the difficulties of trying to model themselves on white institutions to which they had no access, black institutions were usually chronically poor. Wilberforce's existence was constantly threatened by poverty stemming both from lack of endowment and from scant enrollment. The library was inadequately stocked. In 1885, a university publication reported that the library lacked "the best known writers of today, or even of yesterday. Think of a library without Chaucer, Bacon, Milton, DeFoe, Addison, Burns, Cowper, Dickens, Carlyle, George Elliot [sic], Longfellow, Emerson and many others we could mention."[30] Problems with attracting and retaining faculty would beleaguer the institution for decades, in part because of chronic difficulties keeping up with payroll.

The most dramatic turn in the institution's history occurred in 1887 when Wilberforce President William Mitchell and Sarah Bierce, a white teacher of pedagogy, approached the state of Ohio for funding. According to DuBois, Mitchell and Bierce made a persuasive appeal: Ohio, they told the state, "needed teachers for its colored children. These students had a

right to attend the white schools but they seldom did. The State helped."[31] The result was legislation, passed in 1887, under which Ohio made an annual appropriation to Wilberforce specifically for normal and industrial education.[32] The law created a new branch of the university called the College Normal & Industrial Department (CN&I). Wilberforce described the division as "destined to become the great centre in the North for Normal and Industrial training for colored youth."[33] According to DuBois, "the state tolerated the normal school so as to keep Negroes out of other state schools."[34] Furthermore, the Ohio legislation made CN&I a division "at" but not "of" Wilberforce, governed almost entirely by its own separate Board of Trustees. Financially, CN&I was completely supported by the state. Control of CN&I was thus taken almost entirely out of Wilberforce's hands and placed under the indirect authority of the state of Ohio.[35] The resources of CN&I in the coming decades would far outstrip those of the College Department.[36] This disjunction between different divisions of Wilberforce, both in educational orientation and in wealth, created a constant source of institutional tension. CN&I flourished and grew with its ample state funds; the College Department languished in poverty and with scant enrollment. The question of the legality of state aid to a religious institution also immediately arose, and continued to vex Wilberforce, CN&I, and the state of Ohio for years to come.

The ample state funding for CN&I juxtaposed with the languishing College Department is starkly legible in broader cultural terms. Whites disagreed sharply over the question of how freedmen would best be educated. Some believed that what was called "Negro ignorance" was innate and best addressed with rudimentary vocational education that would train blacks for the menial roles that suited them. Others saw "Negro ignorance" as a product of slavery and oppression and believed that the same curricula used to teach whites would benefit blacks as well.[37] William H. Watkins traces how these contrasting attitudes about blacks developed into competing curricula, including accommodationist and liberal education models.

The "accommodationist curriculum orientation" or "Hampton-Tuskegee" model emphasized vocational training, physical and manual labor, character building, and racial subservience.[38] Its institutional emblems were Hampton Institute and Tuskegee Industrial Institute. Hampton was chartered by the state of Virginia in 1870 with two specific goals: to instruct youth in agriculture and the mechanic arts and to train them to teach. For its first 25 years it was essentially a normal school preparing teachers for work in the black South. Even most of the graduates of the

agricultural course became teachers rather than farmers. Its better-known second phase, called the "Hampton Idea," emerged in the mid-1890s. This ideology held that Negro education should stress industrial and trade work. Tuskegee Industrial Institute, an institutional descendant of Hampton, opened in 1881 under the direction of former slave and Hampton student Booker T. Washington. Tuskegee trained teachers who in turn staffed black agricultural institutions, while still others founded their own schools.[39] Tuskegee and Hampton reiterated in the world of race-restricted education what Mount Holyoke Female Seminary had accomplished in the world of gender restriction.

The hegemonic ideology of industrial education held that black students were not suited to alternate curricula. Curricula "equivalent" to those taught to whites, in this way of thinking, would unfit blacks for the subordinate roles that best suited them and, worse, would make them believe themselves equal. In the educational landscape of this time, it was the liberal curriculum that was understood to represent curricular equality. According to Watkins, the liberal curriculum both focused on standard academics rather than training for menial labor and "assumed Blacks learned by the same modality as Whites," a threatening assumption.[40] White opponents held that blacks were incapable of mastering the liberal arts anyway and so need not be considered as their potential students. Opinion was only divided as to whether this black incapacity was a function of innate inferiority or cultural primitivism.[41] Etymologically, the phrase "liberal arts" comes from the Latin *artes liberales*, designating those studies worthy of a free man. Those were definitely not the studies that American culture wanted to offer its African-American population. Watkins' model illuminates why the state of Ohio would generously fund a program of normal and industrial education for blacks but not one that stressed liberal college training. CN&I would provide black teachers for black students, keep blacks out of white schools, and focus the black curriculum on normal and industrial training, where it – and they – belonged.

The vocationally oriented accommodationists, led by Tuskegee and Hampton, drew a great deal of white philanthropic support from the North. White philanthropic agencies and the federal and state governments often supported industrial education for blacks as their true path to success. These ample monies were concertedly and strategically *not* donated to collegiate programs or liberal arts institutions. As Raymond Wolters notes, the insistent focus on industrial education for blacks that emerged in the late nineteenth century was one sign of "the new power

realities" that restored white supremacy after Reconstruction. The "special vocational curriculum" for blacks was especially powerful between 1880 and the 1920s.[42] DuBois described a "design of rich and intelligent people, and particularly by those who masquerade as the Negroes' 'friends,'" to keep blacks in ignorance. This movement, he wrote, "masquerades as industrial and vocational training in an age which is preeminently industrial and busy. It is thus difficult for the average colored man to descry its persistent and tremendous dangers to our ultimate survival as a race and as American citizens."[43] Other black educators also advocated liberal arts education rather than vocational education, arguing that the latter led only to serving as manual laborers and semiskilled craftsmen.[44] The function of liberal arts education, in contrast, was to train the student's mind and tastes in a well-rounded fashion that would prepare him for the learned professions.[45] The educational semiotic of industrial education assured white hegemony that black students would not learn beyond their place.

DuBois noted that including the word "industrial" in CN&I's name "lured the support of the followers of the rising Booker T. Washington," tapping into this national educational masquerade.[46] Wilberforce was trapped: its best chance to raise itself out of marginalization and poverty was to embrace an ideology of Negro education that was committed to preserving the racist contours of American society.

## COMPETING CURRICULA AT WILBERFORCE

The development of CN&I versus what was called "the College Department" at Wilberforce – or, put another way, the program for normal and industrial training versus the program for collegiate training in the liberal arts – evidences at a single institution the broader national battle between competing models of black education. The ways in which American literature appeared in each curriculum exemplifies my larger argument about its curricular identity as an index to other cultural values in flux. Chapters 1 and 2 argued that American literature's "inferiority" was a function of its curricular identity in the school system, specifically of its affiliations with socially inferior schools, student populations, and teachers. The reclamations of the 1920s repudiated and recast this curricular identity. American literature's emergence at Wilberforce is part of this unwritten prehistory of the field. There, the subject specifically served the social function of training black teachers for black students in lower-level schools and thus its inferiority took a racialized form.

The educational goals and curricular offerings in the College Department and CN&I stood in stark contrast. In 1897–98, College Department offerings included standard collegiate fare such as Latin, Greek, Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Logic, Chemistry, and Astronomy.[47] That same year, CN&I offered instruction in Business, Plain Sewing and Dressmaking, Printing, Carpentry, Cooking, Voice Culture, and Drawing.[48] While the College Department was short on students and funds, CN&I thrived with both substantial enrollments and substantial state monies. Wilberforce's presidents as well as the students themselves repeatedly lamented that the College Department did not attract enough students. When DuBois arrived in 1894, he found that most of the student body "was in high school grades and poorly equipped for study. But filtering into the small college department were a few men and women of first-class intelligence, able and eager to work."[49] Records of student enrollment a few years later show ninety students enrolled in the advanced elementary grades; twenty-five in secondary studies; and thirty-seven in the College Department: thus lower-level students outnumbered college-level students at a ratio of roughly three to one.[50] Like Wilberforce, other black colleges typically retained preparatory departments that outpaced their college-level enrollments until at least 1895.[51]

When he became president in 1908, Scarborough tried to inaugurate a "new era" of liberal education against the current of national imperatives, as well as against the local tide at Wilberforce itself, to train blacks vocationally. In 1910, he wrote:

> The competition is great and Wilberforce is the sufferer because other institutions are better equipped and better maintained as they have more money. In this State where the schools are mixed many students we ought to have do not come to us but go to the mixed schools because of the advantages. The first thing we ought to do is build up a distinctively College Department and secure as many College students as possible. This means an outlay for better equipment, for if they find that we are not as thoroughly equipped as other institutions and that they can get just as good or better for the money elsewhere, they will not stay with us. And further, Wilberforce has won its way in the world, has made its mark and is known, and it is for us to take hold of this work with determination and zeal and make it the Literary center, not only of the A.M.E. Church, but as the oldest school, the Literary center of the Negro people, at least the United States.[52]

Scarborough's zeal to build a real College Department and a "Literary center of the Negro people" was up against the money and power committed to limiting blacks to vocational education.

We see similar conflicts over the relative status of vocational and liberal arts education at other institutions. In 1918, the new white president of Howard University, James Stanley Durkee, reorganized Howard's academic structure. He eliminated the preparatory division to upgrade Howard's academic status. He also divided the College of Liberal Arts into a junior college for freshman and sophomores and an array of separate senior schools for divisions such as education and public health, stressing that undergraduates would be best served by a new programmatic focus on future occupations. One of the effects of the reorganization was to divide the previously large College of Liberal Arts into a number of weaker divisions. The chairman of the English Department resigned in protest, accusing Durkee of participating in the longstanding racist program to restrict black curricula to vocational training.[53] Elsewhere, Richard R. Wright was forced to resign from the presidency of Georgia State Industrial School in 1921 for defying the Tuskegee model. He quipped that he had been told to "cut this Latin out and teach these boys to farm."[54]

Black normal schools ran into similar obstacles when they attempted to train teachers in liberal rather than accommodationist curricula. The federal government's second Morrill Act of 1890 required that land-grant monies fund black education, for which the first Morrill Act of 1862 had not provided. Ironically, the new provision in favor of black education produced palpable negative effects in the arena it was supposed to improve. State governments in some cases used the money to transform academic black colleges into vocational schools, using the second Morrill Act as legal ground, since the spirit of Morrill was to cultivate agricultural and mechanical education. For example, in 1896, Florida's state superintendent of public instruction criticized Florida's State Normal College for Colored Students, a liberal arts teacher training school, for its "obvious inattention to agricultural and industrial training." The president of the school, Thomas de Saille Tucker, hoped to avoid changing his liberal arts curriculum in response to these pressures. Strategically, he changed the name of the school instead, to the State Normal and Industrial College for Negroes, and later to Florida Agricultural and Mechanical College.[55] Tucker finally resigned under pressure in 1901; the next president, Nathan B. Young, continued to work quietly to develop an academic curriculum. He, too, encountered suspicions. One of Florida A&M's trustees worried that such education might lead to "social equality." "To be educated like a white man begets a desire to be like a white man," he pointed out.[56]

Other states and schools also hindered black normal training in liberal arts in favor of accommodationist normal curricula. The same year Scarborough called for a "new era" of liberal education at Wilberforce, the Kentucky Colored State Teachers' Association voted to develop a college department at the publicly supported Kentucky State Normal School for Colored Persons. It took 13 long years to bring that mandated college department into being. According to John A. Hardin, the delay was ideologically rooted in the firmly held notion that liberal arts education suggested aspirations beyond those to which blacks were entitled.[57] The ideological flashpoint in these cases was that of curricular models: which curriculum would black teachers carry with them into black schools to new generations of black students? At this point in the history of American education, the "liberal arts" curriculum implied social empowerment.[58]

The impoverished and underenrolled College Department at Wilberforce was a cultural ledger for struggles like these across the nation. In 1909, as Scarborough was trying to inaugurate the new era in collegiate and literary studies, Wilberforce had enrolled 60 students at the secondary level and 48 in the advanced elementary grades, while CN&I boasted 105 normal and 292 industrial students. Meanwhile, the total number of college students was a meager 18.[59] We can now turn to where American literature fit within this larger curricular story.

## AMERICAN LITERATURE EMERGES: THE NORMAL DEPARTMENT

The fact that Wilberforce was engaged in so many different types of simultaneous training, both in level and in curricular model, affords an opportunity to watch diverse programs operating side by side and to see how American literature figured in this complex ideological equation. American literature first appeared in the Wilberforce curriculum not in the College Department but in the Normal Department: in other words, not in the college curriculum modeled on a form of white education associated with social aspiration but in a lower curriculum suitable for Negroes who would go on to teach others of their race. At this point the Normal Department admitted grade school graduates. Like many other normal schools of the age, it was the rough equivalent of a secondary program.[60]

The first American literature class was a 1908–09 class called "American Authors," taught as the first unit in the four-year Normal English

course. The subsequent units studied English authors beginning with Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakespeare, moving chronologically up through Milton, Pope, and Addison, Gray, Cowper, Goldsmith, Wordsworth, Burns, Coleridge, and Scott, and concluding with an "exhaustive study of Tennyson." The final class in the four-year course, required of all seniors, reviewed English literature and pedagogy.[61] As in other curricula we have considered so far, the Wilberforce normal curriculum presented American works first, as elementary to the more advanced work in English history and literature to follow.

American literature pedagogy was distinct from that of English literature not only in level but also in method, and here too Wilberforce was typical of broader cultural definitions of American literature. The English literature classes stressed "literary form," particular authors, and "great" works (Tennyson's "great elegiac poems read and compared"); the American literature course concerned itself primarily with "selections, themes; correlation with history."[62] English literature studies began with a review of English history and language, then moved on to center in the concept of greatness (great authors, great works, great forms) while American literature centered in themes and historical context, never making it past the introductory level to work with the concept of "greatness" at all.[63] Baym has demonstrated more generally that American literary history textbooks between 1882 and 1912 "attempted to configure American literature to serve the aims of American public education: forming character and ensuring patriotism," of particular utility with a burgeoning immigrant population.[64] American literature pedagogy at Wilberforce programmed civic-mindedness in another socially marginal population, especially instrumental from the standpoint of social reproduction, since this population would move as teachers into black schools.

American literature was thus an introductory part of secondary-level normal studies at Wilberforce by 1907. During these years, the Principal of the Normal Department, who also served as Professor of English and Pedagogics there, was Sarah C. Bierce Scarborough, the same pedagogy teacher who made the successful pitch to the state of Ohio that led to the founding of CN&I. She added "Scarborough" to her name when she married her colleague William Sanders Scarborough, who later became President.[65] (For ease of reference, I will continue to refer to her henceforth by her maiden name "Bierce" and to her spouse as "Scarborough.") Her role in the normal curriculum at Wilberforce suggests that she was the driving force behind the shape of its literature component as well, in both English and American literature.[66]

While there is no extant record of the content of the American Authors class, the fact that the content of the English literature curriculum was thoroughly standard for the period suggests that the American selections were likely to have been similarly standard. The foci in the Normal English course on medieval and Renaissance literature, romantic and nature poetry, and Tennyson represented a brand of taste typical of American literary and school culture dating back to the 1890s. Tennyson in particular had broad currency in this period across the curriculum in English. As English studies branched out from philological courses, especially in the 1890s, studies of Tennyson show up in course catalogues over and over again. The canonical Tennyson at that time was the author of *Idylls of the King* and "The Princess"; his thematic interest in King Arthur and the historical age on which the philological method concentrated made him a crossover author, one who provided a bridge from the high era of philology into a new period in which literary history was ascendant.[67] Similarly, standard American literature curricula at this time covered the colonial period through Longfellow and Bryant, with special attention to such authors as Irving, Poe, Hawthorne, and Emerson, and placed their pedagogical focus on biographical and historical facts.

Bierce, one of only a few white people on the Wilberforce faculty, had been educated in the world of teacher training.[68] She had studied at Oswego State Normal and Training School, was then Principal of Lewis High School in Macon, Georgia for a year, and joined the Wilberforce faculty in 1877 as "Principal of Normal Department and Instructor in French and Natural Sciences." She remained Principal of the Normal Department until 1914, but her teaching areas shifted from French and Natural Sciences to Pedagogics and English. In this regard, her teaching career was that of the prototypical pre-professional who taught a variety of subjects and sometimes changed areas from year to year. She was the kind of female teacher that, after the research model transformed higher education, Mount Holyoke had to push to become specialized via graduate training. Both of Bierce's graduate degrees, an M.Pd. and a Litt. D., were honorary degrees awarded by Wilberforce, in 1893 and 1909, respectively. These were instances of "irregular promotion" typical of this professionally transitional period.[69]

At the time of her hire, Bierce's title was "Instructor," a title that remained consistent in all the university records produced through 1885. But in 1915 Wilberforce rewrote its own history, changing her title for this entire period to "Professor," as if she had held that title all along.[70] The university's retroactive change in her title repositioned her status,

bolstered her credentials (which were in fact outdated), and supported the university's need to claim a professional teaching staff (which it in fact mostly could not hire because of market constraints). The manipulation of Bierce's title recalls the era of transitional titles at Mount Holyoke circa 1900, when the school mixed its models between old and new conceptions of the adequate teacher to mimic national professional behaviors. Wilberforce was rewriting school history as part of its more general efforts to upgrade its status in the world of higher education.

As we have seen in earlier cases, American literature's institutional identity at Wilberforce was thus also tied to a female teacher, specifically a female teacher of pedagogy. Further, it was a knowledge product purveyed to a non-elite student population (in this case, secondary-level black students) by a woman who had inferior status in the knowledge economy. These students were themselves being trained to teach other lower-level black students in black schools. Although, from one perspective, American literature's place in the curriculum in the early twentieth century thus served the socially progressive cause of black education, it did so in a way that simultaneously reiterated the hegemonic shape of American racism. Its curricular space in a normal rather than a liberal arts program served the accommodationist program of restricted education for blacks in a segregated society.

## AMERICAN LITERATURE MOVES UP

Before American literature moved from the normal to the collegiate curriculum at Wilberforce, it first moved up in level, from secondary to post-secondary, within the normal curriculum itself. Since its long-standing identity as an elementary subject (of the kind Scudder extolled) was a key part of its image problem, moving up in level was essential to its eventual change in status. In 1910, William A. Joiner, a Wilberforce graduate of the class of 1888, became the new superintendent of CN&I, coming to Wilberforce from his position as Director of the Teachers' Training School at Howard University.[71] A controversial superintendent, Joiner pitted the normal and industrial divisions of CN&I against each other, drastically cutting the industrial course and building the normal course to turn CN&I into a degree-granting teachers' college.[72] Many black colleges followed this institutional path to adapt to their social constraints in the world of American education. The fact that black colleges became teachers' colleges was a product of the white hegemonic system that excluded blacks from other professions; yet whatever its

political compromises, normal training at least suggested, as industrial education did not, an aspiration to be educated beyond socially menial roles.[73]

As Joiner inaugurated these changes in the institutional identity of CN&I, he expanded and diversified the Normal Department. He offered a new two-year post-secondary course, turning teacher training at Wilberforce into higher education at last.[74] Nationally, the idea that teachers required professional training had begun to grow after 1880. Eventually, normal schools, which had a reputation for low admission standards, would be entirely replaced by departments of pedagogics and other university-based programs that gave teacher training a more professional aura and credential.[75] Joiner's upgrade to the Normal Program was an interim stage in this larger historical process of increased credentialization for teachers. Whereas the normal curriculum was previously pursued by students who had just completed eighth grade, and who in many cases would go on from four years or fewer of post-grade-school study to become teachers themselves, now Wilberforce both required and provided advanced study.

DuBois called Joiner a "splendid executive" and praised him for the changes at CN&I.[76] He noted that the work of the Normal Department had been raised so that a full high school course was required for entry to it; the teaching force had been strengthened and salaries increased; and generous state monies supported an impressive physical plant. "Probably the most advanced step taken by any Negro school or college is the new plan of Wilberforce Normal and Industrial Department to pay all teachers for eleven months and require the teachers, when not needed for the summer work, to attend some school or institution for self-improvement," he wrote. He titled his article "The New Wilberforce" because in it he juxtaposed the thriving CN&I department under Joiner (the "new Wilberforce") and the rest of the school, languishing from poverty (the "old Wilberforce"). DuBois chided the AME Church to make the other divisions at Wilberforce a partner worthy of the state-supported CN&I. He summed up Wilberforce's position in the history of Negro education:

> The influence of Wilberforce, old and new, on the mental, social and moral welfare of the colored race not only of Ohio but of the whole world is incalculable. Ten thousand students have received training at Wilberforce. Five hundred teachers have gone forth into every state and into all lands to uplift the race, many are teachers in and presidents of other colleges, some are professional men, and hundreds are splendid mechanics, due to industrial training at Wilberforce.[77]

President Scarborough was incensed by DuBois' article and accused him of "a malicious desire to strike the college department in particular, to belittle what it has done and injure its standing and work for higher education," to which DuBois replied, "If any reader of THE CRISIS can discover in the before-mentioned article anything calculated to make an otherwise mild professor of Greek tear his hair and 'cuss,' we will gladly give him a year's subscription to THE CRISIS."[78] By upholding CN&I as a model, DuBois had touched a longstanding sore spot at Wilberforce: the weak College Department.

Scarborough's vitriolic response showed his fear that DuBois' criticism of Wilberforce's divisions outside CN&I would hurt his efforts to improve collegiate education for blacks. In fact, Scarborough opposed Joiner's plan to convert CN&I into a teachers' college because he feared that a strong institution of that kind would siphon off students from enrolling in the collegiate programs, further weakening liberal education at Wilberforce and finally overwhelming the rest of the institution.[79] By 1920, when both Joiner and Scarborough were dismissed due to a welter of internal political battles, enrollment in the normal curriculum (which was tuition-free, thanks to generous state dollars) had risen dramatically. The student body was 50 percent larger at CN&I than at the rest of Wilberforce University.[80] At this point enrollment at CN&I was second only to Howard University among black colleges.[81]

The change in the status of normal training at Wilberforce brought with it a change for American literature, which also now rose to a more advanced level. The level at which subjects are taught is part of their intellectual status; in the present case, American literature rose in status for reasons that had nothing to do with its canon or with its content at all. It rose simply because normal education itself was rising in level. Institutional and programmatic factors created a particular level and function for American literature, to which the curriculum then adapted. At the same time, even as American literature moved up in level along with normal training, it retained its social function to train black teachers for black students in lower-level schools. The new post-secondary class in American literature was in fact taught alongside normal classes in "Manual Training," a trenchant reminder of the curricular climate in this program.[82] At this historical point at this particular institution, American literature was simply not a liberal art.

What had been the standard "American Authors" course at the secondary level now became a post-secondary required course in Normal

English called "American Literature." It came after "Grammar and Rhetoric" and before "Survey of English Literature," once again the typical course progression from American to English literature at colleges and universities in this period.[83] We have a record of the class method but not its content: the topic is to be "Surveyed, and literary material selected which may be correlated with other subjects in the grades." The "Survey of English Literature" that followed as a more advanced course was focused instead on "masterpieces."[84] This structure reiterated the assumptions of the previous lower-level American Authors class. Bierce's motive for offering American literature in the Normal course all along was likely that of keeping Wilberforce's Normal training as close to national trends in secondary education as possible.

We have seen that Hopkins kept American literature studies out of its undergraduate and graduate courses while the subject thrived in its College Courses for Teachers. Similarly, at Wilberforce, American literature was introduced into the curriculum by way of the Normal Department at a time when the subject had no curricular place in the College Department. In this regard, Wilberforce was also operating as a mirror of white institutions.[85] But unlike a school such as Hopkins, at Wilberforce the Normal division was part of the richest and most populous unit at the university, so American literature studies was being taught not at the institution's margins but at its center. In turn, the thriving Normal Program at Wilberforce was nevertheless a marginalized place in the broader world of American education. The ideologies behind competing curricula for blacks and the strategic placement of state dollars to fund socially restricted forms of education add up to a paradoxical lesson: in the case of Wilberforce University, American literature's curricular vitality was a sign of its socially reproductive and marginalizing functions.

## HURDLES TO THE "LIBERAL ARTS"

American literature's first curricular identity at Wilberforce as one tied to "Normal & Industrial" training was institutionally and ideologically distinct from the "liberal arts" identity of subjects taught in the College Department. As this study has stressed, curricular identities are not transhistorical; they are historically variable and imbricated in complex local and institutional contexts. American literature is, of course, not inherently either a normal or a collegiate liberal arts subject, but could be made to do the ideological work of either. At Wilberforce, American

literature began with the first identity and acquired the second later, in the 1910s.

As we have seen, liberal arts education for blacks at the national level was limited and politically controversial. Locally, Wilberforce's desire to become a center for collegiate liberal arts studies ran into chronic ideological hurdles that its explicitly vocational programs, including the normal program, did not encounter. At CN&I, American literature was a regular part of an active, well-funded, institutionally thriving program. It moved up in level and expanded there as part of the increasingly professionalized world of teacher training. Meanwhile, its new liberal arts identity in the College Department hit hurdles that were also encountered at other schools attempting to provide liberal-arts training to black students.

The history of American literature as a liberal art at Wilberforce is distinct from what we have encountered in other cases, for reasons related to its particular institutional location at a black school. In its collegiate English offerings, Wilberforce mirrored white schools to the extent that it could. American literature's relatively minimal but stable place in the Wilberforce curriculum after about 1915 replicated the kind of curriculum that had become routine at Mount Holyoke 15 years earlier. Yet the institutional situation for English as a whole was entirely different than at Hopkins or Mount Holyoke. Among this broader group of institutions, it was only at Wilberforce that the whole enterprise of collegiate English, including American literature, was at risk because of its identity as a liberal art. The American literature liberal arts curriculum at Wilberforce was thus triply marginalized: within collegiate English, where it played a comparatively minimal role; as part of collegiate English, as compared to the vocational Normal Department; and within the national scene of education and employment, which made little place for black liberal arts graduates.

One of the biggest hurdles to liberal arts subjects at Wilberforce was the increasingly powerful phenomenon of college accreditation. While there was no official federal taxonomy of certified colleges in the United States at this time, other kinds of standardizing bodies, including voluntary organizations, state departments of education, church boards of control, and educational foundations entered the accreditation business.[86] As Veysey points out, the history of the university in the United States can be usefully divided at about 1890. In the pre-1890 era, the central battle about the new university was that of its basic purpose. Widespread public indifference to the new university phenomenon enabled a period

of experimentation and freedom, producing institutions with genuinely alternative educational missions and practices. After 1890, departments and degrees achieved a measure of stability, and disputes centered instead on academic administration and command.[87] After 1900 in particular, institutions became increasingly standardized. The emergence of standardizing bodies that would accredit "real" colleges and universities was one sign of this accelerating institutional cohesion.

At Wilberforce, the impact of these national processes of external certification was profound. University literature shows that school leadership urgently attempted to achieve accreditation by the new national bodies, which rejected Wilberforce repeatedly for its failure to live up to current definitions of a real university. In 1914, for example, Wilberforce redesigned its admissions standards for all divisions in response to a report by the National Education Association.[88] Wilberforce administrators stressed that accreditation was necessary to institutional survival.[89]

In this struggle to conform to national standards, both the Dean of the College and President Scarborough repeatedly stressed the pressing necessity of hiring professors in English in particular. As Scarborough put it in 1909,

> The Carnegie Foundation and Educators generally, are fixed upon what a College should be, or the least number of professors that an institution should have – that is, professors devoting their entire time to the work of their chairs – before it can be recognized as a college. We *must* have six acting professors here and as many chairs, and we cannot afford to cut down below this.[90]

Furthermore, these professors could not be professors on the pre-professional model; they must, Scarborough specified, "devote their entire time to the work of their department. Any less than that prevents the institution from being recognized by the College Association as a reputable College." Scarborough wanted to hire professors in Mathematics, Greek, Latin, Science, Political Science and History, Modern Languages, Literature or English, and Philosophy.[91] As Scarborough's remarks about "professors devoting their entire time to the work of their chairs" indicate, Wilberforce's academic credibility hinged on shifting from the pre-professional model still in operation there to the professional order of the expert that had increasingly become the national standard after 1900.

Hiring a professor of English was a challenge for several reasons. First, Wilberforce mimicked the institutional culture of higher education that often shut women out of its professorial ranks, even as it simultaneously struggled desperately to fill the slot of English "professor." But historically,

Wilberforce had gendered its English instructional staff as female. During the nineteenth century, there was never a "professor" of English at Wilberforce. All the "teachers" and "instructors" in the subject were female and were so titled instead. In fact, the English teachers were typically the only females on the entire teaching staff. The few female teachers in the College Department outside their institutional place in English taught soft subjects: Instrumental Music, Drawing, and Oil Painting. The cultural legibility of this situation was that Wilberforce retained the construction of English as a feminine field more than two decades beyond the point at which philology masculinized English in the broader culture of higher education, circa 1880.[92]

So Wilberforce had to catch up once again, this time under the double pressure to hire a "Professor" in English and also to find a man to fill that role when the local school culture had always staffed English exclusively with women. Wilberforce met this institutional necessity by moving a male teacher from another field into the English slot. The first English "professor" at Wilberforce was also thus its first male teacher of the subject: Edward A. Clarke, A.M., moved in 1907–08 from his position as "Professor of Sciences" to "Professor of English and Instructor in Physical Science."[93] Like Bierce, Clarke was a college professor on the pre-professional model, without an advanced degree and still covering multiple fields. His Master's degree was an honorary one awarded by Wilberforce in 1893, the same year Bierce was awarded her M.A. Honorary Master of Arts degrees in particular were still rampantly awarded in the United States during those years to make faculty look better trained.[94] Wilberforce was still steeped in a world of pre-professional teachers in a culture of higher education where that model was increasingly obsolete.

Clarke did not last long. He resigned under hostile circumstances in 1910 and sued the University for back pay "of some years," a function of the school's problem with chronic poverty outside the CN&I division.[95] Wilberforce hired Hallie Q. Brown, formerly an Elocution teacher at Tuskegee, in 1911 as "Instructor in English and Elocution."[96] She was the sole member of the collegiate instructional faculty in English. Brown had degrees of S.B. and S.M. awarded by Wilberforce in 1873 and 1890, respectively.[97] Her degree credentials were no less substantial than Clarke's had been, but she was female, and Wilberforce simply did not classify women as "professor" in the College Department. Male faculty usually received the title "professor," however, regardless of whether they had post-collegiate degrees; the title was a form of professional prestige

available only to men.[98] With Clarke's resignation, Wilberforce was once again without a "Professor" of English.

The new dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Gilbert Haven Jones, put himself in the job of Chair of Philosophy and English as an interim measure.[99] Jones was an alumnus of Wilberforce who received a Ph.D. in Germany in 1909. Since he was the first English professor at Wilberforce with the doctorate, his appointment represented substantial professional progress. Jones moved quickly to build the program. "In our efforts to keep pace with the educational movements of the country it has been found advisable to add some courses to the college work," he reported, stressing additions to English in particular, as Scarborough had done.[100] Previously, Wilberforce had offered only one college-level English course, required of sophomores, in which "A text-book on the History of English Literature (Painter's) is used and the Library is made a Laboratory for research work."[101] When Jones took over in 1914–15, English offerings increased from one to eight classes in a single year.[102] Half of the new course offerings were classes in composition and debate. The other four were literature classes: two genre classes, "Sociology of Literature" ("a study of the social forces in literature"), and one Old English class (which suited Jones' German Ph.D.).[103] The first college-level American literature class entered the curriculum in 1915–16: "The Short Story in American Literature," including "stories by Irving, Hawthorne, Poe, Mary Wilkins, Bret Harte, Cable, James and others."[104]

The course catalogue appears more ample than the above list would suggest, but only because it combined collegiate with secondary-level classes. Wilberforce still mixed the classes and instructors of the preparatory department with those of the college. In 1917, in an effort to keep up with national standards that insisted upon distinguishing lower- from higher-level grades, the Wilberforce administration separated its secondary-level and college-level English classes and instructors entirely. Although the separation addressed national accreditation standards, it simultaneously left the College Department "sorely in need" of teachers, especially in English. Jones himself took over the college-level classes entirely, having lost all the other instructors to the secondary and normal divisions.[105]

As it was struggling to structure and staff its instructional divisions according to increasingly standardized national models, Wilberforce was trying to catch up with the culture of the research model in other ways at the same time. Across the landscape of higher education, Annual Reports of the President were a standard administrative vehicle for lauding the

research productivity of faculty; in 1915, the same year that Jones took over English, the Wilberforce Annual Report mentions faculty research and publication for the first time. Scarborough notes that "one of our number, Chaplain Steward[,] has issued a book this year on the Haytian [sic] Revolution which shows most creditable investigation. A Faculty Club has also been organized for discussion and to encourage study and research."[106] We saw in Chapter 2 how Mount Holyoke and the other women's colleges made efforts in the late nineteenth century to adapt to the changing culture of higher education. Lagging about two decades behind Mount Holyoke and four decades behind Hopkins, Wilberforce was in 1915 making its initial efforts toward adapting to that new model. Scarborough reported in 1915, "We are standardizing our work as fast as we can."[107]

CN&I was way ahead of the College Department in meeting the norms for accreditation. In 1915, the State of Ohio accredited the Normal Department, entailing reciprocity with thirty-four other states. "After the plans for the standardization of our work in the College are fully completed and certain re-adjustments are made, graduates of the College courses, Classical and Scientific, may have similar recognition," President Scarborough hoped.[108] CN&I continued to thrive on state appropriations, receiving another large sum in 1915 for current expenses, new buildings, and general improvements.[109]

But Scarborough's hope was misplaced. Terrible news was ahead for the College of Arts and Sciences. The Phelps–Stokes Fund and the U.S. Bureau of Education conducted a survey of Negro education, published in 1916, that rated Wilberforce as badly managed and ineffective. DuBois summarized the ideology of this report overall as one holding that "Negro education directed by Negroes was a failure and that Negro education to succeed must be directed by white people."[110] Its temper was that collegiate education for blacks should be curtailed and vocational education should be stressed instead.[111] Indeed, the study opens with the words, "In making these recommendations only the promotion of the cause of the best and most practical education of all colored people for better living, civic righteousness, and industrial and economic efficiency has been kept in mind."[112] This ideology centered in "practical" and "industrial" education for "all colored people" helps to explain its review of the Wilberforce curriculum. It assessed "Wilberforce University" and the "Combined Normal and Industrial Department" as separate institutions, criticizing the first and lauding the second. It found the most populous college courses to be mathematics, English, Latin, Greek, German,

French, and Spanish, but recommends that "emphasis on languages and mathematics be not allowed to limit instruction in social and physical sciences and teacher training." It advises that the collegiate pupils "be encouraged "to take advantage of courses offered by the C.N. and I. Department and full credit be given these courses toward graduation."[113]

Meanwhile, it extols the vocational programs of CN&I, both the teacher training program and the industrial courses, where "boys receive manual training in carpentry, printing, plumbing, shoemaking, and engineering. Some instruction in agriculture is provided. The industrial course for girls includes sewing, cooking, millinery, and nurse training."[114] While the report rated Howard University and Fisk University, the two most distinguished black universities of the era, more favorably, the message to black schools remained clear. It directed Howard to make its entrance requirements for college courses recognize "such important subjects as social studies, teacher-training, scientific agriculture, manual arts, and household economics," and further directed that teacher training should "receive increasing emphasis in the plans of the University." Fisk was told to make "increased provision" for "teacher training, manual training, and the theory and practice of gardening." Meanwhile, the review of Tuskegee commented, "The genius of Booker T. Washington gave to the institution world-wide fame as the exponent both of the educational value of manual labor and the correlation of academic subjects with industrial training" – some of the most effusive language in the report.[115]

DuBois called the educational director of the Phelps-Stokes Fund and author of the report, Thomas Jesse Jones, "that evil genius of the Negro race."[116] As Watkins points out, Jones was an accommodationist, and his "approval meant funding, hence life," for accommodationist curricula.[117] DuBois later used a revealing metaphor for the best way to silence black independent thinkers: "'Keep still!' or the Phelps-Stokes Fund will get you."[118] For Wilberforce, Jones's disapproval meant another blow for collegiate liberal arts studies.[119] The fact that CN&I won accreditation and thrived while the liberal arts college at the same institution languished without philanthropic or state support created a climate of poverty that was only in part financial.[120]

## FORWARD AND BACKWARD

In this climate of constant institutional struggle to validate collegiate studies, Jones successfully hired a "Professor" of English to replace him in 1918. Charles Eaton Burch, who took an A.B. at Wilberforce in 1914 and

an A.M. at Columbia University in 1918, joined the Wilberforce faculty. He had held the position of Instructor in English at Tuskegee in 1915–16, at a time when Tuskegee was still a major national purveyor of industrial education that opposed liberal arts education.[121] Burch thus moved from teaching English as part of an industrial vocational curriculum to teaching English under the liberal arts rubric, but in an institution engaged in heavy competition with the alternate curricular model.

With Burch's hire, English course offerings shifted toward more literature classes. In addition to three composition classes, there were now five literature classes, including "A General Survey of English Literature," "The English Novel," "The Elizabethan Drama," "English Literature in the Eighteenth Century," and Wilberforce's first American literature survey course. Its description read: "American Literature: A Survey of American literature from the Colonial period to the present time. Textbook: Considerable reading of the literature." Unfortunately, no other records of the class survive. It is possible that Burch had studied American literature while he was at Columbia (professors at Columbia were the institutional force behind the production of the *Cambridge History of American Literature* [1917–21] while Burch was a student), but Columbia University records make it impossible to tell, so I must leave Burch's connection with American literature there at the level of surmise.[122]

While Burch did not have the Ph.D. as Jones did, he did have a regular rather than irregular Master's degree. Thus, he represented professional progress for college studies in its quest to meet national standards, although the Ph.D. would have been far preferable. Burch's colleagues in English were exclusively women of lesser rank, "Instructors" and the "Director of Secondary Training."[123] Wilberforce was keeping up with national trends by trying to build male professorial ranks in English while concentrating women's labor both at lower ranks and elsewhere in the educational field, particularly in high school teaching and training for such teaching.[124] Burch remained at Wilberforce for only 3 years, joining the English Department at Howard University in 1921, and going on to take a Ph.D. in English at The Ohio State University in 1933 with a dissertation entitled "The English Reputation of Daniel Defoe."[125] His thesis advisor at Ohio State was M.O. Percival; although Percival's field of expertise was British literature (he wrote a Harvard dissertation in 1914 called "Political Ballads Issued During the Administration of Sir Robert Walpole"), Percival would in 1950 publish *A Reading of Moby-Dick*. Burch and Percival thus shared an interest in American literature, although both pursued their primary scholarship in the British eighteenth

century. The connection between Burch and Percival was likely an epiphenomenon of American literature's pre-professional period, when the obstacles to graduate work often meant that scholars interested in the field came to it via roundabout pathways. When Burch joined the faculty at Howard in 1921, his teaching concentration remained British literature, although he did teach one of Howard's American literature classes, "American Prose and Poetry of Negro Life."[126]

Burch was replaced as Professor of English at Wilberforce by Frederick A. McGinnis, a longstanding teacher of printing there, one of the industrial branches. In 1919, McGinnis began teaching "Vocational English and Mathematics" in the secondary school division, then moved to the College, teaching English there by 1922.[127] His appointment as Professor of English to replace Columbia M.A. Burch represented a reversion to the pre-professional model in which teachers could move from one broad field to another with little or no specialized training.[128] As we saw in the case of Mount Holyoke, female instructors were under pressure to seek graduate training in the 1890s and later to adapt to new national standards. In moving to collegiate English, McGinnis needed additional training – yet he needed not just graduate training but even an undergraduate degree, which he still lacked. He had graduated from the Normal and Printing course at Wilberforce in 1903, which was the equivalent of a secondary program. In 1922, as he was moving into English teaching, he returned to school to take his baccalaureate degree, receiving a Ph.B. in Education at the University of Chicago. He then became "Professor" of English in 1923.[129] This meant that Wilberforce awarded him the title of "Professor" with only an undergraduate degree. Considering again the phenomenon of degree inflation, in this case we see a corollary phenomenon. In the universe of proliferating degrees, the "Ph.B.," although an undergraduate degree, conveniently echoed the "Ph.D." and thus rhetorically served as another kind of degree inflation. The ample number and kinds of degrees dating back to the nineteenth century made it difficult for all but insiders to recognize the entire range of degrees and exactly what each signified. Twenty years prior, William James had noted that

> Graduate schools are still something of a novelty, and higher diplomas something of a rarity. The latter, therefore, carry a vague sense of preciousness and honor, and have a particularly "up-to-date" appearance, and it is no wonder if smaller institutions, unable to attract professors already eminent, and forced usually to recruit their faculties from the relatively young, should hope to compensate for the obscurity of the names of their officers of instruction by the

abundance of decorative titles by which those names are followed on the pages of the catalogues where they appear. The dazzled reader of the list, the parent or student, says to himself, "This must be a terribly distinguished crowd, – their titles shine like the stars in the firmament; Ph.D.'s, S.D.'s, and Litt. D.'s, bespangle the page as if they were sprinkled over it from a pepper caster."

Two decades later, Wilberforce was struggling to adapt to the aftereffects of what James called "The Ph.D. Octopus."[130]

From the standpoint of University administration, Jones struggled to address the problem of training among the faculty. In 1925, he wrote:

> Many of the college teachers who function as heads of the departments are without the A.M. degree or its equivalent in graduate training. To function as such on a basis of standardization they must have this preparation. Apart from not employing any one else who has not the A.M. degree or its equivalent in training, in order to clear up the situation behind us, a time limit should be set within which all teachers who are heads of departments or full professors in the College of Liberal Arts should have such training.[131]

Thus Wilberforce was pushing its faculty toward the new models of professionalization that Johns Hopkins had insisted upon in 1876 and that other schools, like Mount Holyoke College, had made strenuous efforts to accommodate around 1900. In moving to require not even a Ph.D. but a Master's degree in 1925, Wilberforce was thus following broader educational trends a full quarter of a century later than Mount Holyoke and half a century later than Hopkins. Wilberforce began to require that Professors have Master's degrees in 1928.[132]

From Jones's Ph.D. to Burch's M.A. to McGinnis's Ph.B.: from the standpoint of national credentializing standards, Wilberforce was losing its battle to become the "Literary center of the Negro people." Its professional reversion when it hired McGinnis was part of the broader problem at black colleges of catching up with the research culture of expertise. For example, as of 1923, five instructors at Georgia State Industrial College taught all subjects in all grades, while attempting to offer a four-year collegiate course as well.[133] This was the type of crushing teaching load from which the early hires at the new Johns Hopkins were so delighted to be liberated, over four decades earlier, so as to have more time to devote to original research and publication. Other black colleges struggling to upgrade to college-level work also encountered difficulties. By 1917, only 33 of 653 schools for black higher education actually taught subjects at the college level.[134]

When McGinnis took over as Professor of English, the College of Liberal Arts offered twelve English courses, including one class on

American literature as such (the survey introduced by Burch) and one course on the short story in English and American literature. The former course took as its class texts Percy H. Boynton's *A History of American Literature* (1919) and Pattee's brand new *Century Readings for a Course in American Literature* (1923). Its pedagogy was the standard textbook approach that Pattee would himself decry just a few years later in Foerster's *Reinterpretation* (1928). Further, the fact that the classes were being taught by a professor with an undergraduate degree was part of what Pattee called "classroom thinking": he stressed that American literature must bypass this stage of its identity in the quest for status.[135] Through the end of the nineteenth century it was typical to identify a course's content by the textbook it used; in many ways, the textbook *was* the course, especially when classes were taught by non-specialists. The collegiate curriculum at Wilberforce was mirroring outdated national trends.

McGinnis added "Literature by Negro Authors" in 1925–26, participating in a new development at black colleges in the 1920s toward teaching "black" subjects.[136] Such courses had previously been rare, prohibited by a general ideology at black colleges that promoted mainstream middle-class culture, urging students, as Wolters puts it, "to become facsimile WASPs." At Howard, for example, dating back to 1901, the Board of Trustees rejected faculty proposals for courses on Negro history and literature.[137] R.R. Moton argued in the Howard-edited *Journal of Negro Education* in 1933 that black colleges needed to expand curriculum in "specific courses on the Negro." He reported that a review of twenty top Negro colleges showed that an average of two courses "dealing specifically with the Negro" was taught at each. Among them were courses in Race Relations, Race Problems, Negro History, Negro Literature (at seven) and the Negro in American Literature (at four).[138] Seen from another vantage, of course, this curricular innovation in black schools had a negative value in white schools. The addition of a class on "Negro Authors" in the 1920s was wholly distinct in meaning from what such a class would signify today; then, it marked a curriculum with a "black-college" identity. As Moton reported, "Negro" courses did "not come to acquire the importance attached to traditional courses."[139] Of course, the fact that it was American literature as a subject in which there was room for such courses was in turn part of American literature's multiple marginalization, as had been the case with its institutionally gendered rather than raced identity in the case of Mount Holyoke.

Wilberforce's three American literature offerings as of 1925 – the short-story class, the survey, and the Negro authors class – remained its consistent

offerings through 1950, the curricular end point of this study. They remained in place even as English Department faculty changed and the number of courses offered in English grew substantially in the next two-and-a-half decades. New classes in American literature did not increase at the same rate as did courses in other areas of English, and American literature classes did not increase in number during World War II, as they did at many other schools.[140]

Like Mount Holyoke and distinct from Johns Hopkins, Wilberforce's liberal curriculum afforded American literature a regular, stable place by the 1920s. This curricular stability, contrasted with the radical flux at Hopkins between the 1920s and World War II, provides an illuminating example of the disparate meanings of the American literature curriculum at distinct institutional sites. For both a women's college and a black university, with their complex institutional legacies of social marginalization, American literature's history was markedly different than in the research culture at Hopkins. None of these stories is the "real" or only story of American literature's institutionalization. Each tale is tied to the identity of the school in question, its teachers, its students, and its social function.

The long-sought accreditation of Wilberforce by the North Central Association of American Colleges finally came in 1938, promising, at last, national standing for the university and hope for the liberal education it provided.[141] During the 1930s, national models of black education began to shift more generally from the industrial to the liberal arts curriculum, rendering the former an anachronism.[142] But Wilberforce was on the eve of another institutional crisis that would once again eviscerate its goals to provide liberal education. In 1947, the state of Ohio severed its ties with Wilberforce. The traumatized prose of the Annual Report of 1947–48 recounts that the state split the institution, took all its equipment and books, took the entire library and coaching staffs, and lured away faculty with flattering salaries. The church school continued its existence, in dramatically impaired condition, under the name of Wilberforce University, and the state-supported teachers' college became an entirely separate institution, renamed Central State University a few years later. Wilberforce lost its accreditation as a result of the split.[143]

Scarborough's hope that Wilberforce would grow into "the Literary center of the Negro people" was dead. The liberal arts identity that Wilberforce had struggled for so long to build into a "center" was instead an institutional casualty. As DuBois pointed out, the training of black teachers for black students after the Civil War was indeed a social

revolution. But American culture imposed severe limits on the quality, extent, and outcomes of such education. While serving the socially revolutionary cause of black teacher training in the normal curriculum at Wilberforce, American literature studies simultaneously served a most reactionary cause: restricting black access to the white world and to the educational currency it valued.

CHAPTER 4

# *Literary value and the land-grant model: The Ohio State University*

The Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College, later renamed The Ohio State University, opened in 1873 to educate "the industrial classes," as the Morrill Act of 1862 had authorized. Inaugurating the land-grant college movement, The Morrill Act revolutionized higher education by transforming both the nature of its curriculum and the demographics of its student population. While the traditional classical curriculum held that the mental exercise involved in learning Greek and Latin trained the mind in an inherently valuable way, land-grant educators criticized the classics as useless, advocating the idea that the college curriculum should serve practical utility. And while the traditional classical colleges served a socially elite population, Morrill charged the land-grant schools to provide higher education to a sector of the population that had never before had such access. Put into practice, these two innovations carved out a new school model that competed with dramatic success in the chaotic late-nineteenth-century world of higher education.

The new idea of practical higher education for the mass of American youth aggressively changed the social function of the curriculum. College education was no longer presumed to serve elite male students seeking admission to the learned professions. Now both male and female students from all social spheres, including even the sons of dirt farmers presumably headed back to the family farm, had access to a form of higher education that claimed to serve their specific vocational needs.[1] But while the new practical orientation challenged the ideology of the traditional classical curriculum, this ideological difference did not necessarily imply that curricula at practical institutions would be entirely distinct from those at traditional colleges. For example, while some land-grant subjects, such as agriculture and mining, were typically not found at traditional colleges, other subjects, such as languages and literature, might be taught at both,

and indeed often were. This curricular situation was one of simultaneous clash and commonality that created significant confusion, distress, and debate in educational circles. Could ideologically distinct kinds of schools share curricular subjects? If so, how would the subjects shared by these various institutions serve their presumptively different social functions? Were some subjects inherently suited only to a particular institutional model?

The curricular place and social function of the liberal arts became the most symbolic single flashpoint in these debates. Educational discourse of the time pitted the liberal arts against the land-grant model for two reasons. First, the liberal arts emblematized the traditional classical colleges, and since those colleges were a form of the school ideologically opposed to the land-grant institutions, the liberal arts offered an instant, easy target. Second, liberal education was, by definition, education that did not directly serve practical interests. The presumptive social function of the liberal arts thus challenged the very idea of land-grant education, and, more than any other subject, their suitability to land-grant curricula drew fire. Land-grant adherents themselves did not agree on the place of liberal arts in the new schools, or whether indeed liberal arts should be granted any curricular space at all.[2]

This chapter will trace how literary studies began at the Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College under this ideological cloud. To better conform to Ohio's insistent institutional ethos of practicality, literary studies required ideological redefinition to justify their curricular place. The pages that follow will explore Ohio's early rhetorical campaign to justify literary subjects by deflecting attention from their liberal dimensions and repackaging them as practical social products, a form of defense that addressed the debate but by no means resolved it. I will then trace the curricular fortunes of American literature within the larger context established by the ethos of practicality at Ohio State in general as well as by the related but separate entity of the English Department in particular. The English Department bore affiliations both to its utilitarian university climate and to the contours of English as a profession that Ohio State did not exclusively determine or control.

Within this matrix, the curricular status of American literature fluctuated substantially. When it first appeared in 1890, it was a senior elective; it then moved through an extended, steady process of downgrading during the next five decades, landing finally in the most elementary space in the English curriculum. This gradual devaluation of American literature to elementary status accorded with broader top-down national

definitions of the higher curriculum. Nevertheless, such top-down conceptions simultaneously conflicted with other forces at Ohio. Student demand, for example, the chronologically earliest form of curricular pressure at Ohio in American literature's favor, remained constant for decades, despite a climate of minimal institutional support. Ohio's institutional resistance to such bottom-up intramural pressure in favor of American literature changed dramatically when World War II exerted additional external pressures to which the administration and the department had to develop a tactical response. Although both had previously accommodated student demand for American literature only grudgingly, they now repackaged their attitude as enthusiastic support for the subject because it could be justified as an important contribution to practical nationalism. Indeed, at this time American literature's appeal as a curricular product even exceeded the instrumentality of the broader field of English studies that housed it. A climate of suspicion had always dogged literary study at Ohio, but in the late 1940s American literature conquered its image problem by becoming the consummately practical liberal art.

## THE MORRILL ACT AND THE NEW "LIBERAL EDUCATION"

The Morrill Act awarded generous quantities of public land to the state governments, empowering them to sell it and to use the proceeds to found institutions of higher learning, which consequently came to be called "land-grant" schools. The Act held that the states were to use the capital provided

> … to the endowment, support and maintenance of at least one college, where the leading objects shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and inducing military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such a manner as the legislatures of the states may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life.[3]

At the time Morrill was passed, college study in the United States was limited to small, usually elite populations. By 1955, the land-grant schools enrolled more than 20 percent of all American college students. They were the single most influential factor changing the outlook of the American people toward college education.[4]

Justin Smith Morrill of Vermont explained that the Act he sponsored was meant to replace the age-old forms of "European scholarship" with studies of "practical value."[5] But the Act's language was evasive and

offered little concrete direction to those who needed to implement curriculum. While it expressly mandated studies in agriculture and mechanic arts, for example, it also stipulated that "other scientific and classical studies" were not to be excluded. The Act did not present a clear picture of what an agricultural or mechanical curriculum should look like, except that it should somehow promote both "liberal" and "practical" education. The mysterious balance among these kinds of education was to be determined state by state and school by school. Implementation was further complicated by the fact that not all states used their land-grant monies in the same way. Some founded new colleges out of previously chartered agricultural colleges; some awarded the land-grant endowment to existing state universities; and some set up entirely new institutions. All recipients of whatever variety nevertheless had to figure out, and somehow reply to, Morrill's curricular mandate.[6]

The lack of specificity in Morrill's directives generated a scramble by land-grant educators to articulate curricular rationales. Their rhetoric showed their enthusiastic awareness that the land-grant movement promised a revolutionary shift in the nature of higher education. It also showed that curricular justifications could and did take many shapes and that administrators frequently did not agree about the land-grant mission. One core issue of debate was whether land-grant schools should provide exclusively practical technical education or should merely include the technical and practical among a broader array of other subjects.[7]

The role of liberal subjects was the most heated issue in these curricular debates. Liberal education and the classical curriculum had been historically synonymous phenomena. From the postbellum land-grant vantage, the "liberal" and the "classical" were still linked as part of an antagonistic educational model that stood for uselessness, class privilege, and Eastern regional snobbery. Liberal training, conspicuously wasteful in that the amount of time required to attain it was, as Hofstadter and Hardy put it, "highly disproportionate to its limited usefulness," served as a mark of social distinction for the upper class that had heretofore enjoyed almost exclusive access to higher education.[8] Thus it made sense that Midwestern schools in particular engaged in what Veysey calls "conscious revolt" against the liberal arts.[9] Meanwhile, eastern traditionalists, like President Noah Porter of Yale, embraced the idea of gentlemanly caste associated with the traditional college degree.[10] These regional and class antagonisms in turn animated the curricular debates about the liberal arts.

Since the Morrill Act did not disavow "liberal" education but quite clearly endorsed it, no one knew exactly how the new curriculum should or would integrate these seemingly antithetical charges. Curricular history shows that the land-grant schools carved out the relationships among these ideologically prickly subjects case by case and sometimes year by year, through trial and error, compromise, curricular about-face, political haggling, and rhetorical spin. The curricular tendency of the land-grant schools was, in Rudolph's words, to "enthrone the practical and ignore the traditional," neglecting so-called "cultural" and "classical" studies.[11] In 1903, Frederick J. Turner, while extolling what he called "the democratic education of the Middle West," also lamented, "There can be little doubt that the older humanities have suffered somewhat by the dominant practical interests of the West."[12] The Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College was one of the schools that faced the challenge of defining the role of liberal studies in this new curricular landscape.

## THE OHIO AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL COLLEGE: REDEFINING LITERARY VALUE

The state of Ohio had stumbled in trying to establish its land-grant school, stymied by disagreements among competing political interests. Some wanted to award the money to existing Ohio colleges whereas others wanted to found a new college entirely; many argued about different versions of curriculum. Farm advocates, for example, fought for a narrowly defined agricultural and industrial college that would concertedly serve the farmer's son, who often had inadequate secondary schooling and wanted immediately utilitarian training. Others advocated a broader view of agricultural and mechanic arts that would include all branches of science. Still others supported the idea of an even more inclusive program that taught all branches of learning. Such conflicts about educational goals and methods crippled the progress of the institution for decades, from before it opened its doors through the end of the nineteenth century. As William A. Kinnison points out, so many people with divergent purposes were involved with founding the school, and so much competition and confusion arose as a result, that inaction often became the wisest course.[13]

The 1874 inaugural address of the first President, Edward Orton, shows the era's emblematic concerns about land-grant self-definition:

> In the first place, the education to be furnished is Industrial Education, or, in the words of the organic law, the grant is designed "to promote the education of the

industrial classes, in the several pursuits and professions of life." If it is asked who are the industrial classes of American society, I answer, the great mass of the American people. Such is the respect for labor among us, inherited from our Puritan ancestry, that the designation becomes an honorable one …[14]

Orton's rhetorical task, and a delicate one it was indeed, was to establish a curricular rationale that would undergird the school's identity. The core of his argument is a theory of class distinction in which he juxtaposes Morrill's phrase "the industrial classes" to another group he then calls the "learned professions" or "cultivated classes."

Orton's definition of class is not a Marxian one contingent upon the functions of capital in relation to labor; indeed, he flattens the distinction between the proletariat and the capitalist. In his view, the "industrial classes" include those who "live by manual labor" but are not limited to those who do so. "The manufacturer, the builder, the engineer, the farmer, who provide and control the manual labor of scores of hundreds without being able to put their own hands to plow or plane or spindle, belong, by the best of right, to the industrial classes."[15] For Orton, to be of the "industrial classes" did not imply a particular relation to the means of production. Neither did his definition of class affiliation reflect the actual contours of industry and class in postbellum America. There, employees and employers were increasingly stratified rather than unified, and not only with respect to ownership of the means of production. Outside the nominal world of work, social separations such as secluded suburbs and exclusive schools evidenced a widening class rift, particularly in the 1870s and 1880s, the same time at which Orton is parsing out his terms.[16]

Orton is simply not invested in these material stratifications within the industrial world of capital and labor. He elides class difference within the world of industry to establish a different semiotic of class altogether, one that opposes the "industrial classes" (owner, manager, and manual laborer alike) to those who work in the learned professions and comprise what he calls the "cultivated classes." For Orton, everyone who labors is part of the industrial classes – except for those who labor in the learned professions. He notes that "it seems almost invidious to refuse" the honorable designation as a member of the industrial classes to anyone, yet he also insists that the learned professions do not belong. It would be emblematic of this mentality that Ohio included "veterinary science" among its curricular plans from the start, staffed the subject among its first ten appointments, and established a College of Veterinary Medicine in 1895, while a College of Medicine would not be founded until 1914.[17]

His hesitation on the point of whether labor in the learned professions is actually labor points to the signifying core of Orton's definition of class. The fundamental difference between his two classes is not that one labors and the other does not (both do) nor their relation to the means of production (which is not categorically distinct) but, rather, their mode of access to higher education. "I suppose that the learned professions, however industrious and indispensable to the body politic, would scarcely find a place here. For *their* education, the appliances and endowments that have accumulated in past generations and centuries stand largely pledged."[18] Orton insists that the cultivated classes and "*their* education" have no place in land-grant schools, just as the "mass" had never had a place in the traditional halls of learning.[19] The heart of Orton's inaugural address is his argument that distinct school models and curricula institutionalize and reproduce a semiotic of class distinction. As Turner would comment in 1903, "The real significance of the private schools of the East lies in the fact that they mark and accentuate distinctions between the laboring class and the well-to-do more definitely and generally than in the West."[20] Orton's response is not to storm the gates at Harvard, but to cultivate a competing form of the school. "To the mass of the industrial classes of this State, the privileges of Harvard, Yale or Vassar are practically as inaccessible as those of Cambridge or Heidelburg [sic]," he writes, pointedly listing not only two schools abroad but also three eastern schools in the United States (including exclusive schools for both men and for women) as emblems of the heretofore class-bound world of higher education.[21]

Orton's conception of "the cultivated classes" in 1874 operates rhetorically within an extensive and chronic postbellum semiotic of "culture" and affiliated terms such as "cultivation" and "classical." As Alan Trachtenberg argues, these terms operated as shorthand that denoted "a privileged domain of refinement, aesthetic sensibility, and higher learning," including leisure activities that did not serve the process of making a living.[22] Such were the domains of the "cultivated classes" who, according to Orton, had no place at Ohio. Later, W.O. Thompson, President at Ohio from 1899 to 1926, would pointedly describe the agricultural college professor as someone "not afraid to wear overalls or to have a little mud on his boots" and who was "perfectly dreadful in the polite circles of classical people."[23] The curricular identity of the liberal arts at Ohio was wrapped up in this broader battle about the kinds of "people" affiliated with particular subjects.

The image problem of the liberal arts was exacerbated by the fact that Midwestern and Western institutions in particular increasingly defined

"culture" not only as leisurely and anti-utilitarian but also – and most damning of all – as feminine, a connection already implied in Thompson's remark about muddy boots.[24] In the East, in contrast, the gender semiotic at traditional institutions functioned differently, encouraging rather than discouraging male affiliations with the sphere of culture. Thus, at Yale College, even in the last half of the 1920s, more than 50 percent of each class majored in English and showed comparatively little interest in science.[25] Meanwhile, Turner reported that the "differentiation of study" at Middle Western institutions was such that women sought "the older type of liberal culture, while in increasing numbers the men pass over to the technical branches."[26]

The different ways in which curricular subjects were gendered at these opposed kinds of institutions was in large part an epiphenomenon of coeducation. Midwestern and Western schools had inaugurated coeducation, and there the gender history of curricular subjects was markedly different than at the traditional male colleges. Between 1875 and 1900, the number of women students at coeducational institutions increased sixfold but of men only threefold. Some coeducational institutions felt threatened by the influx of so many women and added extra courses to attract more men; for example, Northwestern added a course in engineering because of its masculine appeal.[27] Although coeducational institutions mixed the sexes, they simultaneously produced an elaborately gender-stratified conception of subjects that would mark male spheres (such as engineering) off from female spheres (such as home economics). It would thus be a powerful fact indeed in this coeducational world that surging numbers of female students flocked to the liberal arts. Foerster noted the phallic peril attached to literary study at utilitarian institutions:

> In the women's colleges it was widely elected by women, in the men's colleges widely elected by men, but in the coeducational institutions widely elected by women and avoided by men. Subjects like English, foreign languages and literatures, music and other fine arts were generally looked upon as suitable not for human beings but for women. The cultural destinies of the states and the nation were left to women – not out of deference to women but out of indifference to culture.[28]

At the public, coeducational University of Washington, the English Department in 1907 began to advertise selected classes as "open only to men," as the catalogue put it, an attempt to reclaim, preserve, and encourage a masculine space for the subject.[29] The liberal arts retained their masculine status only at the eastern men's liberal arts colleges such as Yale, Princeton, and Amherst, where there were no girls in the classroom

to threaten the subject's masculinity.[30] In his 1908 *Literature and the American College*, Irving Babbitt reported sarcastically that in "the educational institutions, especially the large universities of the Middle West … . The man who took literature too seriously would be suspected of effeminacy. The really virile thing is to be an electrical engineer."[31] In the Midwest, literature was for girls.

During the postbellum culture wars, the terms "culture" and "cultivation" were fighting words that implied these larger battles about class, gender, region, and practicality. The word "culture," common in such phrases as "culture course," designated a liberal, impractical, or literary subject; "classical," in the sense in which Thompson used it ("polite circles of classical people"), designated not only the classics as subjects but also the people affiliated with classical colleges. For those who devalued the land-grant educational model, "culture" represented the truest, best, and most valuable attribute of education, in both content and outcome. It was a form of cultivation meant for an elite social population.[32] For land-grant adherents, on the other hand, "culture" represented an entire system of exclusive, derogatory, effeminate educational values that scorned the land-grant enterprise and the people associated with it. Looking back from the standpoint of 1931, Eugene Davenport, the Emeritus Dean of the College of Agriculture at the University of Illinois, recalled the vitriol that the word "culture" inspired:

> Curiously enough, the slogan of the educated world [outside the land-grants] was culture, a word which, in its time of greatest abuse, I learned almost to hate. But my hate finally turned to pity for the poor abused term because there never were courses, and never have been courses, more intensely technical or more frankly professional than those same old courses in law, medicine, and theology. Even when bemoaning our "prostituting the sacred cause of education to the business of making a living" these courses were continued and serenely labeled "cultural." The "educated classes" of those days lived in a world of their own and largely of their own making.[33]

Davenport's "educated classes" who "lived in a world of their own and largely of their own making" are Orton's "cultivated classes" working in the "learned professions." Given the strident ideological antagonisms between these models of the school, it is not surprising that land-grant curricula excluded or neglected courses of study that evoked Davenport's hated term "culture." Then as now, the social meaning of curricular subjects extended far beyond the nominal content of the subjects themselves.

When Orton delivered his inaugural speech, the political climate at Ohio was already thick with curricular debate about these issues. Four

years previously, in 1870, the first Board of Trustees had charged a committee to develop a curricular plan for the new college. Its members had fought over whether language and literature should be part of the new school's curriculum or should be excluded. Dr. Norton S. Townshend, the College's first Professor of Agriculture, led a powerful group that wanted to keep English, Modern Languages and Literatures, and Ancient Languages and Literatures out of the curriculum entirely.[34] Townshend lost the battle. The committee's final vote on the matter dictated that "English and Modern Languages and Literature" and "Ancient Languages and Literature" would be two among the six initial chairs to be filled, along with agriculture; physics and mechanics; general and applied chemistry; and geology, mining, and metallurgy. But the battles that made curricular room for languages and literatures were by no means over.[35] Even after the College opened its doors, vocal factions in the state continued to oppose those subjects as foreign to the proper enterprise of the College. From their perspective, languages and literatures were unrelated to the practical mission of agriculture and the mechanic arts and would tie the curriculum to the abhorred traditional college model with its attendant regional and class biases.[36]

In this climate of curricular controversy, Orton's inaugural justification for liberal subjects strategically strikes a resonant note: "science." He explains that some of science's "more ardent disciples, with an intolerance that can be pardoned but not justified, would rule out altogether literary studies, save in their most elementary forms, from our courses of study."[37] The "ardent disciples" of science to whom he refers, those who oppose these literary subjects, are the advocates of an exclusively agricultural and mechanical curriculum, who espouse applied science as the core purpose of the land-grant school. His response to their "intolerance" is to redefine "liberal arts" and "literary studies" in ideologically palatable terms. Ohio, Orton explains, will transform such studies into "science."[38] He offers a new definition of "liberal education" for the present day: "an education that includes science and literature – literature itself being studied by the methods of science."[39] Orton thus proposes that liberal education at Ohio would become the study of science and more science.

Chapter 1 explored the postbellum rhetorical purposes of the word "science." Like other powerful terms, its discursive functions were vast and not always consistent. In part, it signified educational change and was therefore congenial to the land-grant schools with their revolutionary goals. In part, it served middle-class concepts of aspiration because it signified objective principles rather than subjective hierarchies of

privilege, and therefore also served land-grant ideologies of class. Finally, in the world of agricultural and mechanical education in particular, "science" meant applied rather than pure science, and thus served the realm of the practical that land-grant rhetoric liked to call "the work of the world."[40] In this way, the rhetoric of "science" functioned very differently at Ohio than it would at Hopkins, where, in the same decade, "science" meant "pure" science, or what adherents would describe as the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. "Pure" science implied a disinterest in the very concept of utility that drove science in the world of the land-grants. In 1931, President Emeritus Thompson of Ohio recalled the early decades of the land-grant movement, presenting a resonant example of institutional differences even within the world of "scientific" education. He juxtaposed the agricultural college professor, whose role was, in his terms, to teach undergraduates and to be always available to them, with the research professor who dwells "where students could not break through nor steal and where he would be exempt from all worldly contacts and left with his creative genius free to delight itself in the field of pure intellectual scholarship." The fact that he cited Abraham Flexner as his antagonist on the matter suggests that it was quite specifically the Hopkins model of pure research science that Thompson had in mind.[41]

Around the same time that Orton attempted to appease the agriculturalists of Ohio by turning literature into science, President Eliot of Harvard made a curricular announcement equally upsetting to the traditionalists in Massachusetts, for different reasons. Eliot would not turn literature into science but instead would introduce science into the world of the liberal arts. His inaugural speech in 1869 explained that the new Harvard would recognize "no real antagonism between literature and science."[42] Although his words sound similar to Orton's 5 years later, they were animated by an entirely different institutional purpose. Eliot's revolutionary elective system intended to open Harvard's classical curriculum *to* the sciences and thus to install all branches of knowledge on equal footing there, whereas Orton was trying to justify a language and literature curriculum to adherents of practical science. Eliot thus sought to redress a Harvard climate that devalued science whereas Orton addressed a land-grant climate that devalued liberal arts. Of course, Harvard was precisely the kind of institution that embodied the regional and class biases against which the land-grant movement set itself. What the two speeches have in common is the shared semiotic of science as a force of educational modernity to which all could appeal and that no school should ignore.

To make the claim, as Orton did, that Ohio would redefine literature as a science was more important than that he actually know what he meant by this proposition. When he advocates a new study of literature based on the "methods of science," the clearest his definition gets is to say that it will include "the study of this world of matter, physical science, and the study of man – his language, his literature, his history, his art, his relations to his fellow men and to his Maker."[43] (The fear that the scientific spirit at the land-grant schools might turn into godlessness was an ongoing public concern, so it was a tactical measure to include the "Maker" on this list.[44]) Orton's vaguely defined literary science is clearly not a method; it is distinctly not, for example, philology, which would soon become the methodological science of literary study. Instead, Orton invokes a redefinition of literary values as scientific ones not because he has any idea how this would be done but to detach the basis of literary study from its ties to the traditional curriculum and the cultivated classes. He doesn't know what the science of literature would look like, except that it shouldn't look like literature as they study it "at Harvard, Yale or Vassar." He concluded his annual report the following year by noting, "I am sure that it is to our facilities for giving a thorough and *practical scientific training* that we must look for our largest usefulness and our largest favor with the public."[45] As a public institution, Ohio's concern with public "favor" exerted curricular pressure of a far more powerful kind than had ever been the case at the private institutions covered in previous chapters. Doing so would remain an ongoing concern at Ohio.

Orton singled "English" out for specific defense. He had promised earlier in his speech to assess which branches of study "make a just demand for a place in a practical curriculum." He now argued for English because it was essentially a subject with "practical power" in the economic marketplace:

> What shall be said of the study of language, especially our own? Is not the power to make clear, accurate, intelligible statements of what we know or of what we think, a practical power? Does not our education show itself glaringly defective when it leaves us without this ability? Men with knowledge and ideas, but without the power of adequate expression – like lumber-wagons loaded with gold – never pass for what they are worth in the world. But the power to use language with precision and efficiency, and still more the ability to endue it with persuasive force, does not come to us in dreams. There is no royal road, no short cut, to good English. It is one of the choice fruits of education. If obtained at all, it must be bought with a price, the same price that is paid for solid attainments in any other department of knowledge, patient and extended study. Can such study be left out of a practical curriculum?[46]

Among the liberal arts more generally construed, English held particular utilitarian appeal as a language rather than as a literature. As Orton puts it, "the power to use language" (with emphasis on the word "use") is a practical power that will enable its students to "pass for what they are worth."[47]

Recall that at this point in the history of higher education, English had not yet acquired a stable identity as a higher subject. Its reclamation as a philological field of scientific expertise was to gain strong momentum in the next half decade, and English departments would develop increasing stability in the 1880s, as I elucidate in Chapter 1. But at the time of Orton's speech, these transitions had not yet been resolved. Orton does not invoke a scientific rationale for curricular English, as Hopkins would do just a few years later (and as Orton himself had done for the area he called "literature"). By instead foregrounding the practical power of English, Orton provides a rationale that is recognizably the same as the practical economic rationale that had fed the rise of English schools at the K-12 level.[48]

Ohio's institutional identity was in fact predicated on a direct connection with K-12 education that an elite private school like Hopkins could and did eschew. In addition to its origins as a land-grant school, Ohio was simultaneously a state university, and as such stood at the apex of the state system of public education. Part of its institutional role was to integrate the levels of the state educational system so that all students, whether from city or rural schools, could aspire to and then gain access to college study.[49] And, like other land-grant universities, it was also supposed to open its doors to under- or unprepared children of the state's farms. Hence the influential agricultural journal *Farm and Fireside* criticized another land-grant school, the Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College, for establishing a curriculum in "the traditional ruts of drill in the so-called classics – mementos of dead and buried centuries – to the neglect of the very lively issues of the living present." In the journal's view, Texas A&M later redeemed itself, reorganizing its curriculum to begin "so low that any farmer's boy" might enter.[50] When Orton echoed the lower-school rationale of practical English to justify the higher study of English at Ohio, he flagged its institutional connections with lower schools and "inferior" subjects, both of which would have been anathema at Hopkins. Thus although Ohio and Hopkins purveyed this curricular subject under the same name – English – the curricular philosophy that justified it varied radically. At Hopkins just a few years later, English was

an exclusively higher rather than lower subject, one requiring advanced professional expertise rather than one connected to lower schools and practical training for the world's work. At the time of Orton's speech, the curricular identity of English was in flux, and his bid to justify it was only one among an array of possible justifications.

Whatever English was going to be at Ohio, no one could argue that it was agriculture or a mechanic art. Perhaps it could be, as Orton argued, a form of "practical education of the industrial classes," as Morrill directed. But as a kind of language and literature, it was also automatically suspicious in the curricular taxonomy of the land-grant debates. Orton's spin addressed but did not resolve the matter of curricular rationales for English, and indeed The Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College gave Joseph Milliken, its first chair of English and Modern Languages, absolutely no funds to outfit the department when the college opened. He repeatedly begged the administration for badly needed books that he strategically and pointedly called "*apparatus* and *material* for my department … apparatus and material as properly so called as are microscopes, minerals, air pumps, or blackboards."[51] Meanwhile, external interest groups who wanted to marginalize or exclude the liberal arts from the curriculum continued to affect university politics for decades. *Farm and Fireside* led consistent and vitriolic opposition to the liberal arts curriculum. In 1878, "The Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College" controversially changed its name to "The Ohio State University." In the minds of Ohio farmers, the shift in nomenclature provided clear evidence that the school was ashamed of its true mission of agricultural education.[52]

The climate of practicality shaped the way other ostensibly impractical subjects fared as well. It made sense in such a climate, for example, that the University's new Art Department in 1880 announced its purpose as explicitly "utilitarian":

> It is not designed to make it a school for the culture of liberal or fine arts, so much as for technical instruction in the useful arts; to make the artisan rather than the artist; and to impart that form of knowledge essential to skill and taste in the architect, the bridge and ship-builder, the mason, the machinist, the engraver, the cabinet-maker, the decorator and designer of textile fabrics, and every kind of artisan in the catalogue of human industries.[53]

An "Art Department" for "the culture of *liberal* or *fine* arts" would not have fostered what Orton called "our largest favor with the public." The department's name in fact vacillated for the next several years between "Mechanical and Free-hand Drawing" and "Department of Industrial

Arts" before it vanished altogether.[54] At Ohio, artsy, literary, liberal, and otherwise impractical forms of learning faced institutional pressure to justify themselves in terms of the "human industries" of the world. In 1874, Milliken as chair of English and Modern Languages made an impossibly feeble attempt to address this climate, defending the practical utility of modern languages for "the reading of a newspaper" or "the hiring of a servant."[55]

Ohio's debates about liberal versus agricultural and mechanical subjects were not unique among midwestern land-grant schools: when the Illinois Industrial University changed its name in 1885 to the University of Illinois, one rural newspaper commented that it was apparently time to change the university motto from "Learning and Labor" to "Lavender and Lily White."[56] The agricultural society, the Grange, exerted significant pressure on universities in the Midwest and West, demanding not only the teaching of agriculture but, specifically, the teaching of agriculture *rather than* literature. Grangers successfully influenced various state legislatures; Daniel Coit Gilman in fact left the presidency of the University of California to become president of Hopkins in part because of the power of Grangers' demands that he shape the university as an agricultural school.[57] In 1886–87, Ohio too rearranged its agricultural course to placate the farming interests. It redesigned its program around practical courses that common-school graduates could move into after only a year of preparatory study. The reorganized catalogue listed the School of Agriculture in first rather than, as previously, fourth place. The 1886 Annual Report explained that the school had brought higher education "within the reach of the greatest possible number of the young farmers of the state."[58] *Farm and Fireside* praised Ohio State for at last embracing its true mission.[59]

## AMERICAN LITERATURE: CURRICULAR VALUES IN CONFLICT

The English Department operated within this ideological climate that embraced the world of hardworking practical artisans but repudiated the world of leisurely liberality. But the Department simultaneously behaved in ways that observed the trends in the increasingly hegemonic conceptions of the English profession. Thus departmental behaviors rooted in definitions of the English profession could and did simultaneously conflict with other spheres of institutional life. The English Department gradually marginalized American literature in keeping with the hegemonic shape of the profession of English; nevertheless, two forms of

"favor with the public" bristled against these top-down conceptions and ultimately recast the value of American literature at Ohio State. First, student demand consistently exerted bottom-up pressure on the curriculum, which administrators only grudgingly accommodated. Later, the surge of nationalist sentiment during and after World War II provided a new practical lens that encouraged the study of anything "American." The rhetorical and political climate at Ohio had long aimed to deflect attention from purely literary subjects and to justify their curricular place by repackaging them as practical. In the 1940s, American literature would become the consummately practical liberal art.

In 1881, John T. Short replaced Milliken, the sole professor of English, who resigned because of ill health. Short, a pre-professional, moved from his position as Assistant Professor of Philosophy and History to take the role of Professor of History and the English Language and Literature. Ohio operated largely on the pre-professional model in its early years. None of the first faculty had Ph.D.s., nor should they have, since Hopkins had not yet opened and redefined the academic profession. In 1878, by which point Hopkins was already redefining the terrain of higher education, Ohio State awarded an honorary doctorate to its first Professor of Physics and Mechanics, T.C. Mendenhall, whose formal schooling extended only as far as 3 months of rural normal school that led to a degree invented by the school itself.[60]

Among other classes, Short taught two senior English classes called "A History of English Literature," the second of which included American authors.[61] He offered this mixed course through 1890–91, when a new Associate Professor of English, James Chalmers, offered the first course specifically on "American literature." Records sometimes indicate that Chalmers had a Ph.D. and sometimes that he had only a Master's, a vacillation that speaks to the uncertain status of Chalmers' credentials in the post-Hopkins era. Although he had a B.A. and Ph.D. from Eureka College in Illinois (there is no record at all of an M.A.), Eureka was a liberal arts college that offered no systematic graduate training; so Chalmers' degree was awarded on the old pre-professional model that Hopkins had set out to overturn.[62]

In keeping with trends of nomenclature initially driven by the increasing market penetration of the Hopkins research model, Chalmers called this first American literature class "Seminary in American Literature." (Remember that Mount Holyoke taught its first "seminary" in the subject 3 years later.) It was a one-term class open to juniors that featured Irving, Poe, Bryant, Whittier, Longfellow, Holmes, Hawthorne, Lowell,

and Emerson.[63] Its roster of authors is nearly identical to those for the American literature classes taught at Mount Holyoke in the early 1890s. As Chapter 2 demonstrated, the Mount Holyoke classroom canon was shaped by the school textbook market. Pre-professional teachers were typically heavily reliant on textbooks to constitute classroom knowledge. Similarities between the early American literature classes at Mount Holyoke and Ohio State are a function of this relationship between pre-professional teachers and the textbook market.[64]

In 1894, a decade marked by the proliferation and reorganization of "departments" across the landscape of higher education, Ohio State reorganized English to keep in step with national trends. English had been fluctuating in faculty and blending English language and literature with modern languages, history, and philosophy since the institution opened.[65] President W.H. Scott explained the logic of reorganization as part of a "general revival of the study of our own language which has taken place throughout the country." Ohio State would allot a "much larger place than formerly" to English in its courses of study, he reported.[66] Chalmers resigned that year and the Rev. Allen Campbell Barrows replaced him. Barrows took his A.M. at Western Reserve in 1866 and his D.D. at Iowa College in 1889, coming to Ohio State from his position as professor of English Literature and History at the Iowa Agricultural College. He had also taught Latin and Greek at Phillips Academy and Physics, Latin, and English Literature at Western Reserve. Barrows was thus another pre-professional college teacher of literature, both in his lack of professional training and specialization and in his professional credential in the ministry. The clerical teacher of literature was, like the pre-professional teacher more generally, an increasingly anachronistic model at this time.[67] The American literature class continued to appear in the catalogue annually under Barrows' name, but he in fact actually taught the class about every other year.[68]

In 1901, a new teacher, Joseph Russell Taylor, took over the class and began to teach it regularly. Also a pre-professional, Taylor took a B.A. at Ohio State in 1887, taught in the public schools, then became Assistant in Drawing at Ohio State from 1889 to 1894. By that point, the utilitarian Art Department had been reborn as the Department of Drawing. Taylor taught "Freehand Drawing," which was a requirement in the Industrial Arts course, the Engineering course, the Short Mining Course, the Short Course in Agriculture, and the Courses in Agriculture, Horticulture, and Forestry: no effeminate art for Ohio State![69] He then moved from this institutional role teaching utilitarian art to engineers, miners, farmers,

and foresters to the Department of English and Rhetoric, a pre-professional-style shift assuming transferable skills in the knowledge economy.[70] He was promoted to Associate and finally full Professor over the years despite his lack of an advanced degree, another instance of title inflation.[71]

When Taylor took over the American literature class in 1901, it became a permanent annual offering at Ohio State, albeit in the tiny curricular space of one class, typically out of about forty English classes in total.[72] The minimal number of American literature classes the English Department offered did not reflect their significant popularity. In the closing years of the nineteenth century, enrollment in the American literature class was the second largest among all English literature offerings. (Introduction to English Literature ranked first.) Enrollments in subsequent years consistently placed the American literature class among the Department's most highly sought classes.[73] Evidence from the period suggests that the appeal of American literature lay primarily in its image of literary modernity and consequent escape from more remote historical periods. Early textbook authors as well as early teachers of American literature – two populations that the later corps of experts would expunge – justified American literature as a subject not because it was "American" but because it was "modern literature." This particular strain of American literature's popularity represents an active historical alternative to the nationalistic or civic model that Baym identifies in textbooks of the era. Although the civic model eventually became hegemonic as a result of the world wars, the modern model is an important addition to our understanding of American literature's historical configuration as a subject: an active discourse of the time that only later circumstance closed down.

For example, Noble K. Royse frames his textbook, *A Manual of American Literature Designed for the Use of Schools of Advanced Grades* (1872), as a succinct overview of one of "the leading modern literatures." He defines "literature" as "works of taste and sentiment, such as poetry, romance, oratory, the essay, and history." He includes exclusively nineteenth-century materials, arguing that the earlier literary productions of America were inferior either because they were not genuinely literary (such as Puritan writings) or because they were "slavishly English" (such as seventeenth- and eighteenth-century poetry).[74] Kate Sanborn of Smith College, a woman of letters and pre-professional teacher who taught the first "American literature" class there in 1880, used Royse as her text.[75] Sanborn explained that she was interested in American literature not

because it was "American" but because she found it "current" and "interesting." She explicitly contrasted her teaching of the current and interesting to what was taught in the classical curriculum, a curriculum she called "brain-wearying."[76]

In this sense, American literature was modern literature before Modernism. Its modernity was at least part of what drove its popularity among undergraduates in flight from the brain-wearying classics. (In 1901–02, "American Authors" was the third most heavily enrolled class at Ohio, after the "Introduction to English Literature" and a class called "Modern Novel," another example of student interest in more recent literatures.[77]) Recall that, as Chapter 1 shows, the image of historical youth was one of the attributes that historicist scholars used to justify American literature's exclusion from the higher curriculum. In this sense, we see that the curricular identity of American literature was a site of active conflict between students and scholars, in which the former valued its "modern" attributes and the latter derided the same qualities. Scholarly derision toward its modernity was of course linked to the popularity of the idea of the "modern" with a non-expert population. The "modern literature" model, associated as it was with textbooks like Royse's, with pre-professional teachers like Sanborn, and, most of all, with embracing the contemporary rather than the remote historicism dear to the emergent English professionals, would all seal its doom.[78]

## AMERICAN LITERATURE MOVES DOWN

As the American literature class continued to draw substantial enrollments, Ohio redefined its level downward. From its initial appearance in the 1890s through 1906, it was a junior and senior elective. To take it, students had to take "Introduction to English Literature" as a prerequisite. (The fact that "Introduction to English Literature" was a prerequisite for other English classes explains why it was consistently the most heavily enrolled English offering.) Around 1906 a number of changes occurred. First, the class dropped in level, from an upper-division class with a prerequisite to one of only two classes without a prerequisite.[79] Its status thus dropped from an advanced to an introductory class. In 1910, its name changed to "Survey of American Literature," offered twice yearly rather than once and taught not only by Taylor but by a large stable of instructors, who were, like Taylor, not specialists in the field.[80] As I have pointed out in previous chapters, the image of American literature as easy and popular and readily taught by pretty

much anyone (even a painter like Taylor) was one of its liabilities in the world of academic scholarship. Since this was the only American literature class offered at Ohio, when it dropped in level, the institutional definition of the subject also changed: to one exclusively suited to the most elementary level of the curriculum.

American literature's downward trajectory toward elementary-subject status at Ohio State was to continue as the years passed and the number of students it attracted grew. In the early 1920s, the "Introduction to American Literature" survey became one of only two classes that not only had no prerequisite but that were also open to freshmen. Since freshmen were closed out of other classes, it drew huge numbers of students. The only other English class in this curricular category was "Composition and Reading," the equivalent of today's freshman composition class.[81] The composition class was required of all students; the American literature class, while open to all students without prerequisite, was not required.[82] While the department offered its English literature classes at both the introductory and advanced levels, it offered American literature only at the rudimentary level, and its teachers during these years were non-experts who had no research connection with American literature.[83] At Ohio, the subject had undergone a long process of downgrading in curricular status since its inception as a "seminary" for advanced students in 1890–91.

These institutional marks of American literature's inferiority within the top-down terms of the knowledge culture are already familiar to us from earlier chapters. Paradoxically, its emergent institutional definition at Ohio State as a freshman class that required no prior knowledge fed what became an extraordinary popularity for the class, which in turn exerted pressure on the very curriculum that had marginalized it. Large numbers of students were permitted to take the class; they did so. Due to its nature as a freshman class without a prerequisite, its pedagogy had to address that clientele, and thus by definition it spoke to a larger student population than the upper-division electives in the more remote corners of British literature. While 362 students took the American literature class in 1922, "English Medieval Literature to Chaucer" drew 21 and "Milton and his Contemporaries" drew 19.[84] The attitude of English experts who relegated American literature to amateur and introductory status thus backfired. Ohio State's institutional ethos was that of practical service to the students of the state. The students of the state liked American literature. And that bottom-up phenomenon pressured both the department and the administration and forced a response.

Attempting to handle the huge American literature enrollments, the administration in 1929 changed the title and content of the class to "English and American Literature." The Dean of the College of Liberal Arts reported that "this change is a definite betterment." He does not explain the "betterment" beyond mentioning that the change was made "in view of the very large number of students who take this course." In typical bureaucratic parlance, he phrases the explanation in passive voice, obscuring who actually suggested the change as well as the specific reasons for it – but the conflict here between the bottom-up force of student popularity and the top-down opinions of department and university decision makers is clear enough. Given standard bureaucratic protocols still in place today at Ohio State, it is likely that the change was initiated at the department level and then approved higher up the chain of command.[85] The rhetoric of the change is clear: it was a dereliction of departmental duty to teach that many students American literature on its own without a salutary admixture of English literature.[86] Student demand for American literature was thus redirected toward areas of study that more closely reflected English Department faculty specializations.

At this time, the department still had no faculty trained in American literature. After the survey changed to a mixed class, the department offered two new American literature classes that were not open to such a huge student pool. For the first time in 25 years, American literature thus rose in level, but this time around, Ohio State made the change as an oblique form of curricular marginalization, to redress its curricular power "in view of the very large number of students who take this course." Beginning in 1931, Taylor offered a new advanced undergraduate class called "American literature" as well as the department's first graduate course in the subject. The topic of the graduate course in its first 2 years was "The American Novel to 1890."[87] When the English Department proposed the new courses to the Dean, it noted that the undergraduate course would be "especially valuable to those intending to teach in the high schools."[88] As in other cases, at Ohio State the curricular identity of American literature was tied to and justified by its service to teacher training for lower-level schools. Taylor taught both the new American literature classes until his death in 1933.

At that point, Ohio State made an institutional transition in the knowledge status of the field by hiring its first American literature expert, T.C. Pollock. Pollock took his M.A. at Ohio State in 1927 with a thesis on Browning and Keats, followed by a Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania in 1930. There he studied with Americanist Arthur Hobson

Quinn and wrote a dissertation on Philadelphia theater in the eighteenth century, then taught at the Municipal University of Omaha.[89] Pollock took over Taylor's classes, changing the content of the undergraduate class to "the development of the literary arts in America" including "poets, dramatists, essayists, and writers of fiction" as "products of American society." The graduate class shifted in topic from the pre-1890 novel to American drama.[90] In 1936, Pollock expanded the single undergraduate class to two, divided at the Civil War.[91] In 1938, he left Ohio State to become head of the department of English at New Jersey State Teachers College.[92] The utility of the American literature classes to those "intending to teach in the high schools" had been part of how Ohio State construed their institutional purpose. The trajectory of Americanist Pollock's career echoed such a cultural rationale. He moved from the research-centered world of the literature Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania, to teaching American literature at Ohio State to students headed for careers in high schools, to chairing English studies at a Teachers College *per se*.

When Pollock left, Ohio State hired another professional scholar, Leonard Beach, who had a 1933 Ph.D. from Yale and was currently employed as an assistant professor at Northwestern University. At Yale, he had worked in part with Americanist Stanley Williams, but he wrote a dissertation on Aeschylus in English poetry from 1800 to 1850. He was of the generation of Americanist scholars who had written dissertations in fields with traditional status. Nevertheless, Beach referred to American literature as his "chosen field." At Ohio State, he took over the American literature classes and advocated for the field more generally, including trying to strengthen the library's holdings.[93]

## "CONFUSION IN CURRICULA"

American literature's curricular identity at Ohio State had fluctuated for decades. In the 1930s, conflicting curricular forces pushed for and against the subject simultaneously and produced another round of institutional changes. The bottom-up forces of student demand that the subject had attracted all along were now strengthened by top-down national trends in scholarship that had begun to attend to American literature as a new professional field. The always-powerful institutional forces of turf and inertia in the English Department struggled to address these forms of pressure while keeping American literature in a marginal enough place so that it would not interfere with the real shape of English literature studies.

This was a time of curricular confusion, and the changing status of American literature was part of that curricular landscape in flux.

In 1933, the English Department addressed what it construed to be national bewilderment about the content and meaning of the college English curriculum. Citing "confusion in curricula" and the lack of "any sound theory of values or any rational conception of the function of English studies" in departments across the country, the department charged a committee to revamp its own program. The final report noted, "Seldom has a Department had the opportunity and the will to do what the English Department has just done – to reconsider thoroughly and fundamentally its ideals and methods, and construct a curriculum which should embody its views without regard to vested interest."[94]

The primary problem the new curriculum sought to address was a shift in the balance of power between the literature of older historical periods and that of "contemporary literature":

> One of the most difficult questions in the construction of an entire curriculum is the position of contemporary literature. Two generations ago this problem did not exist. Philology was in the saddle, and the Middle Ages was its stamping ground. Little by little, however, as the philological ideal weakened, later literature asserted itself, until today the literature of the present and the recent past threatens to dominate the entire curriculum.[95]

The new curriculum placed courses on "literature of the present and recent past" in the freshman and sophomore years and courses in more remote historical periods in the junior and senior years.[96] The more elementary unit of the curriculum, unsurprisingly, was to be American literature's location. In this unit, the literary selections would be "international … though with emphasis on American literature." Its placement in this part of the curriculum also meant that the subject would be handled as a "literature of the present and recent past." The department thus institutionally identified American literature as a subject elementary in level and historically contemporary in nature. In this way Ohio State's institutional definition of the subject fell in the tradition of popular modernism articulated decades earlier by textbook authors and teachers such as Royse and Sanborn, at odds with the emerging professionalization of the field.

In contrast to its definition of American literature, the department conceptualized its junior and senior classes around "cycles which embrace the rise and fall of some great culture, cycles which include, from the literary point of view, the life and death of an ideal." We needn't strain to guess whose "great culture" lay behind this rhetorically Platonic ideal.

These advanced classes focusing on greatness and idealism treated only British literature. The "cycles" included the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Age of Enlightenment, and the Nineteenth Century and After, also called the Age of the Democratic Ideal. A fifth cycle "in language rather than in literature" was also included. The new plan proposed that every student majoring in English complete one of these cycles.[97]

Despite its rhetoric of bringing much-needed clarity to the chaotic world of English curriculum "without regard to vested interest," the plan produced a curriculum that reproduced the department's longstanding curricular hierarchy. It reasserted the centrality of British literature to the curriculum and the major, and relegated American literature to the lower division. The incoherent rationale for this curricular plan shows at how deep a level its ideology functioned. For example, the series of cycles included one (language) that stood apart from the rest of the list of cycles rooted in literary-historical narrative. Yet American literature was excluded as a major area because it fell "beyond the scope of cyclical treatment." And it couldn't be a "cycle" because "American literature is supplementary to several cultural cycles." Here the report implies that the problem with American literature is not that it has no history (therefore falling "beyond the scope of cyclical treatment") but that it *does* in fact have a history. The real problem is that it can't be restricted in its entirety to one historical cycle. Granting it space as part of more than one historical cycle was of course unthinkable, although doing so had not presented a problem in categorizing British literature by way of four cycles. Had the department wanted to grant even a single slot in the major program to American literature, the possible connections between American literature and the fourth cycle, with its emphasis on "the democratic ideal," was ready to hand. In sum, the deeply ideological blindness to its own "vested interest" in this curricular plan reproduced the marginalization of American literature as a subject that "properly belongs," to use the report's phrase, with the more elementary classes in the first 2 years of college study.

The new nexus of pressures that lay behind this document, operating in the chaotic ways I've been tracing, simultaneously fostered a genuine advance for American literature at the graduate level. There, too, courses were divided into the same five cycles as the undergraduate major. But in this curriculum the department granted American Literature a separate place, standing apart on its own. At the graduate level the subject was supposed to deal with its "historical aspect" as opposed to the "contemporary" dimension covered in the lower-division classes.[98]

The scholarly issue of American literature's history or lack of it had animated early blockbuster scholarly projects in the field, from *The Cambridge History of American Literature* (1917–21), with its extensive bibliographies; to Norman Foerster's *The Reinterpretation of American Literature* (1928), attempting to dispel the "vagueness of our knowledge of literary history in America;" to Vernon Louis Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought: An Interpretation of American Literature from the Beginnings to 1920* (1927–30), with its magisterial and unprecedented organization of three centuries of material into a coherent narrative.[99] All attempted to undo the image of American literature as a literature without a history and thus to counter the anti-American literature polemic that had hurt its knowledge status for so long. Ohio State's curricular plan, attempting to devise an institutional response to competing curricular pressures, both reinscribed American literature as an elementary and modern literature in its lower-division courses and created a new space for graduate studies that would pursue exactly the opposite definition of the subject. The curricular plan thus presented itself as a coherent response to a climate of confusion in English studies, but stands more notably as an expression of the active and paradoxical conflicts in American literature's status as a curricular subject driving change in the 1930s.

External forces would push for yet another redefinition of American literature within the decade. English Department Chair James Fullington reported in 1938 that enrollments in American literature had been increasing so significantly that the department must not only double its offerings in the field and hire new Americanist faculty but must be willing to pay premium prices to hire suitable scholars. In the midst of a desperate national search for an Americanist in 1938, he wrote, "American literature as a special field has developed so recently that comparatively few strong, well-trained men can be found at the salaries we can offer."[100] That year, two Ohio State professors traveled to Cornell, Harvard, Yale, Columbia, New York University, Queens College (on Long Island), and Swarthmore to meet with specialists in American literature, to solicit their opinions about hiring prospects in the field, and to canvas for candidates.[101] Fullington reported, "Interest in American literature is spreading rapidly, not only here, but elsewhere. Our classes have been running enrollments from 80 to 120 students, and seminars from ten to twelve. An increasing number of doctoral candidates are concentrating in American literature." Curricular plans notwithstanding, "We need to increase our staff in American literature, in order to handle heavy enrollments

effectively," he added. It was a seller's market: Ohio State and others were engaged in a national competition for candidates who had received professional training in the field, in an era when the field itself, in professional terms, had just recently come into being.[102]

At Ohio State, then, American literature classes served an array of functions: they responded to consistently heavy student demand; they met the needs of high-school teacher training; and they fit the burgeoning interests in contemporary literature that represented another powerful blow to the tradition of the English Department. These three factors had sustained the subject in a modest (although highly popular) curricular place thus far. The most dramatic changes for American literature in its history at Ohio State lay ahead in the 1940s, when World War II transformed it from a minimal but steady department offering into a thriving field that not only the English Department but also the upper levels of administration pushed and supported.

## AMERICAN LITERATURE AND THE ETHOS OF PRACTICALITY

The university struggled to proclaim its utility in the war effort, a topic that dominates its institutional publications at this time. For example, the 1942 Annual Report on the College of Arts and Sciences focused on the College's contributions to the war. It enumerated specific war activities in the sciences, including Bacteriology, Chemistry, and Physics and Astronomy. Its silence on the Arts was palpable. Lurking in the margins of such a report was the old question dogging English and the other liberal arts at Ohio State. What are they good for? Are they useful like the applied sciences? What practical work can they accomplish? The 1942 Report only obliquely addressed the practicality of the liberal arts, noting without the specific commendations it had offered the sciences that the "Other departments of this college … are engaged in studies helping to a better understanding of the causes of the war and the possibilities for preventing a recurrence."[103]

The practical imperative remained as current in 1942 as it had been in 1874. But "practicality" is a shibboleth that justifies an array of institutional enterprises, and what counts as "practical value" shifts over time in response to changing historical forces. During the war, civic and political education became a newly pressing form of practical value, and within the world of curricular English, American literature best embodied this form of value. The change in the language of American literature course descriptions makes the point. In 1943, one course description used for the

first time the term "democratic consciousness"; another focused on "American thought and culture" and promised that "Special attention will be given to their significance in the light of twentieth-century developments."[104] Beach reported in 1944 that these classes were very popular with students: "American literature has steadily held its own as our most substantial offering in the English Department, so far as registration figures go."[105]

Robert Spiller reported in *The Journal of Higher Education* in 1942 that literature had long been considered an esoteric pastime rather than an index to "the understanding of life," but that this perception was undergoing a shift. Glossed by way of the land-grant ethos that embraced the practical work of the world while deriding cultured leisure, we can see why American literature would thrive at this time within and despite its institutional affiliation with English. Of course, its association with military force also reclaimed American literature from the Midwestern girly image of the liberal arts chronicled by Foerster and Babbitt. The bombing of Pearl Harbor gave American literature a new impetus in higher education that could now rival practical training, Spiller reported, for "If we do not believe in ourselves and in our ideals, our military machines cannot do their work."[106] Such a sense of new practical educational purpose during World War II recast American literature's curricular identity. Although this recasting occurred throughout higher education, the precise historical processes at work varied from one institutional culture to another. The longstanding ethos of populist practicality at Ohio State created a fertile climate for American literature's new curricular success there.

A faculty committee appointed during the war to plan postwar programs included a subcommittee about "American Civilization" whose plans led to the appointment of William Charvat in 1944.[107] Gleason has traced the booming national trend at this time, born of the war, to develop interdisciplinary "American Studies" programs.[108] Ohio State hired Charvat to pursue the field of "American literature and culture." With a colleague in the Department of History, he developed and directed the new interdisciplinary program in "American Civilization," pursued jointly with a new program in "International Studies."[109] Tellingly, his appointment was announced in a discussion of war activities by the College of Arts and Sciences.[110] (Given both his pioneering work in the history of publishing and his service to the practical curriculum at Ohio State, it becomes a gorgeous biographical detail that Charvat had

attended the High School of Commerce in New York.[111]) Official rhetoric in 1945 about the new program offered overt practical justification:

> The study of American Civilization, here and in most ranking colleges and universities, is the result of a spreading conviction that as America grows in physical and cultural power and assumes a crucial role in world affairs, it needs to know more and more about itself – its past and present, its trials and errors, its debts and contributions to other cultures, its experiments and experience in the democratic way of life. This major in American Civilization attempts not only to help satisfy this need, but also to provide a solid and nourishing liberal education.[112]

Its interdisciplinary focus and its practical politics to study and inculcate democratic values meant that "American Civilization" as a curricular subject could be packaged in a way that was not essentially or necessarily "literary." Orton had repackaged literature as science to sell it to the local culture; the terms had changed but the impulse to deflect attention from the literary as an impractical enterprise remained constant. From the vantage of the top-down models of the English profession, equivocal literariness had heretofore been part of American literature's problematic image. This former liability became a new source of curricular empowerment in an era of significant extramural and bottom-up pressures on the university as a whole. American literature's image as a "contemporary" rather than a remote historical literature had grounded its relegation to lower-levels of study at Ohio State and elsewhere, but the currency that hurt it in professional terms now electrified its marketability in the college curriculum. When the 1945 program announcement alludes to a spreading interest in American Civilization "here and in most ranking colleges and universities," we see one mark of American literature's new ascent past the level of lower schools into the realm of university prestige.

Other areas of specialty in the English Department were not susceptible to this particular form of nationalistic utilitarianism serving the mass of the American people. In 1936, an Ohio State Annual Report dedicated to the theme of "The Outreach of Teaching and Research to the People of Ohio" had reported tepidly of English: "The Department of English exists essentially for the cultivation of interests and appreciations which bear upon the individual's leisure rather than upon his work in the world." Within the land-grant ideological framework, this university rhetoric could hardly be more damning, alluding as it does to the dreadful specter of "cultivation" and the associated world of "leisure" rather than the world's work at the core of the land-grant ethos. Similar to Orton's distinction in 1874 between the industrial and cultivated classes, in which he wanted to say that it is the former who "really" labor, in 1936 those who

"work in the world" are not those who teach or study English. The report blandly described public service contributions by English faculty as consisting of public lectures. In addition (a detail I report with due terror), "Faculty members are often called upon by individuals in various parts of the state to criticize pieces of writing."[113]

The tone of such a record of public service contributions differs radically from that of the English Department's "Annual Summary Report" to the Dean only 9 years later. In that year – 1945 – English listed as "Special accomplishments of the year" the hiring of Charvat to pursue American literature studies, the development of the American Civilization Program, and "substantial increases in the University Library's collection of Americana." The new curriculum of 1933 had sidelined American literature, but now, just 12 years later, it served current circumstances not only to cast American literature and affiliated endeavors in the patriotic utilitarian spotlight but also to afford them a far higher profile than the activities of the rest of the English department. The report opened, "The fundamental responsibilities of the Department of English are not such as to provide much or frequent sensational publicity."[114]

The number and variety of courses in American literature at Ohio State surged dramatically in 1945–46. New offerings for upper-level undergraduates included "American Fiction from Twain to Dreiser," "American Literature During the Colonial and Early Republican Period," "The American Renaissance in Literature," "Twentieth Century American Writers," "Studies in Mid-Century American Symbolism and Idealism," "Studies in American Realism and Naturalism," and a graduate course in "Studies in American Literature and Cultural History," most of which were taught by Charvat and Beach.[115] One of the new American Civilization courses promised to examine "Present-day concepts of democracy and questions relating to political organization, economic relations, and racial problems. Literature, art and music as an expression of the American spirit."[116]

A 1943 Ohio State committee trying to formulate plans for postwar education concluded that "basic educational questions of the moment" have "consequences for the future development of democratic values" and recommended focusing on "education as a social instrumentality which has distinctive responsibilities in a democratic culture."[117] That same year, a reporter from the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* wrote to Ohio State President Howard Bevis with a series of questions, to which Bevis penciled the drafts of his answers in the margin of the letter. The reporter asks, "Will the liberal arts college be adversely affected by the present emphasis on

technical subjects?" While Bevis answers other questions substantially, in response to this one he jots only a question mark.[118] By the time he officially answered the letter, Bevis had composed the following:

> I am personally inclined to believe that the liberal arts college on the university campus will grow in character and in influence rather than diminish … . The obligations of citizenship entailed by professional standing likewise bring greater and greater insistence upon training broader than merely technical … . I think that existing curricula will need to be adapted and modified considerably to meet the legitimate needs of returning service men.[119]

Here Bevis ties the future of the liberal arts to an array of practical matters, different from those Orton confronted but no less justified within the ideological climate of the land-grant university: civic duty; professional standing; "training"; and meeting the needs of veterans of the war.

In 1947, the university approved a statement entitled "The Responsibility of Universities in a Democracy." That responsibility was "to develop a citizenry capable of exercising the precious right of free determination of their own leadership."[120] The practical ethos of Ohio State was one that, among all the fields of English study, American literature best served at this point. In the decade from 1933 to 1943, American literature's curricular identity shifted from that of a heavily popular but still marginalized field to one that the English department and indeed the university embraced and trumpeted.

Orton's 1874 inaugural noted that the practical branches whose study begins in the common schools provide the knowledge we use "in all our buying, selling and getting gain. Without this knowledge, indeed, we cannot transact the business of life."[121] The Morrill Act, of course, had not advocated "business" at all; its own cause was "agricultural" and "mechanical" education. But the language of Morrill opened itself to an array of curricular applications and justifications. In 1937, Foerster excoriated the educational ethos of the state universities, "best exemplified in the Middle West," where "Each item of information should have its cash-value plainly stamped upon its face":

> Of what use were painting and poetry (mere frills), of what use were foreign languages (dead or alive), of what use was philosophy (mere speculation), or religion (mere wishing), or even history (the dead past)? The subject known as "English" fared better: good writing is useful, even in business correspondence; creative writing gives a certain "kick"; contemporary books mirror our dynamic civilization.[122]

"In a business civilization built upon applied science," Foerster wrote, "it became conventional for students to attend universities in order to learn

something which they could sell."[123] President Bevis' 1942 annual report noted that the War had given a huge boost to academic research in general: "The researcher no longer was looked upon as a long-haired dreamer, impractical and aloof. Industries were crying for his aid."[124] In his 1942 essay "Higher Education and the War," Spiller addressed the vocational ethos in higher education as "disastrous" for liberal studies, which vocationalists presented as "futile and time-wasting in such a crisis." Spiller wrote, "The burden of proof lies with the liberal colleges themselves; they must make out a convincing case for the worth of the product in itself rather than in comparison with a different product."[125] At Ohio State, the war transformed American literature studies into a thriving product indeed: the consummately practical liberal art.

# *Conclusion: the end of the curriculum*

The emergence of video-game studies as a new kind of college and university program provides one current illustration of the ways that the curricular canon repeatedly redefines knowledge.[1] A broad sector of the adult American public views the world of video gaming as a mindless, distracting, and perhaps even dangerous form of recreation that opposes, rather than embodies, what we hope to teach. Those who hold a competing view see gaming as a deeply engaging and stimulating form of fun and even as a new mode of critical thinking. We live in the transformative moment in which the cultural uncertainty about the meaning of video games is moving toward resolution by tipping them into the curriculum. Once they become curricular in a more widespread fashion, they will achieve knowledge status, and the terms of the present debate about their value will shift once again.

A century ago, the identity of American literature was undergoing a kindred process of cultural flux. Its image, too, was initially antithetical to the very idea of a higher curriculum. This conception held that American literature lacked seriousness; its materials were too chronologically close to current life to warrant scholarly treatment; it had no academic pedigree; people enjoyed reading it, so it didn't require attention in school; grade-school kids could understand it, so it didn't merit college status; and college students, when you let them have it, consumed it enthusiastically. Surely no subject with those qualities belonged in higher education. Nevertheless, American literature made it, as will video-game studies. The fact that American literature made it, of course, does not mean that its curricular canonicity is permanent. The preceding chapters and the work of other curricular historians have stressed that, as Rudolph nicely puts it, values change, and so does the curriculum.[2]

Seen from the largest historical vantage, American literature's history in the college curriculum falls into two major phases: a half century of uncertainty about its curricular identity, from roughly 1880 to 1930,

followed by a half century of stability from roughly 1930 until the 1980s. At that point, the canon wars inaugurated another phase of redefinition that pushed Americanist scholarship to redefine what Pease calls the "field-Imaginary."[3] Now, concerns that the term "American literature" itself is perhaps finally obsolete in a post-colonial, post-national, post-Americanist, transAmerican, hemispheric, transhemispheric, transnational, or maybe pre-national or sub-national, global and postmodern age, to cite only a partial list of terms in current use, are only one sign that scholars themselves feel the sense of an ending.[4]

The disciplinary state of American literature in this regard is, of course, far from exceptionalist.[5] Poststructuralism's legacy of disciplinary fragmentation has left meta-scholarly discourse throughout the humanities tinged with elegy.[6] Some observers call for a new intellectual synthesis or consensus to move the academy past the impasse; others recommend making a better public case about what we do; still others recommend engaging more concertedly the cultural capital of the sciences.[7] These solutions will fail. More relevant still is the reason they will fail: because they arise from a top-down, scholar-driven professional model in an era when that model itself is rapidly becoming obsolete. While the late nineteenth century inaugurated the age of the professor, that age is nearing its historical close.[8]

The next wave of change in higher education will arise from a whole new surge of bottom-up pressures in the classroom.[9] These will push the university past the current impasse of disciplinary fragmentation into the third most historically significant change in the history of American higher education, a stage I call the "post-curricular university."[10]

At present, the signifying function of the term "curriculum" is highly transitional. Current denotations vacillate between a conception of curriculum as a "regular course of study" and as simply the aggregate of all courses offered, which are not the same idea.[11] The confusion in the word's semantic field makes sense from the vantage of history, as it was the notion of curriculum as a school's "regular course of study" that was gradually replaced by elective models after 1870. Routine curricular practices enact the signifying muddle by gesturing toward regularity without providing it, attempting to sustain both denotations despite their essentially antithetical relation to one another. The theory behind general education classes, for example, is ostensibly to ensure that each student receives broad training in core areas to supplement the major area of specialization. Such classes also ostensibly unify the studies of all undergraduates, creating an intellectual community and, indeed, cultural literacy. Nevertheless, it is more typical

in practice that so many individual courses satisfy any given requirement that the idea of the general education curriculum functions not as curricular ballast but instead in scattered incoherence. Guillory argues that general education has been institutionally relegated to the lower division of college and university life where it serves confused simultaneous purposes as "the inevitable curricular expression of the liberal ideal" and as a fundamentally remedial set of basic courses. He concludes that the experiment of general education has failed.[12] Andrew Delbanco recently observed, "Over my own nearly quarter-century as a faculty member (four years at Harvard, nineteen years at Columbia), I have discovered that the question of what undergraduate education should be all about is almost taboo." Delbanco further observes that our educational age is one in which

> … even the most powerful institutions are loath to prescribe anything – except, of course, in the "hard" sciences, where requirements and prerequisites remain stringent … Nor, with a few exceptions, is there the slightest pressure from faculty, since there is no consensus among the teachers about what should be taught.[13]

While some individual schools retain directed curricula, the fact that local instances vary substantially from one another as well as from the practices of peer institutions in general is only one sign that the larger idea of the higher curriculum overall has, finally, lost its meaning.[14]

The model that underlies this muddle – that of a regular, stable curriculum in wise balance with its elective component, providing the best of both prescription and choice – will become increasingly vestigial in the next two decades. Indeed, it will become an artifact of the twentieth century to match the classical curriculum of the nineteenth. In contrast to both these historically prior models, the emergent post-curriculum will gradually cede the ideology of a core (whether real or imagined) and move toward a menu of subjects and classes whose contents are at all points and *by definition* wholly variable. In part, this shift in models will be fed by the dysfunction of the current curriculum. In part, it will be fed by massive structural changes in what counts as a "university" in the United States. (A Congressional budget bill in March 2006 allows federal student aid for online education.[15] The very nature of institutions of higher education – that is, what counts as and is classified as such – is changing in ways that traditional colleges, and indeed American society, have not yet grasped.) But most dramatic, and it is on this last point that I will linger in these pages, the post-curricular university will adopt this new model in large part because an increasing share of curricular power will fall to undergraduates.

Those of us who work in universities recognize immediately that higher education is becoming more consumer-driven. University administration already increasingly refers to students as "customers," and just as often the professoriate flinches.[16] Thomas H. Benton argues that the changing labor model of higher education that is converting the professoriate into part-time workers with no benefits, eroding tenure, and relying on student evaluations as a "faculty-culling device" is also turning professors into customer-service representatives.[17] While administrators and professors have always had to contend in some fashion with undergraduate preferences and behaviors, the current situation is historically unique in that the vector of power will now shift *to* the student and *away from* professors.[18] Our nation has not seen this seismic a change in the knowledge model at the heart of the university since the job class of the professor was invented in the late nineteenth century.

My assessment of the current shift does not imply that history is over, that I have called the final phase of higher education, and that my project has embraced teleology at last. My title, "The End of the Curriculum," marks the end of a phase, not the end of history – like Robert Browning's "last duchess." What I describe in the following pages is the frantic changes in which we are embroiled at the current moment. They are indeed producing a major – but not a final – shift; of course, historical accident (such as another world war) could completely recast outcomes. Readers should understand that I thus proffer my analysis of current trends under a non-teleological sign, of likelihood without certainty, of trajectory that reserves room for randomness.

Indeed, my concluding reflections do not presume to predict outcomes *a priori*. For example, I do not present a representative picture of the future university or the future American literature classroom. It is exactly my point that the curricular variability I describe logically disables the genre of the representative sketch and would indeed be belied by it. Here, then, I focus not on outcomes but on process. The pages that follow assess four major bottom-up trends shaping the ascendant post-curricular university, whose precise contours will emerge only through the contest ahead.

## STUDENT LITERACY IS CHANGING

We are too embroiled in the widely observed phenomenon of becoming digital to fully comprehend its implications. Nevertheless, we know that digital phenomena have utterly transformed daily life in an extraordinarily

short time; we also know that the pace of change is accelerating rather than stabilizing. Billy Frolick's witty essay in *The New Yorker*, "1992 House," captures the by-now almost prehistoric feel of the pre-digital era. The author's premise is that an eighth-grader has to conduct an experiment for his social studies class by living for a week as if in any particular year from the past. He chooses the remote era of 1992, which, as the student writes, lacks "the conveniences available in today's modern society." He compassionately concludes that "1992 was clearly a very confusing, difficult time in which to live in the United States of America."[19]

Those of us inside higher education treat each of the new steps of digitization as presumably sequential and sensible, yet in fact they add up to a picture in which the colleges we knew just yesterday look more and more like 1992 House. The University of Texas announced in 2005 that it is eliminating books from its undergraduate library, whose 90,000 volumes will be dispersed to other university collections to make room for a round-the-clock electronic information space. Frances Maloy, president of the Association of College and Research Libraries, praised Texas for recognizing that "it's in the digital age."[20] Librarians nationwide observe the fundamental shift in how college students conduct research, increasingly relying not on physical books but on electronic media. The college student's first research instinct "to Google it" is one that all of us who work with students can readily verify.[21] The Google phenomenon presents an excellent example of digitally literate behavior that, although relatively recent, has already foundationally transformed how we acquire information. Professors, too, have transformed their research habits in ways unimaginable only 10 or 15 years ago. Eighty-three percent of professors surveyed report that they spend less time in the library than before they had Internet access.[22]

As is typically the case at times of dramatic cultural shift, opinions about the digital age range between the extremes of optimism and pessimism. It is not my present concern to review or adjudicate these arguments. Whether one values the changes in progress as positive or negative is beside the historical point that they are, indeed, the hallmark of our age.[23] I want to stress instead that we are living not only through a change in how we do things, but through a change *in the very structures of learning themselves*, that is, in the way we process information.

The larger meaning of digital behavior transcends the basic issue of how students and teachers acquire information and conduct research: it speaks to a more fundamental shift in how people relate to the very idea of knowledge. Here I call upon Walter J. Ong's revolutionary 1982 study

of orality and literacy, in which he argued that the development of writing, more than any other single invention, transformed human consciousness.[24] In Ong's account, writing is not a transparent medium, but one whose materiality fundamentally transforms the nature of the message as well as the consciousness of both the sender and the recipient. Ong's formulation, "Writing is a technology that restructures thought," is one to update for the new wave of digital literacy.[25]

These almost unimaginably revolutionary transformations in the structure of thought are occurring right now, and their material signs are increasingly legible not only in all corners of daily life but also throughout higher education at all levels. The current generation of college students is the first one in history born with a chip.[26] A 2005 study by the Pew Internet and American Life Project concluded that teenagers are rapidly becoming the most prolific creators of online content. Journalist Tom Zeller, Jr., argues that digital experience is now "inextricable" from the experience of being a teenager. Bernard Luskin, director of the media psychology program at Fielding Graduate University in Santa Barbara, CA, calls them "screenagers."[27] The affiliated terms "Net Generation" and "Millennials" label those born between 1980 and 2000; they will continue to constitute the college-age population until 2022.[28] Current discourse treats this breed of students as radically distinct not only from previous generations of college students but also from their professors. And that distinction represents a chasm in forms of literacy, one that will only change when Millennials themselves become the professors.

Debate about how universities should handle the Net Generation centers on whether and to what extent colleges should make an effort to adapt to student tastes and behaviors, which commentators typically describe as a fondness for gadgets, a short attention span, and a predilection for multitasking. In October 2005, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* pitted educators who advocate tailoring college to the Millennial population against those who believe that doing so will "kill higher education." In the latter camp, Professor Naomi Baron commented, "It is very common to hear people say, Here's the Millennial or the digital generation, and we have to figure out how they learn. Poppycock. We get to mold how they learn." She went on to say, "There is this larger sense of control that students have," adding that they have "a different sense of who is running the communications show as well as who is running the educational show."[29] Her rhetoric, cast as if its greatest concern is that of best educational practices, more dramatically

bespeaks anxiety about a shift in the balance of power from professor to student.

Laments about the "larger sense of control" that Millennial students exhibit foreground new technologies as influences that corrupt the young and their habits. Increasingly severe enrollment pressures are leading cash-strapped colleges to provide services like Napster to attract matriculants. Music downloading, like cable TV and Internet access, is an amenity that students now expect their colleges to provide.[30] Adam Weinberg, a dean and professor at Colgate University, calls this phenomenon the "amenities arms race" whose inherent danger is that of cultivating a student population of "cynical consumers mired in needs."[31] Instead of either opposing or merely tolerating changing student behaviors, some colleges seek instead to ride the curve to the benefit of all parties. Several now offer cellphone plans under which the phones serve double duty, also providing access to current campus information. (President Susan A. Cole of Montclair State University in New Jersey comments that students already view email as an obsolete technology used "to communicate with old people."[32])

Of course, the fear of student corruption by technological change is not new. In 1882, professors at Ohio State repeatedly complained about "the indiscriminate use of the telephone made by the college students," a complaint that obsessively preoccupied a number of faculty meetings. Professor T.C. Mendenhall finally suggested "that no student be allowed to use the telephone without the written order of some member of the faculty." The faculty later voted to send this request to the Board of Trustees for action.[33] We may have changed the content of the debate from one form of media to another, from telephones to cell phones, but youth behaviors and technological change will once again preside.

The digital transformations shaping screenagers will not, of course, remain politely outside the classroom door. (Holding out against the rise of the telephone at Ohio State didn't succeed very well either.) A back-to-school window display at my local Apple Store featured iBooks and PowerBooks handsomely arranged in front of a wallpaper background depicting crammed bookshelves. The slogan read, "The only books you'll need." In the spring of 2005, The University of California at Berkeley announced a deal with iTunes to make lectures from almost thirty courses available for downloading or via semester-long podcasts.[34] James J. Duderstadt, president emeritus of the University of Michigan, observes that faculty are increasingly playing the role of guide or coach to students

who are moving from a passive style of learning to an active style of "synthesizing" knowledge. Significantly, Duderstadt links this transition to the possible extinction of colleges in the digital age.[35] In a 2005 interview, Bill Gates imagined how technology will shape higher education in the next decade. In his view, printed textbooks will fade from the classroom:

> The ability of the professor to take the curriculum they want and assemble it in a rich way and have it be interactive is just so superior in digital form, as well as the cost is lower, and the convenience to the student of always having their tablet that's connected up wirelessly to the Internet, to always have all their textbooks with them, and they can collaborate with their friends and annotate things they don't understand and share that with other people.[36]

The orientation of this future classroom is not only centered in digital rather than print media; it's also a bottom-up classroom, focused on the end-user – sure to provoke Baron's anxiety about "who is running the educational show."

Culture-keepers have expressed fear about the changing nature of undergraduates and their affiliation with technology. For example, the MLA and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) have recently sounded the alarm over "reading at risk." A 2004 NEA report on the subject calls for "serious action" to address the "declining importance of literature to our populace." The NEA frames its findings as ones that come "at a critical time, when electronic media are becoming the dominant influence in young people's worlds."[37] Once again, the villainous electronic media here stand opposed to "literature" and "reading." But as Steven Johnson argues, the NEA's findings are so embedded in a particular traditional model of reading that emergent practices automatically appear to be inferior. Johnson invents an engaging thought experiment in which the historical order of things is reversed, and books are invented after video games. He imagines how teachers, parents, and cultural authorities might have responded to this suspicious new culture of "books": "These new 'libraries' that have arisen in recent years to facilitate reading activities are a frightening sight: dozens of young children, normally so vivacious and socially interactive, sitting alone in cubicles, reading silently, oblivious to their peers."[38] With all the time screenagers spend online reading and writing, as enthusiastic and prolific creators of online content, what's at risk is surely not literacy as such. What's at risk is an old model of literacy. And the old model is, precisely, old.

## STUDENTS ARE CHANGING THEIR IDEAS ABOUT AUTHORSHIP

As forms of literacy change, literature professors simultaneously face a student population with a different conception of authorship, both their own practices as authors and those of others. Let's take the wiki as a case in point. A wiki "is a web application that allows users to add content, as on an Internet forum, but also allows anyone to edit the content."[39] Journalist Brock Read describes the wiki as "a blog informed by socialism."[40] In the world of the wiki, Roland Barthes' "author–God" is indeed dead. Authorship assumes a new form in which authors and readers do not stand in separate categories as producer and consumer, but in a hybrid space like that engendered at *Wikipedia*, "a Web-based, multilanguage, free-content encyclopedia written collaboratively by volunteers." Formally launched on January 15, 2001, *Wikipedia* is now one of the web's most popular reference sites, garnering around 60 million hits per day. Entries are the communal product of as many contributors as care to write, whether they agree with each other or not and whether or not they possess specialized knowledge about the subject in question. The project's home page explains that *Wikipedia* "is built on the belief that collaboration among users will improve articles over time … Its authors need not have any expertise or formal qualifications in the subjects which they edit, and users are warned that their contributions may be 'edited mercilessly and redistributed at will' by anyone who so wishes." *Wikipedia* uses the term "edit wars" for the process of active dispute over the topic in question. Entries are, by definition, never finished.[41] Indeed, the writing space of the wiki is plastic, not only encouraging but in fact constituted by the phenomena of non-linearity, incompletion, and communal authorship. The wiki cultivates a new understanding of what it means to be an author.[42]

English professors using wikis in the classroom report that the medium changes how students experience their own authorship. Mark Phillipson observes that teaching Romantic poetry via wiki cultivates "a new type of literacy," a different form of both thinking and writing.[43] M.C. Morgan uses wiki writing in his freshman composition classes, where writers post bits of text and rework them continuously, instead of moving in a more linear fashion through writing stages of drafting, proofreading, and completion as they might do in the conventional five-paragraph essay. Morgan reports that his students are less apprehensive about writing in the more fluid medium of the wiki.[44]

Changes in how students conceive of their own authorship will of course also affect how they understand authorship as an historical phenomenon. Teacher Rachel Toor was perplexed to notice that her freshman composition students referred to authors by their first names. (Writing about George Orwell's essay "Shooting an Elephant," for example, one student wrote, "George shot the elephant because he felt peer pressure.") Toor concludes that the more general phenomenon of writing in cyberspace, "where everyone can be an author," has produced a new generation of students who do not feel "cowed" by the authority of print culture."[45] Indeed, teenagers working in cyberspace typically conceive of themselves as what *The New York Times* calls "content creators."[46]

From this larger vantage, the Authors Guild's copyright infringement lawsuit against Google in September 2005 marks an almost poetically historic confrontation, between twentieth- and twenty-first visions of authorship. Both Amazon and Google are developing systems to enable consumers to search books online and then to purchase any page or section. As journalist Edward Wyatt observes, the animating idea is to "do for books what Apple has done for music, allowing readers to buy and download parts of individual books for their own use."[47] While technology's initial foray into e-books failed because readers found them unwieldy, the current move toward treating the book as a fundamentally segmentable medium is crucially strategic and likely to reinvigorate the entire phenomenon of digital books. It will do so by changing widespread cultural perceptions of what a book *is*: a book will become an electronic as much as a printed phenomenon – not *more than*, but *as much as*, a signifying shift that e-books never managed to provoke. It will also change perceptions of what a book is *for*: a book is for me to use, in parts, as I see fit, for my content creation. Readers have always used and reproduced parts of printed books for their own purposes (the "Extracts" section of *Moby-Dick* provides a convenient case in point), but the core definition of a book as fundamentally segmentable, to be purchased *in* and specifically *for parts*, will be a new phenomenon. Wyatt correctly suggests that these new systems "could revolutionize how people read books."[48] *Wired* founding editor Kevin Kelly's "manifesto" in *The New York Times Magazine* argues that publishers should "be very, very afraid": the business model based on mass-produced copies of printed books has been permanently disrupted by the electronic economy. Kelly's premise is that printed copies of isolated books no longer have their former value, and that indeed the very definition of a book's

value is changing radically. "Value has shifted away from a copy toward the many ways to recall, annotate, personalize, edit, authenticate, display, mark, transfer and engage a work."[49] The fact that it was John Updike who wrote an impassioned response to Kelly's "grisly" scenario is a perfect cultural emblem for this tense moment of toppling models. Titling his essay "The End of Authorship," Updike laments the prospect of "individuality" threatened by "a sparkling cloud of snippets."[50]

The idea of a book as something to be produced, sold, and consumed as parts will further change how people think about authorship, both their own and that of other authors: as online content creators amidst a universe of like-minded practitioners. Changes akin to these are already transforming the contemporary art world, where the new phenomenon of the "art collective" is, as critic Holland Cotter puts it, scrambling "existing aesthetic formulas." Defined as "joint production among parties of equal standing," the art collective could be composed of one person operating under many names; many people operating under one name; or any other flesh-and-blood- or cyber-group that does away with the "one-artist-one-object model." As Cotter stresses, art collectives "confuse how we think about art and assign value to it. This can only be good."[51]

Recent high-profile cases of plagiarism and the kinds of media attention they have received mark an anxious cultural moment: the status of authors and their relation to proprietary text is becoming more fluid than it has been since the invention of modern copyright. As Mark Rose points out, "Copyright is founded on the concept of the unique individual who creates something original and is entitled to reap a profit from those labors."[52] While controversial plagiarism cases are not in themselves a new phenomenon, my point is that, at the present time, the larger meaning of plagiarism cases like these is changing and is indeed inflected by fluctuations in the very conception of authorship. If books become fully plastic, the idea of the author as we have known it might well become a twentieth-century artifact as well. Further, our new crop of younger authors might not care: which brings me to point number 3.

## THE PARTICIPATION AGE HAS BEGUN

We have entered an age of collective intellectual power, emblematized by Google, citizen journalism, peer-to-peer and open-source software, file-sharing applications, wikis, online games like Spore (that allows users to develop civilizations in which other gamers can then play) and World of Warcraft (that allows users to create characters who engage in real-time

battle with characters created by others), and a growing array of other forms of user-generated content. Electronic formats that situate the user as a source of information, then link that individual into large groups of other users, are creating a new arena of multi-directional knowledge production. The general manager of Google's satellite imaging group comments that these new knowledge systems are "beyond what is possible with individual effort, but once it's there, millions of people will have a tremendous impact."[53] Jonathan I. Schwartz, the president of Sun Microsystems, aptly calls our era "the participation age."[54]

These new participatory forms of collective intellectual power restructure the basic flow of information that has traditionally defined an array of industries, which must now change or die in response. Journalist John Markoff describes "a scramble" by media and technology companies to respond to changes from "a one-way broadcast or publishing model" to the "bottom-up creative process" now replacing it.[55] The very existence of mainstream media is threatened by these trickle-up pressures. Network television, newspapers, and radio are all suffering from increasing loss of market share to emerging digital forms. Journalist David Carr writes, "The ruling media elite are quickly adopting the methodology and technology of the insurgency, attempting to co-opt something that was meant to tip them over."[56] In March 2006, Knight Ridder, the second-largest newspaper company in the United States, sold itself to a publisher half its size. Journalists themselves read this event as a symptom of a newspaper industry "gripped by uncertainty" as readers shift from printed to online newspapers.[57] Reporter Michael Currie Schaffer of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, age 32, commented, "Something happened to our generation where we were not raised to do something that our parents did every day … I have friends … who are smart people, who are very well informed, but they don't feel the need to get a paper."[58]

Blogger and former media executive Prince Campbell recently declared that broadcast television is nearly dead, staying afloat only because advertisers still value old media. "But I wouldn't worry too much about that," he comments, "because their business is next."[59] Indeed, Robert M. Greenberg, chairman and chief executive of the New York advertising and communications agency RG/A, comments that "techonology is going to wreak havoc on the agency business," which needs to overhaul how it relates to consumers, especially the Millennials. "It's not about linear communication, and the millennials understand that; it's about symbols and icons and you click here and you click there and you control it," he

remarks. RG/A is pioneering interactive advertising to address the new shape of consumer power.[60]

As the participation age economy shifts the basic flow of information, the vector of power also shifts, toward the individuals who used to occupy the role of more passive recipients. A longstanding precept of American ideology, the concept of individual empowerment is assuming new forms that are restructuring the exploding world of information exchange. As Schwartz puts it, the "endpoints are starting to inform the center."[61] Chris Anderson, Editor-in-Chief at *Wired*, coined the phrase "the Long Tail" in 2004 to describe the rise of niche markets in the media and entertainment industries. Music videos on Yahoo! Launch, DVDs on Netflix, and songs at the iTunes Music Store present exemplary cases. The Long Tail economy is not driven by hits; its primary economic virtue is that it caters to the consumer preferences of a vast array of niche markets rather than to hit-driven mass preferences. If you plot these specialized offerings on a graph along with bestsellers, they trail off like a long tail that never reaches zero, but, as one commentator puts it, "they cumulatively represent a large market that can be easily aggregated on the Internet."[62] The fact that the profitability of niche markets now *rivals* that of hits makes for a revolutionary redefinition of market power. As Anderson puts it,

> Hit-driven economics is a creation of an age without enough room to carry everything for everybody. Not enough shelf space for all the CDs, DVDs, and games produced. Not enough screens to show all the available movies. Not enough channels to broadcast all the TV programs, not enough radio waves to play all the music created … This is the world of scarcity. Now, with online distribution and retail, we are entering a world of abundance.[63]

The "abundant" economy of the Long Tail validates the taste of the particular consumer in ways that a hit-driven economy did not.

Journalist Saul Hansell coins the term "slivercasting" for the same niche-driven phenomenon in Internet TV. Programming that would never succeed in prime time finds dedicated small audiences who sustain the economy of highly specialized shows such as the new Sail.tv, exclusively devoted to – you guessed it – programs about sailing.[64] When I was a child, we could choose to watch a handful of network channels. We could choose, but that was the extent of our choice. Fifteen years ago (roundabout 1992) digital cable offered the prospect of 500 channels. Although initially greeted with skepticism about oversupply, they are now largely full.[65] The site Squidoo.com, inaugurated in March 2006, offers a forum in which Internet authors with various forms of obscure expertise,

such as beef jerky (*www.squidoo.com/jerky/*), market their opinions to the like minded. Squidoo does not vet the credentials of its experts; the collective opinion of the site's users determines credibility.[66]

The new thrust of the market is increasingly to value, and to find new ways to value, participant individuals; to welcome the individualized forms of taste they express; and to cater to rather than marginalize the individual as such, who no longer has to adapt to hit-driven economics. Indeed, Anderson's term "abundance" resembles other Internet discourse invoking "generosity," "sharing," "empowerment," "participation," and "entitlement," all of which are celebratory rhetorical counters to top-down models of power.[67]

The new power of the individual is percolating upward not only in habits of product consumption but also in control and distribution of information. Let us take the case of college freshman Michael Brim, who, according to news reports, dines on Lucky Charms and rarely leaves his dorm room except to attend class. Brim upended the world of American retailing in 2005 by creating a website that posts retailers' secrets for the day-after-Thanksgiving shopping frenzy that the industry calls "Black Friday," construed as "black" because at this point in the calendar year retail balance sheets move enthusiastically into the black. Brim posted store circulars on the Net, unofficially and far ahead of their planned circulation by retailers themselves, interfering with both their advertising strategies and their profit model. According to journalist Michael Barbaro, renegade sites like Brim's "highlight how much the Web is shifting the balance of power in retailing from companies to consumers."[68] Retailers are watching Google itself warily, worried that its efficiencies in organizing and distributing such data might steer consumers readily to better deals nearby, upsetting the customary economic models even of giants like Wal-Mart. According to Lou Steinberg, chief technology officer of Symbol Technologies, the current climate of "disruptive technology" that threatens traditional industries is driven by power moving "to the edge – to consumers."[69]

Zeller characterizes the innovations of our age as "born in some college dorm where an abiding geekiness is the motivator and earning profits means little."[70] Google itself started less than a decade ago in a Stanford University dorm room.[71] Will Wright, developer of the Sims series of video games and now developing Spore, remarks: "We have a whole generation of kids who feel entitled to be game designers."[72] Millennials assume the ability to share, participate, choose, customize; they assume a two-way relation to the information economy and to power; and they will

bring this set of assumptions to college classrooms whether their professors think it's "poppycock" or not.[73]

Whether arising from geekiness or generosity, digital culture is generating its own systems of exchange, and not only those of the Long Tail that produce actual dollars in profit. A primary coin of that realm is participation itself. As a recent headline in *The New York Times* put it, "Need Answers? Ask Anybody."[74] The participation age is altering more than the ways in which information is transmitted: it is redefining basic assumptions about who produces knowledge and, indeed, who is *entitled* to produce it. This feature of the participatory knowledge economy leads me to point number 4.

### AMATEURS ARE BECOMING THE NEW AUTHORITIES

As user participation expands and transforms where and from whom people seek information, it simultaneously challenges the boundaries between professional and amateur. These were the boundaries so carefully demarcated by the culture of professionalism in the late nineteenth century, and they are crumbling with astonishing readiness. In the world of music, for example, "The nexus of influence has shifted in the last few years," journalist David Carr notes. "Destroying someone's career or pulling work from obscurity used to be the province of well-financed mass and trade publications, but now anybody with a voice strong enough to stand out on the Web can have a real impact." He cites the indie music tastemaker Pitchfork Media, started by Ryan Schreiber in his parents' basement, as a case in point. Garnering 125,000 hits a day through word of mouth among the like-minded, Pitchfork's opinions have driven substantial record sales.[75]

The new youth-oriented cable network Current TV, launched in the summer of 2005, targets viewers aged 18 to 34 by offering them a voice in programming. Journalist Alessandra Stanley comments that reality television has spawned "a generation of viewers who feel entitled to be on camera." Current TV plays to this market by offering viewer-contributed content that has undergone a selection process by still other viewers, who screen it at Current's web site. This participatory process adds what Stanley calls "grass-roots diversity" to the television power of media conglomerates.[76]

Bottom-up pressures in the world of news are redefining the profession of journalism by muddying the boundaries between amateur and professional. Blogs and vlogs are changing American news as well as

assumptions about who counts as a journalist. Citizen journalists preempted traditional news media by acquiring and disseminating the earliest photos of the July 2005 London subway bombing. Dan Gillmor, founder of Grassroots Media, commented, "There was a cliché that journalists write the first draft of history. Now I think these people are writing the first draft of history at some level, and that's an important shift."[77] Journalist Katharine Q. Seelye characterizes the transformation in news media across the country as one in which "top-down, voice-of-God journalism is being challenged by what is called participatory journalism, or civic or citizen journalism," in forms ranging from unedited "newspaper" web sites to collective editorial writing.[78] Journalism professor Jay Rosen at New York University shrewdly coins the phrase, "the people formerly known as the audience."[79]

Richard A. Posner calls the blog the "latest, and perhaps gravest, challenge to the journalistic establishment," noting that journalists accuse bloggers of lowering standards, but their real concern is the threat that the amateurs pose to their own status as professionals.[80] Posner concludes, "In effect, the blogosphere is a collective enterprise – not 12 million separate enterprises, but one enterprise with 12 million reporters, feature writers and editorialists, yet with almost no costs." Despite possible critiques of blog reliability, Posner points out, they "get 12 million people to *write* rather than just stare passively at a screen."[81] That is hardly the picture of literacy at risk.

But it *is* a face-off between amateur and professional. The Greensboro, N.C.'s newspaper *The News & Record* experimented with converting itself into a virtual town square where citizens would have a say. Editor John Robinson was initially "annoyed" by the misinformed nature of the contributions. "But they were scooping us," he added. "They knew things that were going on that we didn't, in the schools and other places. There was power in what they were doing."[82] Steve Outing, a senior editor at the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, remarks, "I don't think we're anywhere near figuring this citizen journalism/grass-roots media thing out."[83]

Disruptions in the boundaries between amateur and professional are forcing institutional change. The new Graduate School of Journalism at the City University of New York named Jeff Jarvis, a major proponent and practitioner of citizen journalism, blogging, and online journalism, as the director of its new-media program in September 2005. *The New York Times* reporter covering the story wittily led her article: "For some old-school journalists, blogging is the worst thing to hit the print medium

since, well, journalism school." She went on to say that the journalists in the anti-blogging camp might well avert their eyes at the appointment of Jarvis. Jarvis himself commented that new media dismantle the economic model underlying twentieth-century journalism as well as the profession's most basic contours. "This is really the first time since William Randolph Hearst that a young journalist can think like an entrepreneur," he remarked.[84] The increasingly unstable boundaries between amateurs and professionals are also forcing reporters to change how they do their jobs. One journalist noted, "We've pretended to be like priests turning water to wine, like it's a secret process. Those days are gone."[85]

The face-off between professional and amateur is not confined to entertainment, news, or even the digital sphere. Social critic Charles Leadbeater has coined the term "Pro-Am" to describe a new kind of demi-expert who is erasing the formerly more rigid boundaries between professionals and amateurs. Leadbeater believes that the Pro-Am phenomenon is producing innovations at all levels of human activity, including but extending well beyond the user-generated realm of digital knowledge production. In Leadbeater's assessment, we are entering a "user revolution," an era of "mass innovation" arising from user-driven communities.[86] One Pro-Am, for example, a man who installs TV satellite dishes for a living, discovered a nebula near the Orion constellation in January 2005; professional astronomers worldwide lauded his discovery. Here we might well recall Baym's assessment of the ways that sciences, including astronomy, sustained and embraced amateur participation in the nineteenth century.[87] But the culture of professionalism ascendant after the Civil War increasingly stratified the social sphere into amateur and professional camps. Current trends are moving in the opposite direction. The British journal *Nature* published a news story in December 2005 assessing the accuracy of *Wikipedia* to rival that of *Encyclopaedia Brittanica*. *Brittanica*, which describes itself as the oldest continually published reference work in the English language, responded with a level of angry passion well suited to the genuine threat of *Wikipedia*'s amateur challenge.[88] Journalist Clive Thompson observes that professionals should get used to sharing the stage, because "if Leadbeater is right, the future belongs not to the pros, but to the weekend warriors."[89]

In the 1890s, the new "departments" at American colleges and universities reorganized the curriculum in top-down fashion, around the subjects defined by professors and their new areas of specialized expertise. We are now at the historical cusp at which that development is reversing itself and moving in the opposite direction. Historian Lynn Hunt points out

that higher education changes when its consumers and producers change, quite apart from the matter of intellectual trends themselves.[90] Now, the balance is shifting once again. The consumers will change the producers; the amateurs will change the professionals. These bottom-up pressures will in turn shape how we in the field of American literature process the scholarly debates of the past 25 years. The extent to which the field will acknowledge the bottom-up material forces behind the changing shape of ideas remains to be seen.[91]

Only the contests that lie ahead can carve out the shape of the post-curricular university. Although this new university unquestionably represents an historically foundational shift in American higher education, I do not share the current elegiac mode of post-humanities discourse, animated as it is by the idea that we have lost our curricular battle and been left facing an abyss. We are not necessarily facing an abyss. What we are certainly facing is undiscovered terrain. Like the hero Link in the blockbuster video game series *The Legend of Zelda*, we can only acquire the tools we need by walking forward into unknown realms.

# *Notes*

## INTRODUCTION

1 Hofstadter and Hardy 11.

2 Scholars have offered as alternatives such formulations as "colonial and United States literature," "transAmerican literature," "transhemispheric literature," "American literatures," and "postnational literatures," usually constituted around the premise of thinking outside nationalist and (implicitly) imperialist ideologies. The historical resolution of these fluctuations remains unclear at the present moment. Similar anxieties about imperialist, essentialist, exceptionalist, and consensus ideologies built into the word "American" have also marked the field of American studies. See Radway 1–32. Pease and Wiegman characterize their edited collection *The Futures of American Studies* as "part of an unfinished encounter with the emergence of futurity" ("Futures," *The Futures of American Studies* 4). While the institutional origins, formations, and histories of "American literature" and "American studies" with respect to one another are not coterminous, it is the case that their intellectual domains today are nearly indistinguishable, although their institutional positions certainly are not. American literature has mostly been and still is primarily located in English departments, while American studies has had a distinct kind of institutional history relying on an array of departmental disciplines (such as English and History) to build a typically non-departmental entity like a "program." Pease and Wiegman point out that "literature and history departments supplied the institutional sites wherein the field of American studies collaborated with the press, the university system, the publishing industry, and other aspects of the cultural apparatus that managed the semantic field" (16). On the history of American studies as such, which is not my subject in the present study, see Wise 293–337; Denning 356–380; Mechling, Merideth, and Wilson 363–389; and Marx 118–134.

3 The phrase "American literature" should be understood to appear in quotation marks throughout the pages that follow. I will eschew actual quotation marks henceforth to avoid needlessly cluttering my pages.

4 Jones, "The Orphan Child of the Curriculum" 376–388.

5 Rudolph, *American College* 266–268, 294; quoting Cornell 266; Rudolph, *Curriculum* 116–138, 131.

6 Graff, *Professing*; Shumway and Dionne, eds., *Disciplining English: Alternative Histories, Critical Perspectives*; Franklin, "English Studies" 346–370; Parker 339–351; Warner 1–28.

7 Warner 11.

8 Daniel Aaron, personal interview, 1 September 1995; R.W.B. Lewis, personal interview, 28 August 1995.

9 The longstanding debate about American literary nationalism provides one resonant example of a counter-discourse about American literature's inferiority; nevertheless, as a counter-discourse, it was of course predicated upon the discourse of inferiority itself. The rhetoric of cultural humility (or chauvinism) need not and should not be assumed to stand as its own explanation, although treating it as if it does so remains the typical gesture of the literary historian. See Ruland, *The Native Muse: Theories of American Literature* and *A Storied Land: Theories of American Literature* for an exhaustive record of what Ruland calls the "endlessly repetitive debate." While Ruland notes that the debate about literary nationalism was only casually related to the actual development of American writing, he does not analyze the logic of disconnection between these realms of discourse, which would be a necessary next step for understanding the historical phenomena of evaluation at work. (See Preface, *The Native Muse* vii–viii; Preface, *A Storied Land* xi–xii.) Michaels notes the emptiness of appealing to the "American struggle for cultural independence" as an explanatory formula to be accepted in its own terms (144 note 8), a judgment with which I concur.

10 Vanderbilt 252; Hubbell, "American Literature, 1928–1954," *South and Southwest: Literary Essays and Reminiscences* 26, 32.

11 These were the most common formulations of American literature's fundamental character, whether construed negatively or positively, whether by opponents or advocates. The particular case I quote is a lecture by Franklin B. Snyder before the American Literature Group of the Modern Language Association at the December meeting of 1926, entitled "What is American 'Literature'?" Snyder's talk was published in 1927 in *Sewanee Review*, 206–215; see 206, 207, 208–209.

12 For histories of the field construed as essentially a history of published research, see Vanderbilt; Shumway, *Creating American Civilization*; Ruland, *Rediscovery*; and Reising. For especially trenchant analyses of canon change in the 1920s, see Paul Lauter, "Race and Gender in the Shaping of the American Literary Canon: A Case Study from the Twenties" 22–47 and "Melville Climbs the Canon" 1–24.

13 My primary critical antecedents here are Graff, Guillory, and Lauter, all of whom, albeit from different vantages, stress the centrality of institutions to definitions of "the literary."

14 My formulation here about the force of the social contexts in which knowledge is purveyed is inspired by Barbara Ehrenreich's commentary on the current conditions of higher education, particularly as they relate to the labor practices of Yale University. (Ehrenreich ix–xii.)

15 I agree with Guillory that "While the debate over the canon concerns what texts should be taught in the schools, what remains invisible within this debate – too large to be seen at all – is the school itself" (*Cultural Capital* 8, 38). Formative works of scholarship that appeared early in the process of upending the canon include Baym, *Woman's Fiction* and "Melodramas of Beset Manhood: How Theories of American Fiction Exclude Women Authors"; Andrews; Baker, Jr.; Fetterley, *Provisions: A Reader From 19th-Century American Women*; Tompkins; Carby; and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *The Signifying Monkey*.

16 Lauter, "Race and Gender" 24.

17 Guillory, *Cultural Capital* 51.

18 Lauter, "Race and Gender" 24. Lauter assesses three primary factors shaping the increasingly exclusionary canon emerging in the 1920s: the professionalization of the teaching of literature, nationalist and formalist aesthetic systems as they increasingly shaped and dominated literary thought, and the historiographic organization of literature into conventional "periods" and "themes" (27, 31–32).

19 Guillory rejects Barbara Herrnstein Smith's theory of contingency as mistaken precisely because questions of value are, finally, not simply philosophically contingent but historically determined within the realm of social relations (*Cultural Capital* 324–325; Smith, *Contingencies of Value*). I define contingencies within such a sphere of precise historical phenomena.

20 Lauter, "Race and Gender" 23; emphasis in original.

21 Vanderbilt and John Smith Lewis, Jr. ("The History of Instruction in American Literature in Colleges and Universities of the United States 1827–1939") provide two representative examples of this assumption. Susan Harris Smith provides a sample counterpoint in *American Drama: The Bastard Art*, which argues that "American drama is still American literature's unwanted bastard child" (10), occupying a marginal curricular place within American literature more generally. (See especially chapter four, "Did She Jump or Was She Pushed? American Drama in the University Curriculum" 114–158.) It remains to be seen whether American drama will stake out an alternative curricular identity. A genre that successfully negotiated a change in image, from its original reputation as easy and popular to (eventually) worthy of study, was the novel. As Ian Watt points out, the novel began as one of two eighteenth-century literary forms (the other being the newspaper) that encouraged a "rapid, inattentive kind of reading habit," an "effortlessness" of satisfaction (*The Rise of the Novel* 49). Guillory argues that Wordsworth's poetic project was in part carved out in disdain for this public taste that favored novels and other ephemeral reading matter (*Cultural Capital* 130). These subjects, like American literature, have their own elaborate curricular histories.

22 Bourdieu comments that his sociology of taste "transgresses one of the fundamental taboos of the intellectual world, in relating intellectual products and producers to their social conditions of existence" xiii.

23 Lauter, *Canons*; Shumway; Carnochan.

24 Guillory's recasting of the canon debates centers in his argument that canonicity inheres not in works themselves, but in their transmission via the school as a specific site of social practice (e.g., *Cultural Capital* 38, 50, 55).

25 Carnochan 6, 3, 2. Carnochan is especially interested in the ideology of "liberal education" as a transhistorical value that has obscured the actual history of universities. He argues that "a fuller sense of the history of the university and its curriculum as an ongoing intellectual episode, subject to the same sort of scrutiny and analysis as any other long-term struggle of contested ideas, is badly needed" (4).

26 Bledstein, especially 287–331; Higham 3–18.

27 Bledstein 82; 65–66; 85–86. The American Medical Association, too, while formed in 1846, remained a minor forum for the medical profession until the 1890s, when a surge of interest among doctors turned it into an important national gatekeeper for the profession (Wiebe 117; 114–115).

28 Hopkins did not award the first Ph.D. degree in America; the first three were awarded by Yale in 1861 (Rudolph, *American College* 335).

29 My four cases cannot and do not, of course, wholly define various institutional types, just as these institutions are not wholly defined by their founding ideologies. As Veysey has aptly pointed out, the idea that any institution was a pure instance of a "type" is a myth belied by the historical record. Although institutions were animated by guiding ideologies, usually best represented by the rhetoric and policy of their administrations, the actual facts of campus life, particularly of faculty practice, often offered substantial counterpoints (58).

30 Poovey 308; Veysey 58.

31 Scott has stressed the historical value of disrupting pretended continuities in order to attend to the actual flux of history, inverting what she describes as a teleological historical metaphysic and patiently exploring instead the randomness of events (Scott 97).

32 For example, Vanderbilt; Shumway; Reising; Ruland, *Rediscovery*.

33 The fact that its place post-1950 continued to be postcolonial, to use Lawrence Buell's phrase, and the related arguments that it should be separated from English entirely, as Kolodny and Spengemann have argued, are phenomena that fall outside the bounds of this study (Buell 411–442; Spengemann 7–27; Kolodny 1–18).

34 For an excellent assessment of the dramatic structural changes in American universities resulting from World War II, see Geiger, *To Advance Knowledge: The Growth of American Research Universities, 1900–1940*, *Research and Relevant Knowledge: American Research Universities Since World War II*, and *Knowledge and Money: Research Universities and the Paradox of the Marketplace*, as well as Hollinger, ed., *The Humanities and the Dynamics of Inclusion Since World War II*.

35 Pease, "New Americanists."

## 1 THE BIRTH OF THE PH.D.: THE JOHNS HOPKINS RESEARCH MODEL

1 Yale awarded the first Ph.D. in 1861. Rudolph, *American College* 269; Cordasco 20, 16.
2 Morison 334.
3 Flexner 532. Flexner was the author of the influential "Flexner report" for the Carnegie Foundation, a report that revolutionized American medical school training. Cordasco 6; Hannaway 160, note 11.
4 Shils 28.
5 Cordasco quoting Eliot 1.
6 Cordasco 2; Rudolph, *American College* 396.
7 Cordasco 110.
8 Hannaway 146.
9 Rudolph, *American College* 336.
10 On the "matrix of specialization," see Higham; on professionalism, Bledstein; on capital and labor in the postbellum era, Trachtenberg 70–100, 89.
11 Bledstein 84–85.
12 Higham argues that the oft-noted professionalization of postbellum America was the effect of a more primary driving force, specifically the growth of specialization. Specialization countered the fundamental presuppositions of antebellum American culture with its focus on jack-of-all-trades individualism. The specialist, with his esoteric knowledge, also stood as an affront to American egalitarianism. Higham's thesis is that American culture resolved this tension by developing specialization along horizontal rather than vertical lines, which widened opportunities for people to specialize but also structurally restricted the opportunity to dominate others (10).
13 I say "in part" because this historical turn need not be and surely is not permanent. A half-century of uncertainty inaugurated another half-century of stability that is now once again poised to change.
14 See Graff, *Professing*; Frantzen; Franklin, "English Studies"; Warner.
15 As with my use of the term "American literature," I will henceforth use the term "English" without quotation marks, to avoid needless typographical clutter. The term should be understood as one under investigation at all points and thus always in implicit quotation marks.
16 School nomenclature in nineteenth-century America provides a chaotic taxonomy at best. Many schools operating under different names fell at the intermediate rank between elementary common schools and college: academies, seminaries, grammar schools, gymnasiums, English schools, and high schools, for example. As William J. Reese explains, the editor of *The American Almanac and Repository of Useful Knowledge* in 1834 attempted to clarify the terminology. He concluded that all these terms applied to schools intermediate between common schools and college; some of them were classical, college preparatory schools; others provided "English education"; but many were of "a mixed character, having a part of their pupils pursuing

the study of the ancient or modern languages, and more of them pursuing English studies" (quoted by Reese 30).

17 Reese 65, 2, 95.

18 Reese 107–108, 115–116; personal correspondence with William J. Reese, 10 December 2002; Rudolph, *Curriculum* 159, 31–32, 34–36. Some schools were exclusively English schools or classical schools; the increasingly popular new institution called the high school often offered both curricula and allowed students to select one. While the two kinds of curricula were roughly equivalent in popularity in the high schools at mid-century, as of the 1860s the English curriculum increasingly overtook the classical (Reese 95).

19 Buell's essay points out the postcolonial mentality at work in the sphere of literary production and reception, which is of course both distinct from and coterminous with curricular phenomena.

20 Reese 32. D.J. Palmer traces a similar division between the classical curriculum at seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Oxford and Cambridge and the alternative "general education" curricula (which included, for example, the "modern poetry" of the day) at the Dissenting Academies. The latter trained both the non-conformist clergy who were excluded from the universities as well as students destined for "worldly careers" (Palmer 7–8).

21 Reese 94–98, xvi, 248, 224–225.

22 By 1905, Greek was a curricular dead language and Latin was soon to follow (Rudolph, *Curriculum* 181–182).

23 Reese 28.

24 Reese 94–95. Academies were sometimes single-sex and sometimes coeducational; high schools in general were mostly coeducational, although even coeducational high schools often separated young men and women into male and female departments (Reese 224). These non-classical institutions were thus also configured around gender, although the configurations of gender at different kinds of institutions are not necessarily synonymous.

25 Reese 224–225. This discrepancy between the sexes retains a high profile. (Tamar Lewin, "Boys Are No Match for Girls in Completing High School" *The New York Times* 19 April 2006: A12.)

26 Reese 254, 231–232.

27 Warner 7; Lauter, *Canons* 22–23.

28 Hunt, "Place of English" 118, 120, 122; Albert H. Smyth also addresses the classics v. English debate ("American Literature in the Class-room"); Pattee "American" 267; Graff, *Professing* 28, 73, 36.

29 Frantzen 34, 70; Graff, *Professing*; Warner.

30 Bledstein 32, 90–91.

31 Bledstein 285. One of the most powerful educational emblems of the rise of science as a new trend in education was Eliot's elective system. Eliot was a Harvard graduate who had been an assistant professor of mathematics and chemistry in the Lawrence Scientific School, Harvard's school of science. Both Eliot and President Daniel Coit Gilman of Hopkins had worked on behalf of renegade scientific schools (Gilman did so at Yale) and both became

leaders of powerful institutions where they advocated science in the curriculum. Eliot proclaimed that Harvard would recognize "no real antagonism between literature and science" (Rudolph, *American College* 292).

32 Baym, *American* 1–17.

33 Veysey, *Emergence* 174–175. One can of course propose only a symbolic date for the establishment of English as a subject in American universities, as the process was one of transition rather than overnight conquest. Arthur N. Applebee places the phenomenon between 1883, when the MLA was formed, and 1900, when graduate degrees in the subject were available across the United States (27–28). By way of general account we can say that English struggled to, and did, carve out its curricular space in the 1880s, as Applebee suggests; and that in the 1890s, English departments proliferated and grew nationwide, becoming standard at that time. In contrast to these large-scale changes in curricular practice, we can juxtapose the case of Francis A. March, who was appointed Professor of English Language and Comparative Philology at Lafayette College in 1857, a phenomenon that Rudolph calls "one of the most remarkable curricular abnormalities of the century" (*Curriculum* 140).

34 Malone 123.

35 Baym, *American* 8.

36 Angier and Chang A1, A15.

37 Phelps wrote textbooks on botany, geology, chemistry, and natural philosophy (Baym, *American* 18).

38 Baym, *American* 8, 35, 223 note 13, 29.

39 See Baym, *American*; Garrison 131–159; Goggin 769–802.

40 Malone 119; Brandt xxiii. See also Graff, *Professing* 67–68. During about its first decade, Hopkins terminology for what would become the English Department fluctuated among such rubrics as "Department of Philology," "Romance and Teutonic Languages," "Ancient and Modern Languages," and "Teutonic Languages – English and German," only settling on "English" in 1888. (See the Annual Reports during these years, The Ferdinand Hamburger, Jr. Archives, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD).

41 Brandt xxiii; Graff, *Professing* 37–38.

42 Hawkins 167–168; Bright lvi. Although Bright is frequently identified as the first Hopkins Ph.D. in "English," he actually took his Ph.D. under the rubric of "Teutonic Languages and Sanskrit" in 1882 (Annual Report 1882). Those who call Bright the first Hopkins Ph.D. in English include Hawkins and Michael Mitchell and James Knighton, "Records of the Department of English, The Johns Hopkins University," Record Group Number 04.130, The Ferdinand Hamburger, Jr. Archives, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD. Malone describes Bright's Ph.D. as the first of "a long series of Hopkins doctorates in English philology" (119), again showing this terminological slippage.

43 Keller 7, 48, 61. Keller argues that the rhetoric of gender that informs the characteristic language of science (the hierarchization of fields in gradations

of "hardness" is one instance) is not superficial, but deeply embedded in the structure of scientific ideology.

44 University Circular 3 (February 1880) and 7 (December 1880), The Ferdinand Hamburger, Jr. Archives, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD.

45 Malone 127.

46 Malone 127.

47 Howard Mumford Jones, "American Scholarship and American Literature" 117. See also Gohdes 63; and Flanagan 513.

48 Jones, "Orphan" 384.

49 Bright's response to Smyth at this point in 1887 itself marks a resonant moment in the history of curricular fluctuation. He endorsed Smyth's paper with the words, "I therefore insist upon the importance of American literature for the purposes of advanced work as well as for elementary training," an apparent (or perhaps merely polite) endorsement of a former student's conference paper, but adds his caveat about "distinction" in levels of the school and appropriateness of "aim and method"; further, he adds that American literature's higher place in the schools (a point upon which he stressed his agreement with Smyth) is jeopardized by "problems there of development." All the respondents to Smyth's paper address the issues of validity and level for American literature studies and provide a useful index to a moment of curricular uncertainty as increasingly hegemonic English departments map out their terrain. As subsequent chapters will show, the questions about American literature under discussion here in 1887 would increasingly be resolved in the next decades by pushing the subject downward rather than upward in status, at Hopkins and other schools (Smyth, "American Literature in the Class-room" 238, 240; "American Literature in the Class-room: Discussion" li–liii, with Bright's comments at lii and Tolman's at li–lii; student file, Albert H. Smyth, The Ferdinand Hamburger, Jr. Archives, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, cited in correspondence with James Stimpert, Archivist, 7 April 2006). There is no further information about why Hopkins granted Smyth an honorary B.A.

50 Flanagan, "American" 518. Although philology was not the only pedagogical practice in early departments of English, it was the one that lent English studies the prestige it needed, without limiting the practice of English studies to philology. Earlier traditions of rhetorical analysis, oratory, and appreciation coexisted with philology in ways that have not yet been fully documented (Applebee 27–28; see also Graff, *Professing*).

51 Vanderbilt 110–111; Lewis, "History" 51, 126; Pattee, "American" 269. Applebee agrees that separate courses in American literature were the exception until 1900 (41 note 24).

52 Vanderbilt 128.

53 Lewis cannot bear to acknowledge that the women's colleges played a role in the development of the subject. Of the decade between 1880 and 1890, he defensively proffers only "one generalization [that] is permissible and significant – not one of the 'great' American universities of the day (Harvard,

Yale, Johns Hopkins, Virginia, William & Mary, Columbia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Princeton) was doing important work in American literature during this period" ("History" 119). Writing in 1941, his project emerged at the height of masculinist recuperations of the field. See also Vanderbilt 110–111; Graff, *Professing* 214; Pattee, "American" 269.

54 Hunt noted in 1884 that "some of the smaller and weaker schools of the South and West" offered notably full schedules of English classes, while "the best classical schools of New England and the adjacent West" take "special pains … to shut out or suppress the study of English" (Hunt, "Place of English" 119, 124).

55 See, for example, the case of The University of Washington as I have assessed it in "American Literature" 850–856.

56 Reese 116.

57 Ballou, *Building* 328–337.

58 Ballou, *Building* 337.

59 Houghton, Mifflin was not only a major textbook publisher of American literature for lower schools; it was simultaneously the publishing house that most influenced the shape of the cultural canon of American authors in the latter nineteenth century. Indeed, it controlled the copyright for the leading American authors of the day. Textbooks and anthologies routinely thank Houghton, Mifflin for permission to extract "their copyright editions of leading American authors," as textbook author Albert P. Southwick phrased it in 1883. Casper 179–222, 180; Ballou, *Building* 334–335; Southwick iv. Scudder would become editor of *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1890, a magazine owned by Houghton, Mifflin, meanwhile maintaining his role as a senior editor in their trade division. (Chielens, ed. 53, 57; see also Glazener, on *The Atlantic Monthly*'s role in latter nineteenth-century literary culture, a coterminous but not synonymous space for the institutionalization of canons.)

60 Scudder, "The Place of Literature" 27–28.

61 Scudder, "The Place of Literature" 19.

62 Smith College Circular, 1905–1906, 20–21. "The Vision of Sir Launfal" was an exam standard because of its ready application to the study of Arthurian literature already central to English studies. Pedagogical bulletins about the exam requirements in some cases articulate this rationale, which surely obtained more widely. The Mount Holyoke College entrance exams for 1899–1903 required "Launfal" as well, as did the national exams between 1902 and 1905. See Mount Holyoke College, Catalogue, 1898–1899, 10–11; Mount Holyoke College, Catalogue, 1899–1900, 8–9; the University of Washington, Bulletin 4.1 (March 1902), "Suggestions to Secondary Schools" 5, 9 (Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA; University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, University Archives Division, Seattle, WA).

63 Pattee, "American" 269, 271; Vanderbilt 84–86; Jones, "Orphan" 381.

64 See University Circular (August 1926) 30 and Annual Report, 1906–07, 46, The Ferdinand Hamburger, Jr. Archives, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD; Malone 125.

65 Donoghue attends trenchantly to the semiotic of prestige in higher education as it operates in often oblique and otherwise unspoken ways ("Prestige," MLA Convention, Washington, D.C., 27 December 2006; *The Last Professors*).
66 Hawkins 163–165.
67 Malone 117–118.
68 Malone 117.
69 Malone 119.
70 While the relationship of course listings in catalogues to what was actually taught cannot be established with certainty (a methodological problem that qualifies both Vanderbilt's and John Smith Lewis Jr.'s findings), I have circumvented this difficulty to the greatest extent possible here by relying on the departmental reports of course offerings in the Annual Reports, which are retrospective and hence not plagued by the same inaccuracies. See Annual Report, 1906–07, 46, The Ferdinand Hamburger, Jr. Archives, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD.
71 Annual Reports, 1901–02, 46 and 1923–24, 32, The Ferdinand Hamburger, Jr. Archives, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD.
72 Malone 117.
73 Hawkins 224; see Annual Reports 1887, 18; 1888, 39, 63; 1889, 50–51, The Ferdinand Hamburger, Jr. Archives, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD.
74 University Circular, Faculty of Philosophy, 1924–25, 37, The Ferdinand Hamburger, Jr. Archives, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD. I have not been able to determine whether this pamphlet was ever produced. Malone was hired as a lecturer in 1924–25 and did not yet have rank equivalent to French's status as Associate Professor. French ran the department that year (Annual Report, 1924–25, 41–44, The Ferdinand Hamburger, Jr. Archives, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD).
75 Vanderbilt's assertion that Hopkins offered no American literature classes from 1900 to 1920 is wrong (188). On the literariness of the librarian position, see Malone 119. Dr. William Hand Browne was librarian in the 1880s and taught the "elementary" literary courses in English, set against the "advanced work" the philologists taught.
76 When French left the department in 1927, Hopkins had produced three American literature dissertations out of a total of more than sixty English Ph.D.s (Annual Report, 1924–25, fold-out chart, "PhD and AM Degrees Conferred by Years and Subjects," The Ferdinand Hamburger, Jr. Archives, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD).
77 Annual Report, 1909, 19; University Circular, 1909, 5, 6, The Ferdinand Hamburger, Jr. Archives, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD; Goucher College, *Minutes of the Board of Control September 22, 1903– May 29, 1909* (Baltimore: Goucher College), Minutes for 21 May 1909, 743, Archives of Goucher College, Record Group Number 4.010, Faculty, 5.16, 1891–1931. The curriculum seems to have been set with input from these three bodies as well as instructors' suggestions from individual departments.

78 Annual Report, 1914–15, 74–75, The Ferdinand Hamburger, Jr. Archives, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD.

79 University Circular, College for Teachers, 1916–17, 14–15, The Ferdinand Hamburger, Jr. Archives, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD.

80 Reese 116; Applebee 68; Pattee, "American" 270; Gohdes 64; Lewis' appendix entitled "American Literature in State Requirements for Teacher's Certificates" covers the state of such requirements as of 1940 ("History").

81 Annual Report, 1930–31, 60; University Circular, College of Arts and Sciences, 1933–34, 21; University Circular, College for Teachers, 1936–37, 29; all at The Ferdinand Hamburger, Jr. Archives, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD.

82 Annual Reports, 1927–28, 43ff., and 1928–29, 41, The Ferdinand Hamburger, Jr. Archives, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD.

83 Graff, *Professing* 166.

84 Spencer taught a graduate elective reading course in 1931–32 and again in 1935–36, and from 1938 to 1940 he opened his course to both graduate students and undergraduates (Annual Reports, 1931–32, 48 and 1935–36, 77; University Circular, Faculty of Philosophy, 1938–39, 44; all at The Ferdinand Hamburger, Jr. Archives, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD).

85 Evans 647ff. The relationship between secondary school and higher curricula was a tense one in which influence moved in both directions. While modern, popular subjects often trickled up via student and parent demand, the higher schools then often reconfigured the constitution of these subjects, and they trickled back down in perhaps altered form through mechanisms such as college entrance exams, which expected a form of training and a kind of reading that the secondary schools had to accommodate in their own pedagogy. High schools and universities increasingly saw that they needed to coordinate their efforts. Evans' remarks show us a moment in 1903 as American literature stands in a taut position between these levels of the school. In 1893, the Report of the Committee of Ten, initiated by the National Education Association and chaired by Harvard's President Eliot, assessed secondary school curricula and their relation to college curricula; in a related development of standardization, the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) gave its first exams in June 1901. Colleges then chose whether to make use of the CEEB exams for their admissions process or to administer their own exams. Both phenomena attempted to address the prickly issue of the relationship between levels of the school (Rudolph, *Curriculum* 165–66; Willis *et al.*, eds. 85–93; Graff, *Professing* 99; Rudolph, *American College* 437–438).

86 Rudolph, *Curriculum* 131.

87 My conception of these historical processes as phenomena of curricular distinction is indebted in particular to Bourdieu and Guillory.

88 French 157–158. Unfortunately, French does not cite his sources for this information, and I have been unable to locate this faculty petition. See Annual Reports, 1925–26, 7–9 and 1926–27, 4–5; Board of Trustees Minutes, Record Group Number 01.001, series 2, 5/7/28–4/6/31, 668–968, minutes

dated 26 May 1930; Records of the Office of the President, Record Group Number 02.001, Series 1, File 66, 1922–1925, letter dated 6 October 1924; all at The Ferdinand Hamburger, Jr. Archives, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD.

89 N.a., "Johns Hopkins' Bargain Basement" 29–37, 29.

90 Woody 1:499; Annual Report, 1910, 97, The Ferdinand Hamburger, Jr. Archives, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD.

91 Annual Report, 1910, 97. For the first twenty years, the composition of the student body was, by my calculation, generally between 60 and 75 percent female (see Annual Reports for individual years, The Ferdinand Hamburger, Jr. Archives, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD).

92 Avent 241.

93 Luckey 102.

94 Woody 1:505.

95 Brackett, "The Education of American Girls" 89.

96 Chadwick 109, 115, 116, 118, 119.

97 Woody 1:499–500. See also Douglas.

98 The 1920s drew a new clientele of first-generation college students, many of whom sought vocationally targeted curricula. While male students tended to choose business and commerce, women tended to choose teaching and home economics (Geiger, *To Advance* 109–110).

99 Morgan 11.

100 Noble 1–4.

101 Douglas 388 note 58; Woody 2:268–298; Boas 235–236.

102 Nan Johnson, *Gender* 51, 17; in *Poets in the Public Sphere: The Emancipatory Project of American Women's Poetry, 1800–1900*, Bennett argues that female poets passionately exploited the public sphere to participate in their own emancipation.

103 Lentricchia 184, 176–177. The classic exploration of this topic is Douglas.

104 Hubbell, Foreword, *American Literature* [2]; Jones, "American" 119.

105 Furness, ed. xx, xxi, xvii, xliii.

106 Shryock 334–335. My phrase "beset manhood" is indebted to Baym, who coins the term by turning Leslie Fiedler's "melodramas of beset womanhood" against itself. In so doing she also translates Fiedler's account of the content of American literary texts into an account of the field's institutional history ("Melodramas" 130).

107 Flanagan 518–519.

108 Lauter, *Canons* 22–47 and "Melville."

109 For an assessment of the massive structural changes in higher education as a result of World War II, see Geiger, *Research*.

110 Pattee, "American" 272; Gohdes 63.

111 Pattee, "American" 270; Vanderbilt 187, 190; Lewis describes an increase from fifty-seven to ninety-eight classes ("History" 241–42).

112 Pattee, "American" 272; Simon 176–190; and Ludeke 168–175.

113 Pattee, "American" 268, 271.

114 Foerster, ed., *Reinterpretation* vii.

115 It was literary history as a research model that would in turn face off with emerging notions of "criticism." See Warner; Graff, *Professing*; Greenlaw, *The Province of Literary History* 121.

116 Graff, *Professing* 121.

117 Greenlaw calls the "story of American literature" "briefer" and "simpler" than that of English literature; "The literature is less philosophical"; and "there are fewer great personalities" (Greenlaw and Miles 10–11). See also Greenlaw and Hanford, *The Great Tradition*, which Greenlaw opens with the remark, "This book is the result of a study, extending through five years, of methods by which the required course in literature for elementary college students may be made more effective" (xxiii). Greenlaw, Elson, and Keck's *Literature and Life* provides "material for an organized course in literature for secondary schools" (iii).

118 Flanagan 519; C. Alphonso Smith quoted by Pattee, "American" 272.

119 Vanderbilt places maturity of the field between 1939 and 1948; Graff places it in the twenty-five-year period beginning in the late 1930s (*Professing* 216). On the development of American studies, a thematically related but institutionally distinct phenomenon, see Gleason 343–358.

120 Stovall 470–471; Spiller, "Higher Education" 296.

121 *American Quarterly* was launched in 1949; the American Studies Association, in 1951. The United States' emergence from World War II as a global superpower also expanded American studies abroad. See Gleason 343ff., Vanderbilt 490.

122 Graff, *Professing* 216.

123 Annual Report, 1940–41, 34, The Ferdinand Hamburger, Jr. Archives, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD. Anderson had studied in Columbia's well-respected American literature graduate program from 1926 to 1930 and then taught at Duke, a leading center for American literature studies, for ten years (Charles Anderson, letter to the author, 10 April 1988).

124 C. Alphonso Smith quoted by Pattee, "American" 272.

## 2 SEMINARY WARS: FEMALE TEACHERS AND THE SEMINARY MODEL AT MOUNT HOLYOKE

1 The female seminary achieved its greatest power as an educational model between 1830 and 1860. Woody measures this claim by official support from state legislatures (Woody 1:393).

2 Vanderbilt and John Smith Lewis, Jr. are emblematic examples.

3 The exception was Oberlin College, which admitted women to a special course when it opened in 1833, and in 1841 to the same course as men. Lyon and her teachers considered Oberlin to be the principle alternative to Mount Holyoke for women desiring advanced education (Shea 15, 15 note 6).

4 Academies and seminaries could be single-sex or two-sex schools. The two-sex model, while technically coeducational, often nevertheless divided

students into separate departments by sex. In short, there was a tremendous amount of variation in academy and seminary practices, from school to school and state to state (Woody 1:108, 96, 365–368, 457; Reese 30, 31).

5 Woody 1:329.

6 The majority of the population could not afford to pay the tuition required to attend, so these were still elite institutions (Woody 1:457, 397).

7 Woody 1:96.

8 Woody 1:342, 343, 319, 350.

9 The female seminaries were the antecedent institutions to the normal schools that would arise later. Normal schools were originally called "teacher's seminaries" (Woody 1:468).

10 Woody 1:460, 109–111, 412, 310, 468; Woody quoting Beecher 1:462; Shea 1, 38, 41; Stow 10.

11 Lyon had taught at Ipswich. Mount Holyoke's early curriculum did include girls' subjects such as music and French, but none of the classes in manners and sewing that dominated training at many girls' schools (Woody 1:343, 350; Stow 10, 146–148; Shea 38, 4, 1).

12 Cole 24–25. Cole is quoting a manuscript of Lyon's called "Schools for Adult Females."

13 Woody 1:468–469.

14 Woody 1:341. By the 1850s, the new institution of the high school had also become an important source of teachers for the lower grades (Reese 250).

15 Shea 38–39.

16 Woody 1:362.

17 Shea 63, note 40.

18 LD7082.2A2, Dup. Principals and Presidents Reports (unpublished), Helen M. French, 1869, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA.

19 Shea 41–43.

20 Woody 1:489.

21 Shea 31, 84; Horowitz, *Alma* 42, 45, 46.

22 Quoted in Shea 114–115.

23 Shea 126.

24 The Seven College Conference, nicknamed the "Seven Sisters," began in 1926 for fundraising purposes (Horowitz, *Alma* 260–261).

25 Horowitz, *Alma* 224.

26 LD7082.2A2, Dup. Principals and Presidents Reports (unpublished), Julia E. Ward, 1875, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA.

27 LD7082.2A2, Dup. Principals and Presidents Reports (unpublished), Julia E. Ward, 1877, 2, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA.

28 LD7082.2A2, Dup. Principals and Presidents Reports (unpublished), Julia E. Ward, 1880, 1, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA.

29 LD7082.2A2, Dup. Principals and Presidents Reports (unpublished), Julia E. Ward, 1880, 15–16, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA.
30 As quoted by Lloyd 151.
31 LD7082.2A2, Dup. Principals and Presidents Reports (unpublished), Elizabeth Blanchard, 1887, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA.
32 Shea 86, 114, 129; Cole 194. See Edmonds 69.
33 The B.L. and B.S. were eliminated after 1896–97, at which point all studies led to a degree of B.A. See, for example, Annual Catalogues 1890–91, 1896–97, 1897–98, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA. See also Shea 152; Cole 195.
34 LD7082.2A2, Dup. Principals and Presidents Reports (unpublished), Elizabeth Storrs Mead, 1891 Report, [5–6], The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA.
35 Shea 180–181; Cole 206.
36 Shea 85.
37 Shea 106
38 Wellesley College also hired only female teachers. Vassar hired male and female teachers from its beginning (Horowitz, *Alma* 53, 38).
39 Shea 179.
40 Shea 106.
41 Mount Holyoke College President's Report, Elizabeth Storrs Mead, 1895–96, 9, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA.
42 See, for example, the case of Elizabeth Prentiss, a member of the History faculty ("Death of Miss Elizabeth B. Prentiss," LD7092.8, Prentiss, Elizabeth, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA).
43 Gilman as quoted in Cordasco 17.
44 Rudolph, *American College* 397.
45 Rudolph, *American College* 397.
46 Cole 252.
47 There was only one Ph.D. in the English Literature division in 1910. See catalogues for the years listed, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA.
48 Cordasco, quoting Gilman 73.
49 LD7082.2A2, Dup. Principals and Presidents Reports (unpublished), Elizabeth Storrs Mead, 1892, 4; 1895–96, 21, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA; Shea 179.
50 "Clara Frances Stevens" 221–228; "Alumnae Biographical Record," 1936, Clara F. Stevens, Biographical File, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA.
51 Shea 188ff.

52 LD7082.2A2, Dup. Principals and Presidents Reports (unpublished), 1899–1900, 25, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA.

53 Shea 196–197, 207.

54 *Mount Holyoke in the Twentieth Century*, v. 3, Viola Barnes interview, 9 and 10 March 1972, 4, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA. Barnes, who taught History at Mount Holyoke from 1919 to 1952, here recalled the memories of a colleague who taught Greek.

55 Annual Report 1929–30, 9, English Department, Annual Reports 1921/22–1950/51, Box 2, Series B, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA.

56 It was characteristic of course catalogues at this time to list classes without their instructors. As Warner has pointed out, the academic profession would redefine the scholar–expert himself, rather than the actual classes he taught, as the fundamental commodity of higher education (Warner 5). That development would force change in the genre of the anonymous course catalogue to a more professor-centered form. At this time, Bowers was the only English literature teacher, so she was likely the force behind the addition of American literature to the curriculum. In her diary for 1901, she noted visiting the graves of Hawthorne, Emerson, Alcott, Thoreau, and Peabody in Concord. (Annual Catalogue, 1887–88, 4–5; Ellen Bowers, Mount Holyoke College Biographical File; also see entry under Bowers, *One Hundred Year Biographical Directory of Mount Holyoke College 1837–1937*, bulletin series 30, note 5, South Hadley: Alumnae Assn, 1937; Annual Catalogue, 1887–88, 26; all at The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA.

57 Another emergent college subject after 1884 was freshman composition, which began at Harvard that year as "English A," a remedial course meant to rectify the ills of the secondary schools and to serve as only a temporary measure until they improved their standards. Robert J. Connors explains that, following Harvard's example, "most colleges and universities instituted a freshman English course, staffing it with the youngest and least influential members of the English department." Of course, freshman composition did not vanish but became itself an institution, identified with the most basic level of the college curriculum and staffed by the least expensive instructors, often "untrained beginners" ("Crisis and Panacea" 89, 91). American literature would eventually work its way out of its *a priori* elementary status, but composition did not do so, instead eventually evolving an internal two-tier hierarchy that, as Connors describes it, recasts the older hierarchy between literature and composition into one between higher-tier "composition scholars" and lower-tier "composition teachers" (102). Other useful curricular histories of composition and of rhetoric include Berlin, *Rhetoric and Reality*; Berlin, *Writing*; Brereton, ed. *The Origins of Composition*; Connors, *Composition-Rhetoric*; and Johnson, *Nineteenth-Century Rhetoric*. According to Connors, the consolidation of composition-rhetoric in American colleges transpired between 1885 and 1910; from 1910

through roughly 1960, the teaching of writing became what he calls "an intellectual backwater" because of "the absolute reign of a freshman composition requirement" with its stifling institutional constraints upon professional and scholarly activity (*Composition-Rhetoric* 13).

58 Scudder, "The Place of Literature" 5–33, 30.

59 Annual Catalogue 1888–89, 24, 34, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA.

60 Annual Catalogue 1890–91, 27, 28, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA.

61 *The Llamarada* 1896, 12; 1897, 10; 1898, 22, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA.

62 According to the forms Knapp herself filed with the University of Michigan, she had been "Head of Dep't. of English in the Univ. of the state of South Dakota, 1884–87." In other words, she was "Head" of a university English department *prior to* taking her A.B. Knapp was the only English teacher among a total faculty of seven, each instructor responsible for an entire field: Mental, Moral, and Social Science; Natural Science; Latin and Greek; Mathematics and Normal Department; English Language and Literature; German; and Music. The fact that Knapp was hired to this position in the 1880s without having taken a college degree is historically legible for several reasons: English was emerging as a university-level subject at this time and had not yet been thoroughly professionalized; it was a transitional era in which it was still common practice to hire college faculty without what would later count as "training"; and institutions that were regionally remote from the historical core of American education in the East typically struggled to establish themselves in spite of sparse populations and lack of ready access to qualified students and teachers, factors that added up to frequently rocky early years. A similar situation arose at the equally remote University of Washington, where women without advanced degrees filled positions of authority in the English Department from 1888 through 1897 and the entire university sometimes had only a handful of enrolled students. (See *The Mount Holyoke* 2 [June 1893]: 140, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA; Ella Adelaide Knapp, necrology file, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; entry under Ella Adelaide Knapp, *One Hundred Year Biographical Directory of Mount Holyoke College 1837–1937*, bulletin series 30, note 5, South Hadley: Alumnae Assn, 1937; Renker, " 'American Literature' in the College" 850–851; Annual Catalogue, University of Dakota, 1886, "Faculty and Instructors," Special Collections, I.D. Weeks Library, University of South Dakota, Vermillion, SD.)

63 Hawkins 224.

64 The other was a class in the Victorian period (Annual Catalogue, 1893–94, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA).

65 It was Smyth who gave the 1887 MLA talk on American literature discussed in Chapter 1. In an era in which MLA had not fully excluded lower-level teachers, Smyth appeared there as "Professor of Literature" from the highly

competitive Philadelphia Central High School. The title "professor," common in secondary schools in this era, applied only to male teachers (Reese 130).

66 Smyth, *American Literature*.

67 See "American Literature," 1893, Frances W. French; and Annual Catalogue, 1893–94, 15–16 (both at The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA).

68 Pattee, "Call" 6.

69 The assigned stories were: "Little Annie's Ramble," "Sunday at Home," "The Gentle Boy," "A Rill from the Town Pump," and "The Village Uncle" (from *Twice-Told Tales*) and "The Fire Worship," "A Select Party," "Birds and Bird Voices," "Drowne's Wooden Image," "The Intelligence Officer," "Skeletons from Memory," "The Old Apple Dealer," "The Artist of the Beautiful," and "A Virtuoso's Collection" (from *Mosses from an Old Manse*).

70 "American Literature," 1893, Frances W. French (The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA).

71 Southwick iv, v, 86–104.

72 "American Literature," 1893, Frances W. French; Annual Catalogue, 1893–94, 15–16 (both at The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA).

73 Bentley Historical Library, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, personal correspondence with Julie Pepera, 3 January 2005.

74 Ella Adelaide Knapp, necrology file, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; for a detailed analysis of such barriers to women historians, see Goggin 775.

75 At Mount Holyoke, units called "English" and "English Literature" were sometimes part of a single department and sometimes separate departments. Their often hostile quarrels run as a constant theme through the history of English studies there.

76 She wrote her dissertation under the direction of Hermann Collitz, Charles F. McClumpha, James Douglas Bruce, and M. Carey Thomas (Marguerite Sweet, "The Third Class of Weak Verbs in Primitive Teutonic, with Special Reference to its Development in Anglo-Saxon," diss., Bryn Mawr College, 1892). See also *The Llamarada*, vol. 5, 1899, 12, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA; Bryn Mawr College Commencement Program, 1892, Bryn Mawr College Archives, Bryn Mawr, PA; Vassar College Libraries, Special Collections, Poughkeepsie, NY.

77 See Horowitz, *Alma* 105, 115; Rudolph, *American College* 319.

78 Snell 26.

79 Amy Roberts, Class of 1900, letters, 16 February 1898; Annual Catalogue, 1898–99, 26–28 (both at The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA).

80 Mount Holyoke College Catalogues, 1896–97, 18–20; 1897–98, 26–27; 1898–99, 24–28, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA.

81 Amy Roberts, Class of 1900, letters, 16 January 1898; Annual Catalogue, 1898–1899, 26–28 (both at The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA).

82 John Smith Lewis, Jr., "History" 105–109. The Mount Holyoke example shows that such downturns continued past Lewis' terminal date of 1890.

83 After she graduated from Vassar and before she began her graduate studies at Bryn Mawr, Sweet taught at New Paltz Normal School in New York for 2 years. After she took her Ph.D. in 1892, she taught English at Vassar until 1897. When she left Mount Holyoke in 1899, she went back to her pre-Ph.D. career, becoming a teacher at The Ely School for Girls in New York, NY (sometimes appearing in records as "Miss Ely's" or "The Misses Ely's School for Girls"), where she worked until 1903. The Ely School was founded by three sisters, all of whom were Mount Holyoke graduates; it offered college preparatory and general courses. When Sweet left The Ely School she dropped out of teaching until 1905, after which point she was a principal and English Department head at various schools in New York. For reasons that remain undocumented, she left higher education when she left Mount Holyoke. (The Ely School moved to Greenwich, CT in 1907.) See *Bulletin of Vassar College: Alumnae Biographical Register Issue* 54, Vassar College Libraries, Special Collections; Marguerite Sweet, biographical file, Vassar College Libraries, Special Collections, Poughkeepsie, NY; author's correspondence with The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA, 22 February 2000.

84 Snell 31 note 1.

85 Rumors held that the relationship between Woolley and Marks became distasteful to many, particularly in an era in which homophobia was on the rise. The trustees reputedly wanted a president with a wife who could host social events. (See Wells viii, 231.) Others who were at Mount Holyoke during the Woolley years have objected to characterizations of the relationship as a lesbian one, charging such assessments with anachronism. Viola Barnes recalled being struck upon her arrival at Mount Holyoke by how the entire culture there, as well as at the eastern colleges and seminaries in general, was structured around female couples, an arrangement she ascribed to living conditions and low salaries rather than sexual preferences. According to Barnes, the criticism of the Marks–Woolley relationship stemmed not from discomfort with their status as a couple but from Woolley's favoritism toward Marks (*Mount Holyoke in the Twentieth Century*, vol. 3, interview with Viola Barnes, 9 and 10 March 1972, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA). The world of female couples in the women's colleges surely embraced many varieties of relationships, for which our rigid contemporary sexual vocabulary is inadequate.

86 Bates, *American Literature* 327, 316; *The College Beautiful and Other Poems* and *America the Beautiful and Other Poems*; and her fourteen-volume edition of Hawthorne.

87 Lauter, *Canons* 23.

88 Annual Catalogue, Mount Holyoke College, 1901–1902, 36–37, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA.

89 Transcribed as in original. LD7096.6, Mount Holyoke College Alumnae; Cole, Blanche S., C of 1902, Box 1, Folders 5 and 7.

90 They were: Haverford College; Heidelberg College; Howard University; University of Richmond; University of Mississippi; Iowa University; Washington University; Princeton University; Swarthmore College; Union College; and University of Rochester (Lewis, "History" 106).

91 Bryn Mawr College Commencement Program, 1908; Bryn Mawr College Alumnae Register, 1995; Bryn Mawr College Archives; "Mount Holyoke Professor Dead," Springfield [MA] *Republican* 15 December 1919, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA.

92 Wells 171–172.

93 Goggin 775.

94 Goggin 775.

95 She also experienced chronic health problems. For a detailed account of Marks' complex relationships with her colleagues, see Wells, especially 128, 157, 162–172.

96 Marks returned to the faculty 3 years later and devoted herself to work on contemporary American poetry and plays (Wells 105–106, 128, 152; see also Annual Catalogues, Mount Holyoke College, 1909/10, 1910/11, 1911/12, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA.).

97 By the 1920s, many departments at Mount Holyoke had begun to hire male faculty. In 1927, the American literature classes passed to Leslie Burgevin, one of only a few male faculty in the Department of English Literature, and to Sydney McLean, a woman in the separate Department of English. Although these departments were engaged in chronic turf wars at this time, Burgevin and McLean apparently worked cordially in the subject area they shared. Burgevin took a Ph.D. at Harvard in 1931 with a dissertation on "The Origin and Development of the Saga of King Horn." McLean took her Ph.D. at Yale in 1933. According to Constance Meadnis Saintonge, a fellow faculty member, Marks forced Burgevin, who was a Medievalist, to take over the American literature classes against his wishes, but there is no other record that he resented the assignment (Wells 175; Catalogue, 1927–28, 76–77; Leslie Burgevin, Biographical Files; "Sydney Robertson McLean," LD7092.6, Box 13, English Department, Ser. C Dept. Records, Sub-series 4 Subject Files, Folder 6, Faculty-Data (various) 1947/48–1952/53; *Mount Holyoke in the Twentieth Century: Constance Meadnis Saintonge*, vol. 5, transcript, 1972 tape-recorded interview, 26 (all at the Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA).

98 A Report of Student Committee on the Curriculum (1922? Dated by MHC Archives) LD7092.2, MHC Fac & Staff, Sub-group 5: Fac. Committees, Curriculum Com., Folder: Reports undated, 1919–1932/33 passim; LD7092.2, MHC Faculty and Staff, sub-group 5: Fac. Committees, Academic Com.,

Series C, Folder 13: Ac. Com. Minutes, July 1941–June 1942 (Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Academic Committee, 4), Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA.

99 The institutional distinctions among women's colleges like Wellesley and Bryn Mawr are too complex for me to cover in depth in this chapter. It is crucial to note, however, that although their female teachers and graduates faced the same professional obstacles I have described here, the institutions themselves were not always born of the same ethos nor did they operate in exactly the same ways. Wellesley, for example, was initially modeled on the female seminary tradition and hired only female faculty; Bryn Mawr was founded two decades later on an entirely different model, that of Hopkins and its idea of rigor. Although both Sweet and Harper had Ph.D.s from Bryn Mawr with its Hopkins-style ethos, they were nevertheless female graduates of a women's institution and remained professionally within the world of women's education.

## 3 HIGHER EDUCATION FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS: COMPETING MODELS AT WILBERFORCE UNIVERSITY

1 "Negro" was the term used in the founding language of the school as well as in the rhetoric of the period more generally. I will frequently adopt it in the analysis that follows for rhetorical reasons, but I will eschew the quotation marks henceforth. Frank Bowles and Frank A. DeCosta designate Ashmun Institute in Pennsylvania (1854, later renamed Lincoln University) and Wilberforce as the first black colleges, since both remained in their original locations, took the awarding of baccalaureate degrees as their aim, and developed completely into degree-granting institutions. Other schools that claim "first" status do not meet these criteria. Raymond Wolters adds that Wilberforce was the first college owned and managed by blacks, but Wolters' description is accurate only after 1863; the first administration and faculty were mostly white. See Bowles and DeCosta 20–25; Wolters 293; McGinnis, *History* 139. In addition to the early "Negro" schools, some white institutions of higher education admitted African Americans. Western Reserve, founded in 1827, did so beginning in 1832 and Oberlin College, founded in 1833, did so in 1835. See also Klein 642; McGinnis, *History* 20–21; McGinnis, *Education* 77, note 1.

2 Wolters 230–231; Schor 147.

3 Just as my case studies complicate large-scale national narratives about the history of the field, so the history of Wilberforce as one historically black college does not represent the history of all such institutions. My findings about Wilberforce, like my findings about the other schools that I define as rough instances of institutional types, must not be construed as allegorical. Rather, they represent historically specific instances of particular institutional locations. Preeminent black institutions like Fisk University and Howard University shared some goals with Wilberforce and encountered similar

ideological barriers; nevertheless, the material terms of their histories are, by definition, distinct. A complete study of historically black colleges is beyond the scope of the present book.

4 DuBois called Wilberforce "the oldest colored institution of learning in America," dating its foundation to the founding of Union Seminary in 1844 ("The New Wilberforce" 191–194); McGinnis also places its founding at 1844 (*Education* 83). The erratic early history of the institution complicates the unequivocal establishment of a founding date.

5 McGinnis' version of the story is that, while the AME Church readied the property and buildings in West Jefferson for school use, J.M. Brown, the pastor of Bethel Church in Columbus, opened an interim location for the school in his church basement. The Bethel Church school was popular but, according to McGinnis, once the school grounds relocated to West Jefferson in 1853, 12 miles north of Columbus, the students did not follow it. (McGinnis, *History* 26–27). Other sources, based on less intimate knowledge than McGinnis' and thus probably incorrect, say only that the school closed because of the war (e.g., Jones, *Negro Education* 2: 683).

6 *Wilberforce Alumnal* 9–10, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

7 McGinnis, *History* 33.

8 *Wilberforce Alumnal* 9–10, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

9 September 1854 committee report, quoted in *Wilberforce Alumnal* 14–15, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

10 1859–60 Catalogue as quoted in *Wilberforce Alumnal* 18, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH; there are no extant copies of the catalogue itself.

11 McGinnis, *Education* ix.

12 McGinnis, *History* 37.

13 McGinnis, *History* 38–39, 41.

14 Scarborough himself was born in Georgia as a slave in 1852. By his account, his mother "was only nominally in servitude," having been given "her own time to spend as she pleased" by her owner, so Scarborough himself "never felt the harsh, inhuman restrictions of slavery." His autobiography, left unpublished at his death in 1926, was published in 2005 under the editorial care of Michele Valerie Ronnick (26, 198). Ronnick notes the complex history of transmission of the original text, which no longer survives. Her edition derives from a typescript (18–19). Scarborough graduated from Oberlin in 1875 and took an M.A. there in 1880. He was one of the University's most distinguished scholars and served as President from 1908 until 1920 (*Wilberforce Alumnal* 32, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH; McGinnis, *History* 68–69). A recent analysis of the cultural contours of Scarborough's career is Mailloux's "Thinking with Rhetorical Figures" (695–711).

15 Writing in 1938, the social scientist Charles S. Johnson, a scholar at Fisk University, also reported that Wilberforce was founded "to educate the Negro

children of certain southern planters who acknowledged a responsibility to provide education for their irregular offspring" (Johnson, "The Negro College" 305). Johnson does not cite particular sources for his information so I cannot determine if he had access to additional data beyond what I have cited from the primary records.

16 McGinnis, *History* 41–42, 5; *Wilberforce Alumnal* 20, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

17 Klein 602; McGinnis, *History* 41, 5; *Wilberforce Alumnal* 20, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

18 As Bowles and DeCosta point out, elementary and secondary training was also necessary in white colleges and universities in the South because a system of public education had not been instituted there. Women's colleges like Smith and Mount Holyoke also had preparatory departments because of inadequacies in schooling for women, especially in Greek. Bowles and DeCosta note that "the Negro private colleges were largely elementary and secondary schools down to 1895, for, with one or two exceptions, they all retained preparatory departments until that year; and the enrollments in the preparatory departments were larger than in the collegiate departments" (Bowles and DeCosta 29, 31).

19 Wolters 29.

20 Payne quoted by McGinnis, *History* 49.

21 Catalogue 1893–94, Wilberforce University, 27–30, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

22 *The Wilberforce Graduate* 15.15 (20 June 1895), Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

23 List of faculty, Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1895–96, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

24 Quoted by Bowles and DeCosta 2.

25 Bullock and Wolters point out that some of the outcomes of the black education movement, from the standpoint of uplift, aspiration, and social progress, contradicted the hegemonic ideological structures that simultaneously constrained such education to preserve a social system meant to keep blacks in subordinate roles (Wolters 16; Bullock 160). Heather Andrea Williams's *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* focuses powerfully on the individual agents, "ordinary African Americans in the South," who struggled to provide education for themselves during slavery and in the first decade of freedom (2). She concludes with DuBois' "sad and disheartening" assessment 50 years later, "'The Negroes themselves are making heroic efforts to remedy these evils thru a widespread system of private, self-supported schools.'" As Williams points out, "What good emerged from neglected, underfunded southern black schools in the early twentieth century once again came only through the determination of black teachers and students" (200).

26 Bowles and DeCosta 2–5, 41–42. See also DuBois, "Careers Open to College-Bred Negroes" 201–213.

27 Bowles and DeCosta 38.

28 Bowles and DeCosta 3, 38–42.

29 The Sub-Academic Department was later renamed the "English Preparatory Course." It was another instance of the kind of lower-level nonclassical English curriculum discussed in Chapter 1.
30 *Wilberforce Alumnal* 35, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.
31 DuBois, *Autobiography* 192.
32 Wolters 296; McGinnis, *History* 57.
33 Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1897–98, 54, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.
34 DuBois, *Autobiography* 185–186.
35 The new Board of Trustees for CN&I consisted of nine people, five appointed by the Governor with Senate approval and three chosen by the University's own Board of Trustees, with the President of Wilberforce acting as an ex officio member. "An Act – S.B. No. 179," reprinted in Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1907–08, 69–70, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH; DuBois, *Autobiography* 191–192.
36 By the mid-1880s, the Classical and Scientific departments were united in a division called the "Collegiate Department." This division underwent various name changes: from Collegiate Department to College Department to College of Liberal Arts to College of Arts and Sciences. These were all names for the division that provided collegiate education that was liberal rather than explicitly vocational in nature. For an overview of the university's early history, see *Annual Catalogue*, Wilberforce University, 1913–14, 12, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.
37 Wolters 3; Hardin 1; Watkins 321–338.
38 Watkins.
39 Schor 19, 15, 23, 110, 112, 23.
40 Watkins 324, 328.
41 Wolters 6.
42 Wolters 8–10, 3; Hardin 25.
43 DuBois, Editorial, *The Crisis* (July 1915): 132.
44 Hardin 23.
45 As Rudolph points out, the phrase "liberal learning" does not apply to the same subjects in all periods. The specific content of the "liberal" curriculum had and has been changing under various social pressures since the Renaissance (*Curriculum* 30).
46 DuBois, *Autobiography* 192.
47 Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1897–98, 21–22, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.
48 By 1913–14, CN&I offerings had changed to include Shoemaking, Printing, Plumbing, Millinery, Blacksmithing, and Cabinet Work, as well as the "Practice School" for Normal students (Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1897–98 and 1913–14, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH).
49 DuBois, *Autobiography* 188.

50 At this point, the names of the programs had changed although their function had remained constant: the Sub-Academic Department had become the English Preparatory Course; the Academic Department had become the College Preparatory Course; the Classical and Scientific Departments had become the College Department. Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1897–98, 35, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH. The number of students enrolled in CN&I that year is not available. For additional information on the nature of the English Preparatory course, see also Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1910–11, 57, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

51 Bowles and DeCosta 31.

52 Annual Report, Wilberforce University, 1910, 21, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

53 Wolters 95–96, 96 note 47.

54 Quoted by Wolters 197.

55 Wolters 10, 192–193; quotation appears in Wolters 193.

56 Quoted by Wolters 195.

57 Hardin 23.

58 Guillory argues that literature has lost precisely this kind of cultural capital. I concur with the stress he places on precise historical determinations of literary value, which I explore specifically through the lens of curricular value, a related but not equivalent category.

59 The administration tried to inflate the appearance of vitality in the college courses through creative bookkeeping – for example, by including in "College Enrollment" students who were in the lower level grades. Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1907–08, 46; Annual Report of the President, Wilberforce University, 1909, 26, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

60 As the department literature puts it, the program was open to students who "have passed through English Preparatory work." The English Preparatory program, as noted earlier, was the equivalent of seventh and eighth grade. See, for example, Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1910–11, 57, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH. In most states, teacher education was not transformed into a college-level program until the 1920s (Geiger, *To Advance* 110).

61 American authors were included in literature classes earlier, but 1908 was the first year American literature was taught in a class of its own. As of 1907, the first-year literature class still covered "both English and American authors." (Institutional records from 1898 to 1906 have not survived.) Annual Catalogues, Wilberforce University, 1907–08, 77; 1908–09, 78–79; and 1909–10, 77–78, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

62 Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1909–10, 77–78, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

63 Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1909–10, 77–78, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

64 Baym, "Early Histories" 459, 476.

65 Before the 1881–82 year she is listed with her maiden name; as of 1882–83 she is listed as "Mrs. S.C. Scarborough" (*Wilberforce Alumnal* 33, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH).

66 *Wilberforce Alumnal* 32–33, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

67 These were the central texts for the Tennyson class in 1909–10 ("Normal English," Annual Catalogue 1909–10, Wilberforce University, 78, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH). Many course descriptions and entrance exams of the era attest to their canonicity in the curriculum. "The Princess" was a required text in English for the Mount Holyoke College entrance examinations in the years around 1900, for example, and sections of *Idylls* were added in 1904. *Idylls* remained the Tennyson text required for entrance examinations at Mount Holyoke in 1924–25 (Catalogues of Mount Holyoke College, 1899–1900, 8–9; 1902–03, 15; 1903–04, 18–19; 1923–24, 24–25, The Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, South Hadley, MA).

68 Paula Bernat Bennett mistakenly identifies Scarborough as black. She was white, as testified by DuBois, McGinnis, and Ronnick (DuBois, *Autobiography* 191; McGinnis, *History* 146; Ronnick 15–17). See Bennett for Scarborough's translation of Lamartine's "Toussaint Louverture," originally published in the *A.M.E. Church Review* in 1888 (Bennett, *Nineteenth-Century American Women Poets* xlii, 481–483). Ronnick observes that the interracial Scarborough marriage would have been notorious, but that Scarborough says almost nothing about either it or about his wife in his autobiography, so our information is limited (15–17).

69 Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1893–94, 26, 46, 47; Joiner 60; both at Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

70 See, for example, *Wilberforce Alumnal* 32–33, which lists Bierce as "Instructor in French and Natural Science"; by 1907–08 she had shifted to what was called either "Pedagogics and Literature" or "Pedagogics and English" (see, for example, Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1907–08, list of faculty). For Bierce's vita, see Joiner 60. (All at Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.)

71 Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1910–11, 17, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH; Joiner 51. As superintendent of all of CN&I, he was an administrative superior to Bierce, who was the senior administrator of the Normal Department only.

72 McGinnis, *History* 90, 79; McGinnis, *Education* 85.

73 McGinnis, *History* 79; Bowles and DeCosta 41–42.

74 Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1910–11, 88, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

75 Luckey 82–83; Geiger, *To Advance* 110.

76 DuBois, "Wilberforce" 178, 176.

77 DuBois, "New Wilberforce" 191–194.

78 DuBois, "Another Puzzle: The 'New' Wilberforce" 21. The institutional political battles at Wilberforce were densely interwoven with racial politics in the state of Ohio, disputes among black educational leaders about the best path for black colleges, and competing educational models nationwide.
79 McGinnis, *History* 110.
80 DuBois, "Wilberforce" 178; Wolters 298–301. Enrollment rose from 165 (the figure when he took office in 1910) to 620. See McGinnis, *History* 78–80; Annual Catalogues, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH; Wolters 298.
81 Wolters 298; Scarborough 271–277.
82 Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1910–11, 88–89, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.
83 The course offering remained constant until 1913. See Annual Catalogues, Wilberforce University, 1910–11, 89, 92; 1912–13, 41, 77–78, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.
84 Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1910–11, 92, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.
85 Bowles and DeCosta use the metaphor of the distorted mirror to describe the predicament of black schools more generally.
86 Ballou, *Comparative* 51. In 2006, the Commission on the Future of Higher Education proposed a national accreditation body to replace the regional bodies that emerged at this time (Bollag A1, A22–A23).
87 Veysey viii, 11.
88 The Annual Catalogue of 1916–17 reports on the matter (Wilberforce University, 35, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH).
89 The North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools was the body from which Wilberforce primarily sought accreditation (Annual Report, Wilberforce University, 1925, 10–14, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH).
90 Annual Report, Wilberforce University, 1909, 15, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH; emphasis in original.
91 Annual Report, Wilberforce University, 1909, 10, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.
92 The following necessarily detailed personnel history elucidates my point about the gender of English at Wilberforce. During the first 2 years of the school's existence, from 1856 to 1858, the small group of teachers initially included the Principal and his wife; then the Principal, his wife as "Matron," one teacher of music and one of English, Miss Mary J. Allen. In 1858, when Richard S. Rust, a white man, took office as the first "President," the faculty expanded to include, for the first time, male "Professors" in addition to female "Teachers." Rust, who had a degree of D.D., was not only President but also "Professor of Theology and Mental Science"; George W. Mendell, A.M. (Wesleyan University), was Professor of Languages and Natural Sciences; Mary J. Allen (Wesleyan Academy) no longer covered English but

was now Preceptress and Teacher of French and Mathematics; Sarah J. Woodson of Oberlin was Teacher of English; and Adelaide Warren of Oberlin was Teacher of Instrumental and Vocal Music (*Wilberforce Alumnal* 30, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH). Both "Professors" were men and both were listed with advanced degrees; all the "teachers" were women whose training did not go beyond college studies. Woodson was the only black faculty member at this time (McGinnis, *History* 141). After Rust's tenure concluded in 1863 – at which point the institution was in transition from its first incarnation to its second, under President Payne, and simultaneously from white to black administration – there was no "English" teacher as such. The faculty was comprised of a Professor of Christian Theology, Mental Science, and Church Government; a Professor of Greek, Latin, and Mathematics (both professors male, both listed with advanced degrees); and two women, a Lady Principal, Matron and Secretary of Faculty and an "Assistant Teacher and Head of Intermediate Department," both of whom had studied at Oberlin (*Wilberforce Alumnal* 31, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH). Teachers at Wilberforce in the early years were often either graduates of Wilberforce or Oberlin, an outgrowth of the fact that these two schools were among the few institutions that would educate blacks. McGinnis called Oberlin "the most liberal college in America in the matter of higher education for Negroes" (McGinnis, *Education* 78). In 1866–68, the only woman on the faculty was the English teacher: first, Sarah Woodson, who was now "Preceptress of English and Latin"; then, her successor, Josephine Jackson, B.S., who was also black (*Wilberforce Alumnal* 31, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH; McGinnis, *History* 142 note 6). In 1868–69, the faculty was comprised of seven male professors (of Theology; Greek, Latin, and Mathematics; Ecclesiastical History, Homiletics, and Pastoral Theology; Greek and Natural Science; Latin, Greek, Exegesis, and Mathematics; and two in Law), one male "teacher" of Hebrew, and a series of female "Teachers" of English. Not all the male "Professors" had advanced degrees. Three were listed with Master's degrees, the others with bachelor's degrees or no degrees at all. The female English teachers, all of whom were white, were "Mrs. Messenger"; Mrs. Alice M. Adams, who had studied at Mount Holyoke Female Seminary in the 1850s and went on to teach at Wilberforce until 1885; Miss Emma L. Parker of the "Wesleyan Female Seminary" in Oxford, OH; and Miss Leonore Congdon, of Oberlin College, who succeeded Jackson in the roles of Lady Principal, Matron, and Teacher of English (McGinnis, *History* 142; *Wilberforce Alumnal* 31–32, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH). From 1870 to 1885, no Professors or Teachers are listed as teaching "English," although instructors in the Academic (secondary) Department taught lower level English as part of their general duties. (McGinnis identifies the early teachers by race, *History* 142 note 6). In 1893–94, the eleven faculty members in the College Department

included eight male "professors" (in Intellectual Philosophy and Logic; Mathematics; Latin and Greek; Natural Sciences; Law [two] and Military Science [two]); and two females, a "Teacher" of Instrumental Music, Drawing and Oil Painting and a Resident Physician in charge of Ladies' Hall. A third position, at this time unfilled, is clearly defined for a female employee: "Lady Principal and Instructor in English Literature and History" (Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1893–94, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH). By 1895–96 the faculty in the College Department was still organized along similar lines. The position of Lady Principal and Instructor in English Literature and History had been filled by Elizabeth L. Jackson; she and Emma H. Albert, Instructor in English branches, were the only two women on a faculty that included seven men, six of whom were "Professor" or "Dean" (including DuBois, "Professor of Latin and Greek"); the other was a "Teacher of Instrumental Music," in other words, a man in a soft field who didn't warrant the masculine title (Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1895–96, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH). DuBois reported that he also taught English composition along with his duties in Latin, Greek, and German, so teachers not classified in "English" served this affiliated role under their other titles (DuBois, *Autobiography* 188). The fact that anyone from any subject area was construed to be capable of teaching English, specifically English composition, was part of its lesser status, as indeed would later be the case with American literature. Connors discusses the conception that untrained beginners could teach composition, fostering a market for a "'teacher-proof textbook'" that "any idiot could teach" ("Crisis" 91).

93 Clarke was already at Wilberforce in 1897, when a gap in the material record begins and lasts through 1907–08. Whether another English "Professor" was hired, and left, during that period is something that cannot be ascertained, but for which there is no other evidence.

94 Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1893–94, 26, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH; Ballou, *Comparative* 38.

95 Annual Report, Wilberforce University, 1910, 7, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

96 Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1915–16, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH. "Elocution," tied to nineteenth-century models of oratory, would become "Public Speaking" in 1915, and would increasingly separate itself out of English entirely, both at Wilberforce and in U.S. education more generally. For a history of the field of rhetoric in the nineteenth century, see Johnson, *Nineteenth-Century Rhetoric*.

97 Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1911–12, 38, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH; Joiner 53. Brown, also an instructor on the pre-professional model, was dismissed from her position in the mid-1920s amidst a great deal of political turmoil on campus. A woman of letters, her *Homespun Heroines and Other Women*

*of Distinction* (1926), a collection of biographical sketches of sixty African-American women by twenty-eight contributors including Brown herself, was republished in 1988 by the Schomburg Library of Nineteenth-Century Black Women Writers. On Brown's dismissal, see "'Politics' Charged by 'Force Employees" 10.

98 See Annual Catalogues 1907–08, 20–21; 1910–11, 37–38 for representative lists of faculty showing the all-male roster of "professors" even when female instructors and associate professors have the same credentials.

99 In 1915, "The College of Liberal Arts" became "The College of Arts and Sciences" and Jones became its first Dean (Annual Reports, Wilberforce University, 1914, 6 and 1915, 3, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH). In 1924 Jones would become President of Wilberforce (McGinnis, *History* 71–72).

100 Annual Report, Wilberforce University, 1915, 6, 11, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH. Jones's inaugural report as Dean of the College was in keeping with Scarborough's vision. He noted the ongoing problem of too few college students at Wilberforce. "An increased enrollment of college students should give us higher and better rating as a university, while the money thus spent would return to the treasury in increased tuition fees." He also reported that "In our efforts to keep pace with the educational movements of the country it has been found advisable to add some courses to the college work." He tried to expand work in mathematics, chemistry, history, and classical and modern languages. Annual Reports in 1911 (27) and 1915 (11) provide similar explanations of the need to hire in English. (Annual Report, Wilberforce University, 1915, 5, 6; Annual Report, Wilberforce University, 1909, 16; all Annual Reports at Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.)

101 Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1909–10, 43; 1910–11, 48; 1911/12, 48, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

102 At this time, the catalogue began to combine the preparatory, Normal, and collegiate English classes in one section. Thus not all the courses listed under "English" are collegiate classes. This form of bookkeeping made the collegiate offerings look more ample than they in fact were. Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1914–15, 106–109, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

103 Annual Catalogues, Wilberforce University, 1916–17, 61–62; 1917–18, 66–68, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

104 Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1915–16, 111, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH. This course remained on the books for only 2 years.

105 Wilberforce University, Annual Report of the President, 1917, 14–15, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH. When Wilberforce separated the academy and university divisions in 1917, the English section of the course catalogue continued to list all the faculty and courses for both divisions together, but devised a new system of course

numbers to differentiate between levels of study. Academy courses appeared in a series beginning with 1 and college courses appeared in a series beginning with 100. The first 100-level course is "Composition," the equivalent of freshman composition, although in the catalogue it appears as a course more advanced than those numbered 1–4 that precede it, which are in fact not college courses at all. (Wilberforce University, Annual Report of the President, 1917, 14–15; Annual Catalogue, 1915–16, 108–109; Annual Catalogue, 1917–18, 66–67, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH. These two catalogues show the change in numbering systems in response to the new mandate for increased separation.)

106 Annual Report, Wilberforce University, 1915, 3, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

107 Annual Report, Wilberforce University, 1915, 20, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

108 Annual Report, Wilberforce University, 1915, 10, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

109 Annual Report, Wilberforce University, 1915, 9, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

110 DuBois, "Thomas Jesse Jones" 254.

111 Wolters 15.

112 Jones, *Negro Education* 2:7.

113 Jones, *Negro Education* 2:684, 685.

114 Jones, *Negro Education* 2:686.

115 Jones, *Negro Education* 2:154, 536, 62.

116 DuBois, "Opinion" 9.

117 Watkins 327.

118 DuBois, "Gifts and Education" 151–152.

119 A number of surveys of black colleges were in progress around the country beginning in the late 1910s. The Phelps–Stokes Fund, a philanthropic venture founded in 1910, and the U.S. Bureau of Education sponsored surveys of black colleges in 1914–15 and 1928; the U.S. Office of Education (the new name of the Bureau of Education) sponsored a third in 1942. These surveys were influential both in providing colleges with specific recommendations for improvement and, in the case of the 1928 survey in particular, in producing wider recognition and accreditation for these colleges. The American Medical Association, for example, listed thirty-one of the colleges as offering acceptable pre-medical work after the 1928 survey. The first survey rated Wilberforce a "C"-grade institution, with massive negative repercussions for the institution among distressed alumni and throughout the educational world (Wolters 14, 299; Bowles and DeCosta 45–47; McGinnis, *History* 85).

120 On the history of the philanthropic foundation as a social institution in the early part of the twentieth century, see Hollis, *Philanthropic Foundations and Higher Education*.

121 *Columbia University Alumni Register 1754–1931*, 119; Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1918–19, 9, Wilberforce University Archives and

Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH. Tuskegee would not begin to develop a College Department until the 1920s (Wolters 140–141).

122 Communication with Columbia University Archives, 6 and 7 July 1999. Columbia did not keep student records from those years. On the *Cambridge History of American Literature*, see Vanderbilt.

123 His colleagues were Geraldine Edith Jackson, Instructor in English, with a 1918 B.A. from Wilberforce, who then taught high school English and History for a year and came to Wilberforce in 1919; Irene Josephine Patterson, Instructor in English and English History, who took a 1917 A.B. at The Ohio State University, then taught in the public schools in Toledo, Ohio before coming to Wilberforce in 1919; and Sadie E. Overton, Director of Secondary Training, who had studied at a variety of institutions and taught at several more before coming to Wilberforce in 1912 (Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1919–20, 11–13, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH).

124 In another example of the institutionalization of female teaching labor, the few women who took English Ph.Ds at Hopkins during this era often taught secondary school. Alice Jouveau DuBreuil, for example, wrote a 1922 dissertation, "The Novel of Democracy in America; A Contribution to the Study of the Progress of Democratic Ideas in the American Novel" (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University). The preface to her 1932 publication *"Want-to-be" Stories: One Hundred Stories for Character Education in the First Three Elementary Grades* (published by the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore) indicates that she was "Teacher of English" in Central High School, Washington, D.C. The vita that concludes her 1922 dissertation indicates that she had held that job since 1915. DuBreuil indicates in her Preface that she wrote *"Want-to-be" Stories* for a 1930 Summer Session class on children's literature at Hopkins (The Ferdinand Hamburger, Jr. Archives, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD).

125 Charles Eaton Burch, Autobiography, "The English Reputation of Daniel Defoe," diss., The Ohio State University, 1933. As he indicates in the Autobiography that concludes his dissertation, Burch was born in Bermuda.

126 Annual Catalogue, Howard University, 1924–25, 194; Annual Catalogue, Howard University, 1929–30, 204–205, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, D.C.

127 Annual Reports and Catalogues are missing for the years 1918–21 and 1920–22, respectively.

128 McGinnis graduated from the Normal Course and the Printing Course at Wilberforce in 1903, after which he worked in various printing jobs. Then he began to teach printing, finally coming back to Wilberforce as "Instructor in Printing" in 1907 (Joiner 58–59).

129 Personal correspondence with Krista L. Ovist, University of Chicago Library, Special Collections, 4 August 1999. Geraldine Jackson, an "Instructor" although her degrees were no less advanced than McGinnis',

taught English was well, along with Eliza A. Robinson, who took an A.B. at Wilberforce in 1922 and became Instructor in English in the Academy in 1924, and Ethel Margaret Sutton, who took an A.B. at Ohio University in 1922 and became Instructor in English in the College Normal & Industrial Department. The division of faculty ranks by sex rather than training thus remained in place (Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1923–24, 9–12, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH).

130 James 332–333.

131 Annual Report, Wilberforce University, 1925, 18, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

132 Annual Report, Wilberforce University, 1928, 6, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

133 Schor 128.

134 Bowles and DeCosta 43.

135 Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1923–24, 48–49, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH; Pattee, "Call" 6.

136 Annual Catalogue, Wilberforce University, 1925–26, 50–52, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

137 Wolters 342. The Board of Trustees at Howard included black members but was controlled by white Congregationalists. The American Missionary Association had helped to found the institution, which was nondenominational (Wolters 86–87, 70–71).

138 Moton 401.

139 Moton 401.

140 See Annual Catalogues by year, for example 1928–29 (97), 1930–31 (111), 1936–37 (123–125), 1937–38 (106–107), 1938–39 (102–103), Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH. By the late 1930s the short story class had become "The Short Story in English and American Literature." Some ancillary courses like "Contemporary Literature" and "Contemporary Drama" mentioned American works in their descriptions during this time.

141 Catalogue 1938–39, 26; Annual Report, 1939, 4, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

142 Hardin argues that a gradual philosophical shift in ideas about the "key instructional approach" for black colleges was in transition nationally in the late 1930s, from industrial education to liberal arts education. Black colleges on the industrial model were becoming anachronisms. DuBois observed in 1933 that "the industrial school has almost surrendered its program." In Kentucky, to take one example, by 1938 all higher education for blacks emphasized liberal training toward teacher certification (Hardin 55, 59; DuBois, "The Negro College" 176). Holloway traces a later development in this history, that of the slow and complex path by which black professors gradually began to penetrate white campuses after 1945 (Holloway 217–246).

143 Wolters 296–297, 313; Annual Reports, Wilberforce University, 1947–48, 1–3; 1948–49, 16, Wilberforce University Archives and Special Collections, Wilberforce, OH.

## 4 LITERARY VALUE AND THE LAND-GRANT MODEL: THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

1 The land-grant and state universities were coeducational; they, and the new women's colleges discussed in Chapter 2, were the primary forces in higher education for women after the Civil War.

2 However else the definition of "liberal arts" might fluctuate historically, their foundational premise is that they do not serve practical, narrowly vocational interests but instead train the mind in a broader sense for the challenges of thinking and living well.

3 Quoted by President William H. Scott at the 1884 Commencement of The Ohio State University ("Inaugural Address of President Wm. H. Scott," Annual Report, 1884, The Ohio State University, [110], The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH).

4 Rudolph, *American* 18, 20, 247, 244; W.O. Thompson, *The Land-Grant College and Agricultural Education: An Address Given on the Occasion of the Semicentennial Celebration of the Ohio State University, October 14, 1920*, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

5 Morrill quoted by Rudolph, *American College* 249.

6 Rudolph, *American College* 255, 253; Ross 68; Hofstadter and Hardy 39–40.

7 Rudolph, *American College* 315, 255; Kinnison xi.

8 Hofstadter and Hardy 14.

9 Veysey 79, 184–188. Rudolph points out that colleges in both the Midwest and West tended to be so rooted in practicality and popularity that finding a way to defend liberal subjects was a struggle (Rudolph, *Curriculum* 186–187). Veysey coins the term "utilitarian university" to include but not to limit itself to the land-grants. In his analysis, this more capacious term denotes the new type of university accessible to large numbers of students, specifically including students without a background in the classical languages; that encouraged vocational specialization; and that adopted as its goals (at least rhetorically) those of practicality, usefulness, and service. Utilitarian universities in this scheme include some state universities as well as universities that were technically land-grant schools. Veysey is more interested in the educational ethos of utility rather than the Morrill Act heritage *per se*, all of which were, of course, wrapped up in the same historical processes. Broad distinctions between eastern and "western" institutions (the regional term "western" included both the "Middle West" and the "Far West" at the time) did not of course obtain in every case. Cornell, for example, was utilitarian in orientation (Veysey 190, 79, 60 note 3, 109–113).

10 Veysey 31–32. This distinction comports with social distinctions in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as described by, for example, George Santayana and Van Wyck Brooks. Santayana characterized these two radically distinct social elements as "polite America" and "crude but vital America." Brooks made a distinction between "highbrow" and "lowbrow," "dessicated culture" and "stark utility," a distinction that he thought had

created "a deadlock in the American mind." See Santayana, *Character* 140 and Brooks, *America's Coming-Of-Age* 7.

11 Rudolph, *American College* 257.

12 Turner 3758.

13 Kinnison xi, 20, 21, 28, 36, 41–42, 182–183, 196; Pollard, *History* 7.

14 Orton, "Inaugural Address of Professor Edward Orton," *Third Annual Report of the Trustees of the Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College, to the Governor of the State*, 14, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

15 Orton, "Inaugural" 14–15, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

16 Trachtenberg 79.

17 Kinnison 49, 39; Pollard, *History* 22–23, 143, 218–219. Medicine fought a long battle over its image as antithetical to the agricultural and mechanical purpose of the school (see Kinnison 150).

18 Orton, "Inaugural" 14, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

19 In the same decade in which Ohio opened its doors, a national cultural infrastructure was taking shape, including New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art and Boston's Museum of Fine Arts in 1870, the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1876, and the Art Institute of Chicago in 1879. Trachtenberg argues that, while this cultural apparatus ostensibly rendered high culture public and available to the masses, its institutional forms "subliminally associated art with wealth, and the power to donate and administer with social station and training … . Thus, museums established as a physical fact the notion that culture filtered downward from a distant past, from overseas, from the sacred founts of wealth and power" (Trachtenberg 144–145).

20 Turner 3756.

21 Orton, "Inaugural" 15, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH. In his attempt to understand the implications of class stratification to the new world of higher education, Orton echoed the growing impulse of his era to observe emerging class distinctions. Postbellum social observers such as Jonathan Baxter Harrison and Jacob A. Riis described not only the material gulf between the cultivated classes and what Riis called "the other half," but the ignorance of the cultivated about any world beyond their own. Harrison investigated a New England mill town and published his alarmist findings in *Certain Dangerous Tendencies in American Life*; Riis' *How the Other Half Lives* brought tenement life to broader attention (Trachtenberg 126, 148, 161).

22 Trachtenberg 143.

23 Thompson, "Spirit" 60.

24 On the femininity of "culture," see Trachtenberg 145.

25 Geiger, *To Advance* 204–205.

26 Turner 3758.

27 The phenomenon of coeducation began in Iowa, Wisconsin, Missouri, Michigan, and California (Rudolph, *American College* 314, 322–323).

28 Foerster, *The American State University* 77.

29 English Department course list, University of Washington Catalogue, 1907–08, The University of Washington Archives, Seattle, WA.
30 Rudolph, *American College* 324.
31 Babbitt 118–119.
32 Veysey 188.
33 Davenport 27–28.
34 Mendenhall 1:9–10.
35 Kinnison 48–49; Pollard, *History* 22–23.
36 Mendenhall 1:9–10.
37 Orton, "Inaugural" 22–23, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.
38 Orton, "Inaugural" 21, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.
39 Orton, "Inaugural" 23, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.
40 Bledstein 123–124; Spiller, "Higher Education" 292; Pollard, *History* 43; one example of the phrase appears in Orton, "Inaugural Address" 16, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.
41 Thompson, "Spirit" 59–60. The concept of pure science at Hopkins derived in part from its German university genealogy, institutions animated by *Wissenschaft* ("science"), which, as Timothy Bahti explains, "is the interest in truth as freely reasoned, as freely judged by reason," an enterprise guiding the entire university. From this standpoint, the essential utility of the university is the judgment of truth, and all other concepts of utility are subordinate (Bahti 444).
42 Quoted by Rudolph, *American College* 292.
43 Orton, "Inaugural" 23, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.
44 Ross 133; Kinnison 91.
45 Quoted by Pollard, *History* 37.
46 Orton, "Inaugural" 18, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.
47 In the absence of a European social system of inherited classes, occupation became a chief form of distinction in the United States. Bledstein argues that degree-granting education emerged as a means to status and that a university degree became an increasingly necessary component of "scheduled mobility, from the distinct and ascending levels of schooling, to the distinct and ascending levels of occupational responsibility and prestige," all in the service of status in the occupational world. The American middle class matured and defined itself largely by way of the university, which emerged as the "seminal institution within the culture of professionalism" that established an institutional matrix for the middle class (Bledstein 121, 34, x, 34, 20, 111, 53, 285, 326; see also Higham; Veysey 40–41).
48 See Chapter 1.
49 State universities were not exactly the same type of school as land-grant institutions, although they often exhibited similar tendencies in curricular philosophy, student population, and relation to the general public. Land-grant schools were specifically created and empowered by the Morrill Act and charged there by the federal government to impart particular kinds of education. Ross discusses the generic complications associated with the terms "state university" and "land-grant college." A "state university," defined as a

state-supported institution independent of sectarian control, that embodies the dignity of the state, and that caps off a complete system of public education beginning with the primary grades, is an idea that began in the South. Its first incarnation was the University of Georgia, chartered in 1785. In contrast, Western and Midwestern "state universities" were more centered in equalitarian social ideals and practical orientation. The state university might also be the recipient of Morrill funds and therefore simultaneously the land-grant school, as in Ohio. The terminology is further complicated by the fact that many kinds of institutions received "state" aid, but state support after the Civil War increasingly focused on state universities themselves and on land-grant colleges (Ross 1–7; Rudolph, *American College* 275–280, 188–189; Hofstadter and Hardy 43–48). Veysey encompasses both the land-grant colleges and the state universities under the larger rubric of the "utilitarian" institution: "accessible to large numbers of students including students without a background in the classical languages" and with curricula encouraging "vocational specialization" (Veysey 113).

50 The 15 November 1886 issue of *Farm and Fireside* is quoted by Kinnison 135. Children from rural areas had almost no opportunity to prepare themselves for college, yet by the late 1880s, colleges and universities increasingly considered preparatory departments to be institutional embarrassments, further complicating access for un- or under-prepared students (Kinnison 135–136).

51 Annual Report, 1875, The Ohio State University, 54–55, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

52 Kinnison 60, 54, 140; Pollard, *History* 70; *History of the Ohio State University* (*Formerly Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College Containing Act of Incorporation and Unrepealed Acts of the General Assembly of Ohio*) (Columbus: Nevins & Myers, 1878) 33, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

53 Annual Report, 1880, The Ohio State University, 7, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

54 Annual Reports, The Ohio State University, 1880, 7; 1880, 35; 1881, 48; 1885, 46, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

55 Annual Report, 1874, The Ohio State University, 681, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

56 Rudolph, *American College* 257.

57 Veysey 15–16, 160.

58 Annual Report, 1886, The Ohio State University, 22, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

59 Kinnison 142.

60 Unidentified newspaper article, "Source unknown: 1920," "Mendenhall, Thomas Corwin," The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH; Wilbur H. Siebert, *Thomas Corwin Mendenhall: Teacher, Scientist, Administrator*, pamphlet, "Mendenhall, Thomas Corwin Physics/Trustee 1919–1924," The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

61 The content of the class cannot be determined from extant records. See Circular, 1881, 51ff. and Annual Report, 1882, 39, The Ohio State University, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

62 Chalmers took his B.A. and Ph.D. at Eureka College in IL and then became Professor of English and Philosophy there from 1887 to 1889. There is no Eureka College record of the M.A. to which the Ohio State records refer. Eureka did not have a graduate school, a curriculum of graduate classes, or graduate advisors. The College has no record that Chalmers produced a dissertation or indeed engaged in any official doctoral studies (Dickinson, ed. 194–195; personal correspondence with Anthony Glass, Melick Library, Eureka College Archives, Eureka, IL, 18 and 19 April 2006, 17 May 2006; Annual Report, 1889, The Ohio State University, [6], 15, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH).

63 Catalogue, 1890–91, The Ohio State University, 63, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

64 The kinds of historical data that support my assertion about the relation between teachers and textbooks in this era include the direct links I have traced between class content (as recorded by student notebooks) and textbook content; course descriptions prior to the 1890s that listed textbooks as if they were the content of the course; and the advertising copy in textbooks themselves.

65 The Annual Reports provide a chronicle of the change in nomenclature.

66 Annual Report, 1894, The Ohio State University, 26, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

67 Annual Report, 1894, The Ohio State University, 24; Catalogue 1896–97, The Ohio State University, 9; Annual Report, 1899, The Ohio State University, 11; The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH. On the accelerating exile of clergymen from academic posts after 1865 as part of larger reform trends, see Veysey 10.

68 The Annual Reports for the years at issue provide a record of the offerings (The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH).

69 Catalogue, 1893–94, The Ohio State University, 80, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

70 Departmental lines between English as a language, English as a literature, rhetoric, philology, and affiliated terms were often in flux at colleges and universities during this period. As was typically the case in the history of departments, nomenclature for the English Department thus varied at different points. For example, in 1884 the department was called "English Literature and History"; in 1891–92 it was called "English and Rhetoric." In the ensuing years, fluctuating relationships among such designations as "English literature," "English language," "English language and literature," "rhetoric," and "philology" continued to show in departmental headings and subheadings in the catalogues (Annual Report and Catalogue, 1883, The Ohio State University, 14; Catalogue, 1891–92, The Ohio State University, 5, 49–51, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH).

71 He studied for a year at Columbia in an unidentified field. (Annual Report, 1902, The Ohio State University, 177; Catalogue, 1896–97, The Ohio State

University, 12; Joseph Russell Taylor, Biographical File; The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.)

72 See Annual Reports and Bulletins, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH. At this time, the work in "English" is sometimes separated into "English Literature" and "Rhetoric and English Language" and sometimes unified under a single heading.

73 Annual Reports, The Ohio State University, 1898, 42; 1900, 45; 1902, 42; The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

74 Royse includes selections from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, William Cullen Bryant, John Greenleaf Whittier, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Edgar Allan Poe, Fitz-Greene Halleck, Nathaniel Parker Willis, John G. Saxe, James Russell Lowell, Alice Cary, James Fenimore Cooper, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Washington Irving, William Hickling Prescott, George Bancroft, John Lothrop Motley, Bayard Taylor, Daniel Webster, Henry Clary, Edward Everett, John C. Calhoun, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Edwin P. Whipple, among others. Royse 13, 14, 21.

75 Sanborn taught the first "American literature "course at Smith in 1880. The course was a senior-year summer-term elective listed as "English Literature. – Lectures on American Literature." Although these early college circulars list courses without instructors, we know that English courses were divided at the time between Heloise Hersey and Sanborn, with Sanborn taking the "literature" side. (Official Circular 7, 1880, Smith College, 12; Official Circular 8, 1881, Smith College, 11; Smith College Archives, Northampton, MA.) Her father, Edwin D. Sanborn, a professor of oratory and belles-lettres at Dartmouth, taught Dartmouth's first American literature course the same year she introduced the subject at Smith (Vanderbilt 110).

76 Sanborn 96.

77 Annual Report, 1902, The Ohio State University, 42, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

78 Royse characterized his textbook as "a repository from which to draw selections either for reading or for declamation," marking it as the kind of textbook that was standard in the old-style classroom (Royse 3–4). It was these kinds of textbooks that Pattee later insisted that American literature needed to replace with real scholarship if it was ever to become a serious college subject (Pattee, "Call" 4). Like Royse, Sanborn's labor was also marked as pre-professional. Her pedagogy was rooted in the lecture and the recitation method, the standard antebellum classroom fare under pressure in the post-Hopkins era. The recitation consisted in an oral quiz of an hour's length, 5 days a week, throughout the academic year. It was meant to test whether each student had memorized the lesson assigned the previous day. Sanborn showed her ambivalence about the recitation method when she recalled proudly in 1915 that during her teaching at Smith she took questions from the class "for ten minutes at the close of every recitation" (Sanborn, *Memories* 116; on recitation as the conventional pedagogical method of the day, see, for example, Rudolph, *American College* 138 and Veysey 37). Working

as she was at the cusp of a cultural shift in teaching styles, Sanborn was also, as a pre-professional woman of letters, at the brink of a change in definitions of the adequate college English teacher. Her approach to American literature represented only one emergent strain of curricular justification, which would eventually lose in the broader history of the curriculum.

79 In 1906–07, the American literature class still required a prerequisite, which could be met by taking any of eight other English classes. The following year, the department eliminated the prerequisite (Bulletin, 1906–07, The Ohio State University, 207; Bulletin, 1907–08, The Ohio State University, 235; Bulletin, 1907–08, The Ohio State University, 233; The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH).

80 In 1909–10 Taylor taught it; in 1910–11 three assistant professors taught it; in 1911–12 it passed back to Taylor. (Connors discusses the history of composition as an elementary subject staffed by "untrained beginners" ["Crisis" 91].) The new survey class of 1910 taught exactly the same authors as the 1890s class, with two additions: James Fenimore Cooper and Walt Whitman. Cooper was an unsurprising addition, since he appeared on other college syllabi by the late nineteenth century as well as on college entrance exams. Cooper was included, for example, in Bates' 1897 textbook and in Marks' 1901 American literature class at Mount Holyoke (see Chapter 2). Ohio State included *The Last of the Mohicans* on its entrance requirements in 1899 and 1900. Whitman was a more cutting-edge addition. Debates about whether Whitman represented a path American literature should or should not embrace had been a hot point of debate around the turn of the century, an issue that was at this point in the process of historical resolution in his favor. For examples of the debate over Whitman in the 1890s, see Santayana, "The Poetry of Barbarism" 84–116; Santayana, "Walt Whitman: A Dialogue"; *George Santayana's America*, ed. James Ballowe 97–104; and Edwin Arlington Robinson's poem "Walt Whitman" (*Nineteenth-Century American Poetry*, ed. William Spengemann 429–430). See also Bulletin, 1923–24, The Ohio State University, 269; Biographical Files, Joseph Russell Taylor, Edwin Long Beck, William Lucius Graves; Bulletins, 1910–11 and 1911–12, The Ohio State University; Annual Report, Part II, 1899, The Ohio State University, 68; Bulletin, 1910–11, The Ohio State University, 49; all at The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH. (Ohio State fluctuated in the title it gave to the annual list of courses, sometimes calling it "Bulletin," sometimes "Catalogue," and sometimes even "Bulletin Catalogue.")

81 Here again we see American literature negotiating its curricular place alongside other subjects doing the same. Connors's work on the history of composition points out that, particularly after 1910, the hierarchy of English departments became more clearly stratified, with "literature" on the top and composition on the bottom, a phenomenon to which composition responded by evolving an internal two-tier hierarchy with composition "scholars" ranking higher than composition "teachers" ("Crisis" 102). American literature eventually escaped its elementary status in a way that composition did not.

82 Catalogue, 1921–22, The Ohio State University, 286; Catalogue, 1924–25, The Ohio State University, 403, 201, 231; Catalogue, 1925–26, The Ohio State University, 429; Annual Report, 1925, The Ohio State University, 185–186; Bulletin, 1924, The Ohio State University, 84–85; The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

83 Some of the instructors from the increasingly large stable of American literature teachers included Edwin Long Beck, who had a 1908 undergraduate degree from Ohio State and an honorary M.A. and whose area of interest was nineteenth-century English poetry; and William Lucius Graves, an Ohio State B.A. and M.A. (Edwin Long Beck and William Lucius Graves, Biographical Files, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH). During World War I, an additional upper level American literature course appeared in the course bulletin for the first time, but was never actually taught. As at other schools, World War I produced at least an intention to teach more American literature (Bulletins, 1917–18, 1918–19, and 1919–20, The Ohio State University, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH). In each volume the course is asterisked with the note that it will not be offered during the current year; also see Pattee, "American" 268, 271.

84 Annual Report, 1922, The Ohio State University 249–250, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

85 I speak here from my own experience as faculty at Ohio State, including my involvement in curricular design and policy at the departmental and college levels.

86 Annual Report, 1929, The Ohio State University, 73, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

87 Bulletin, 1931–32, The Ohio State University, 103, 116, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

88 W.L. Graves to W.J. Shepard, 29 January 1930, College of Arts & Science, Office of the Dean, RG 24/a/5, English Department, 1924–31, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

89 Letter of 4 April 1933 from Thomas C. Pollack to Edwin L. Beck, RG 24/a/5, "English Department, 1932–1934," The Ohio State University Archives; Bulletin, 1931–32, The Ohio State University, 103, 116; Joseph Russell Taylor, Biographical File, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH; Biographical File, Thomas Clark Pollock, University of Pennsylvania, The University Archives and Records Center, Philadelphia, PA.

90 Bulletin, 1934–35, The Ohio State University, 71, 103, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

91 Annual Report, 1935, The Ohio State University, 39 and Bulletin, 1936–37, The Ohio State University, 72, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

92 He eventually joined the faculty at New York University and later became Dean there (Biographical File, Thomas Clark Pollock, University of Pennsylvania, The University Archives and Records Center, Philadelphia, PA).

93 Beach eventually left for the University of Oklahoma, in 1945 (Bulletin, 1940–41, The Ohio State University, 115, The Ohio State University

Archives, Columbus, OH; Cicely Beach, telephone interview by the author, Nashville, TN, 8 August 1994; Biographical Files, Leonard Brothwell Beach, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH).

94 "Framing an English Curriculum: Report of the Committee," undated report, [1], College of Arts & Science, Office of the Dean, RG 24/a/5, English Department, 1932–34, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH. The report carries the names of five English faculty: E.L. Beck; H.H. Hatcher; H.R. Walley; J.F. Fullington; and M.P. Percival, Chairman. The latter is a typographical error, since Percival's middle initial was "O." A 27 April 1934 letter from the Committee on Curriculum to Dean W.J. Shepard identifies the date of the English Department's proposal for the new curriculum at autumn of 1933 (RG 24/a/5, "English Department, 1932–34," The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH).

95 "Framing" [1].

96 The report's language uses the terms "Junior College" and "Senior College" for the first two and last two years of undergraduate studies, respectively. This was new bureaucratic language devised for the curricular revision. See "The Problems of the Arts College," Annual Report, 1930, The Ohio State University, 99–100, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

97 "Framing" [3], The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

98 "Framing" 4, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

99 Foerster, "Introduction" viii.

100 James F. Fullington to Bland L. Stradley, 21 April 1938, RG 24/a/5, English Department, 1934–38, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

101 James F. Fullington to Dean Bland L. Stradley, 14 February 1938, and "Proposed Travel for March 15 to March 28 James F. Fullington and M.O. Percival," RG 24/a/5, English Department, 1934–38, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

102 James F. Fullington, Chair, "The Department of English General Analysis and Recommendations March 29, 1938," RG 24/a/5, English Department, 1934–38, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

103 Annual Report, 1943, The Ohio State University, 27, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

104 Bulletin, 1940–41, The Ohio State University, 91; Bulletin, 1941–42, The Ohio State University, 96; Bulletin, 1943–44, The Ohio State University, 97; College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Minutes, July 1942 to June 1943, 64, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

105 Biographical Files, Leonard Brothwell Beach, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

106 Spiller, "Higher Education" 297.

107 Pollard, *History* 366; Biographical Files, Leonard Brothwell Beach, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

108 The history of American Studies, while related to the history of "American literature" studies, is not identical or coterminous. For a disciplinary history of American studies, see Gleason 343–358 and Wise 293–337.

109 Annual Report, 1946, The Ohio State University, 9; College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Minutes, July 1942 to June 1943, "American Civilization," 349, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.
110 Annual Report, 1946, The Ohio State University, 1, 9, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.
111 William Charvat, Biographical Files, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.
112 "American Civilization Curriculum," Bulletin, 1945–46, The Ohio State University, 36, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.
113 Annual Report, 1936, The Ohio State University, 46, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.
114 "Annual Summary Report, Department of English, July 1944–July 1945," RG 24/a/2, College of Arts & Science, Office of the Dean, Annual Reports of the Dean, 1942–52, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.
115 Bulletin, 1945–46, The Ohio State University, 89–96, and Bulletin for the Graduate School, 1945–46, The Ohio State University, 133–136, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.
116 Bulletin for the Graduate School, 1945–56, The Ohio State University, 56, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.
117 Report by the committee on post-war education, 21 September 1943, 3/h/26/29, Post War [sic] Planning: Correspondence: 1943–44, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.
118 Eugene F. Gleason to Howard L. Bevis, 9 December 1943, 3/h/26/29, Post War [sic] Planning: Correspondence: 1943–44, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.
119 Howard L. Bevis to Eugene F. Gleason, 16 December 1943, 3/h/26/29, Post War [sic] Planning: Correspondence: 1943–44, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.
120 "The Responsibility of Universities in a Democracy," 3/h/19/19, Faculty Committees: 1947, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.
121 Orton, "Inaugural" 16, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.
122 Foerster, *American State* 76–77.
123 Foerster, *American State* 68, 67.
124 Annual Report, 1942, The Ohio State University, 23, The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.
125 Spiller, "Higher Education" 293.

## CONCLUSION

1 Schiesel, "Video Games" A1, A21; Carlson, "Grand Theft"; Mangan, "Joysticks in the Classroom."
2 Rudolph, *Curriculum* 3. Hofstadter and Hardy point out that a college curriculum "reveals the educated community's conception of what knowledge is most worth transmitting to the cream of its youth" (11).
3 Pease, "New Americanists." For a list of scholarly works representative of the canon wars of the 1980s, see Introduction, note 15. The canon wars were of

course followed by the culture wars of the 1990s, whose representative texts include Lauter, *Canons*; Graff, *Beyond the Culture Wars*; Gates, *Loose Canons*; Michael Bérubé, *Public Access*; Jeffrey Williams, ed., *PC Wars*; Bérubé and Nelson, eds., *Higher Education Under Fire*; and Jay, *American Literature & the Culture Wars*.

4 Scholarly discussions about reconfiguring American literature studies have become a genre in themselves, emerging with particular force in tandem with the canon and culture wars of the 1980s and 1990s. See, for example, Michaels and Pease, *The American Renaissance Reconsidered*; Spengemann, "What is American Literature?" *A Mirror for Americanists* 7–27; Kolodny 1–18; Pease, "New Perspectives" 22–37. Dimock's "Scales of Aggregation" 219–228 is a current emblem for this generic habit. Radway's "What's in a Name?" presents an excellent barometer of recent anxieties about Americanist conceptualizations of the field of American studies.

5 In Americanist discourse, "exceptionalism" names the intellectual tradition that argues for America's uniqueness, emblematized in formulations like "the American mind." See Radway, Wise, Denning, and Pease and Wiegman for post-exceptionalist discussions of exceptionalism. Obviously, in the present case I turn the term to new use, applying it to the *disciplinary status* of American literature rather than to the *nominal content* of the field.

6 The sense of an ending obtains in the larger world of the humanities, where a proliferation of terms beginning with the prefix "post" (including my own coinage in this chapter) has become routine. Scholes' MLA Presidential Address in 2004 was called "The Humanities in a Posthumanist World." Michael Millner recently characterized the critical aftermath of the 1990s as a period of "post post-identity" that is "marked by a sense of exhaustion" ("Post Post-Identity" 541–553, 541). Other representative examples of humanist discourse about fragmentation and its angst-filled relation to globalization include "The Future of the Humanities in a Fragmented World" ("Guest Column" 715–723) and Paul Jay's "Beyond Discipline" 32–47. See also Arthurs and the MLA 2004 Presidential Forum on "The Future of the Humanities," the papers from which were published in *Profession 2005*: Scholes, "Whither, or Wither, the Humanities?"; Menand, "Dangers Within and Without"; Smith, "Figuring and Reconfiguring the Humanities and the Sciences"; Guillory, "Valuing the Humanities, Evaluating Scholarship"; Appiah, "Humane, All Too Humane." Menand argues that the anti-disciplinary stage, in which scholarly inquiry challenged traditional disciplines for their conceptual arbitrariness and institutional failures to integrate new areas, has given way to what he calls "the phase of postdisciplinarity." The postdisciplinary phase is one of "determined eclecticism about methods and subject matter." Some professors, Menand argues, "now establish themselves as stars not by attacking their own disciplines, but by writing books on subjects outside, or only tangentially related to, their disciplines" (*The Marketplace* 12–13).

7 Examples of these positions include Arthurs; Graff, "The University *Is* Popular Culture" 16; Bérubé, *The Employment of English* 34; Bérubé and

Nelson, eds. *Higher Education Under Fire*; Jay, *American Literature & the Culture Wars*. The "Future of the Humanities" panels at the 2004 MLA convention were the professional emblem of these worries, in particular about the status of the sciences. A consortium of humanities organizations, led by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, has inaugurated a project called the "Humanities Indicators" to collect "hard data" that will assist in diagnosing the precise contours of the current crisis (Howard A14–A16).

8 In *The Last Professors: The Corporate University and the Twilight of the Humanities*, Frank Donoghue argues that the job class of the professor is silently disappearing across the nation in response to the increasingly corporate behaviors of modern universities. He assesses in depth such forces as the growth of for-profit education and the rise of adjunct labor in the classroom.

9 I thus add an important and overlooked element to the scholarly discussion in progress about the future of the disciplines. Menand, for example, usefully traces the history of disciplinarity as well as the genealogy of the humanities, but his picture is one in which undergraduates occupy a marginal, not a formative, place. My argument here is a bottom-up corollary to Menand's vision of the postdisciplinary era, seen not via a model concerned primarily with research scholars and their disciplines but with students and curricula. Altbach points out that students are a key piece in university life, and yet "relatively little is understood about the nature and orientation of student culture," since research in higher education tends to focus on matters other than the students themselves ("Students: Interests, Culture, and Activism" 203, 219).

10 The other two phases, as the previous chapters have pointed out, are the birth of the modern American university in the 1870s (along with the professor as a job class) and the structural transformation of higher education after World War II.

11 I measure these signifying fluctuations both by way of an array of contemporary dictionaries and by noting routine uses of the term in university discourse. *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language* offers two definitions: "1. the aggregate of courses of study given in a school, college, university, etc. 2. the regular or a particular course of study." *The American Heritage College Dictionary* offers "1. All the courses of study offered by an educational institution. 2. A group of related courses, often in a special field of study." *The Oxford English Dictionary* (1971), meanwhile, lists one definition only: "A course; *spec*. a regular course of study or training, as at a school or university."

12 Guillory, "Who's Afraid of Marcel Proust?" 29, 33, 45.

13 Delbanco, "Colleges: An Endangered Species?"

14 See Menand, *Marketplace* 15–17. He argues that the undergraduate curriculum shows "a great deal of paradigm loss within the humanities disciplines" (17).

15 Dillon A17. Donoghue trenchantly analyzes the curricular implications of the current upheaval in definitions of the "university." As he points out, the new phenomenon of the for-profit "university," to cite only one example of the changes in progress, eliminates the liberal arts entirely ("The Uneasy Relationship," 1.1:106).

16 Those of us who work in higher education recognize this rhetorical shift from student to customer. Budiansky reported in *The New York Times* that he was planning a satirical novel set at a university and featuring "a bunch of gags about how colleges prostitute themselves to improve their U.S. News & World Report rankings and keep up a healthy supply of tuition-paying students, while wrapping their craven commercialism in high-minded-sounding academic blather." He created a character, a breakfast-cereal executive, who returns to his alma mater as vice president for finance and "tries to get everyone to call the students customers." Budiansky reports: "It turns out Yale was already doing that" ("Brand U" A23).

17 Benton, "Manifesto" C1, C4.

18 Student choices, attitudes, and interests have always had direct effects on higher education, although the scholarship on higher education is itself so primarily top-down that one might justifiably wonder where all the students are. The specific ways that universities are market driven do not feature widely in their public-relations rhetoric, which prefers bland and usually meaningless terms like "excellence," frequently obscuring the actual practical logic behind decision-making (Altbach 203). Two excellent studies that focus on higher education by way of the undergraduate are Horowitz, *Campus Life* and Nathan.

19 Frolick 49.

20 Blumenthal A1, A9.

21 Blumenthal A9; Bell B14; Hisle B6–B8; Wittenberg B20.

22 Despite their own behaviors, a majority of professors believe that the Internet has had a negative influence on student performance. Forty-two percent of professors participating in a recent nationwide survey think it has caused a decline in the quality of student work, while only 22 percent think it has caused an improvement. The fact that the survey was itself conducted online suggests that these results might even inflate the Internet-positive responses. Sixty-seven percent reported, in contrast, that the Internet has improved their communication with students (Young, "Professors" A32).

23 One of the earliest elegies about these changes, from the vantage of the humanities, is Birkerts.

24 Ong, *Orality* 77.

25 Ong, *Orality* 80–81. He argues that writing is a technology that calls for the use of specialized tools and other equipment, such as styli, brushes, or pens; carefully prepared surfaces such as paper, animal skins, and strips of wood; inks or paints, and much more. Ong only tangentially addresses digital phenomena, which had not yet developed as they have since ("Writing is a Technology" 293–319). I cite Ong to stress and extend his premise that technologies of literacy (in his argument, writing in particular) restructure consciousness itself, but I do so while also stressing that the material circumstances and configurations of literacy are historically situated phenomena that thus cannot be simply treated as universal. Throughout my discussion I define "literacy" in its most foundational sense: basic skills in

alphabetic reading and writing. Literacy studies is a vast and exploding area of scholarship that offers, at present, little consensus about the impact of electronic media. Useful recent studies include Gee, *What Video Games Have To Teach*; diSessa, *Changing Minds*; Bloch and Hesse, eds., *Future Libraries*; Selfe, *Technology*; Taylor and Ward, eds., *Literacy Theory*; Welch, *Electric Rhetoric*; Nunberg, ed., *The Future of the Book*; Swiss, ed., *Unspun*; Sutton, ed., *Literary Texts*; Reinking, ed., *Handbook*; Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation*.

26 The phrase "born with a chip" is Maloy's, quoted by Blumenthal; Zeller, "Lives" C1, C18. This transformation is altering an array of practices associated with visual culture both in and outside universities. For example, Walt Disney Company, in a controversial shift, decided to resolve the internal battle between its two camps of animators, those who used computers and those who used pencils, by choosing the former path. Journalist Laura M. Holson reports, "The results were nothing short of a cultural revolution at the studio" (3.1, 10).

27 Zeller quotes Luskin ("Lives" C18).

28 Zeller, "A Generation Serves Notice" Section 3: 1.

29 Professor Naomi Baron, quoted by Carlson, "The Net Generation" A36.

30 Read, "More Colleges."

31 Weinberg B13–B14.

32 Foster A32–A34. Cole quoted by Foster A33.

33 The Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College, Faculty Records 1873–82, 302, 310; The Ohio State University Archives, Columbus, OH.

34 Read, "Berkeley" A44.

35 Carlson and Carnevale, "Conference Notebook."

36 "Q&A" A26–A27. Of course, the rhetorical altruism of technology manufacturers has little to do with the nitty-gritty of the actual educational process. "A robust information technology solution is no longer a maybe in higher education: it's a must for all. And yet, on many campuses, administrators have neither the time nor the personnel to resolve all the challenges they confront in the quest to deliver the powerful systems their users demand. Inevitably, those IT administrators look to the outside, searching for a trusted vendor with which to partner to develop the solutions that will keep their campuses clicking – a trusted partner like Hewlett-Packard" ("Creating the Adaptable Campus," Hewlett-Packard Special Advertising Supplement 2).

37 National Endowment for the Arts, "Reading at Risk" ix; Scholes, "Some Interesting Developments" 3. Researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have unveiled a $100 laptop that runs on batteries and provides wireless access to the Internet as part of a plan to bring every child in the world a computer. Nicholas Negroponte, director of MIT's Media Lab, described the initiative as "'an education project, not a laptop project,'" the kind of initiative that is diametrically opposed to the NEA ideology of reading (Young, "MIT Researchers" A41).

38 Johnson, *Everything* 19–20.

39 "Wiki," from *Wikipedia*. 15 August 2005 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiki>.

40 Read, "Romantic Poetry" A35–A36.

41 "Wiki," from *Wikipedia*. 15 August 2005 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiki>. Ironically, an edit war recently transpired at *Wikipedia* over who founded the site; founder Jimmy Wales altered his own *Wikipedia* biography to play down the role of his former colleague Larry Sanger as co-founder. Volunteer editors undid Wales' edits and he reinstated them. Sanger eventually left *Wikipedia* because it gave too much power to "difficult people, trolls, and their enablers" (Mitchell, "Insider Editing at *Wikipedia*" B5; Sanger quoted by Mitchell). Some entries at *Wikipedia* fall outside the "anyone can edit" domain (Hafner A1, B9).

42 The *value* of that shift is another matter entirely, one I will not resolve here. Jaron Lanier addresses its potential hazards as a form of "hive mind" or what he calls "foolish collectivism." He argues that the "hive mind" tendencies of *Wikipedia* and other forms of online collectivism represent "the alarming rise of the fallacy of the infallible collective." In contrast, MySpace "is all about authorship" that "doesn't pretend to be all-wise." Lanier argues that the current moment is one in which a potentially dangerous collective must be balanced by a guiding principle to "cherish individuals first" ("Digital Maoism").

43 Read, "Romantic Poetry" A35–A36.

44 Read, "Romantic Poetry" A36.

45 Toor B5.

46 Zeller, "Lives" C18.

47 Wyatt, "Want 'War and Peace'" 1.

48 Wyatt, "Want 'War and Peace'" 1, C12; Wyatt, "Writers Sue Google" C3; Vaidhyanathan B7–B10.

49 Kelly 64.

50 Updike 27.

51 Cotter 2. 1, 29.

52 Rose 2. Sample cases covered extensively in recent news include William H. Swanson's *Swanson's Unwritten Rules of Management* and its unacknowledged use of a 1944 engineering text, W.J. King's *The Unwritten Laws of Engineering*; Harvard sophomore Kaavya Viswanathan's novel *How Opal Mehta Got Kissed, Got Wild and Got a Life* and its relation to two novels by Megan McCafferty; and the highly publicized (and ultimately unsuccessful) case against Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* by Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh, two of the three authors of a nonfiction book, *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail* (Wayne C3; Dinitia Smith, "Copying" A14; Rich and Smith 1, A16; Dinitia Smith, "Novelist" A16; Lyall E1).

53 John Hanke quoted by Markoff, "By and for the Masses" C1.

54 Markoff, "By and for the Masses" C1.

55 Markoff, "By and for the Masses" C1.

56 Carr, "Big Media" C1.

57 Seelye and Sorkin 1, A18.

58 Carr, "In Print" C5.

59 Mitchell, "Blog" B5.

60 O'Brien 3. 1, 3. Experimenting with a new trend in the advertising business, Chevrolet introduced a website that would allow users to create ads for its S.U.V.

the Tahoe, hoping these users would then in turn spread the ads, a phenomenon known as viral marketing. The most widely spread ads that users created actually attacked the Tahoe as an environmental disaster (Bosman C1, C12).

61 Markoff, "By and for the Masses" C1.
62 Hansell 3. 1, 4.
63 Anderson 170–177, 173.
64 Hansell.
65 Hansell.
66 Tedeschi C7.
67 Markoff, "By and for the Masses" C5. He quotes Caterina Fake, co-founder of the Web photo-sharing service Flickr, on the "culture of generosity."
68 Barbaro A1.
69 Lohr 1, 18.
70 Zeller, "Imps" C1.
71 Phillips A1.
72 Quoted by Markoff, "By and for the Masses" C5.
73 Carlson, "Net Generation" A36.
74 The article describes "an online commons for impromptu research," a service typically patronized by users whose questions can't be or aren't answered by automated searches (Wayner C9).
75 Carr, "Garage Rock" C1, C6.
76 Stanley B1, B4.
77 Story A12.
78 The *Los Angeles Times* curtailed its own experiment with wikitorials, which allowed readers to rewrite editorials online, after only 2 days because users posted pornography (Stephanie Saul C6; Seelye, "Hands-On" C1, C4).
79 Rosen quoted by Seelye, "Take That" C3.
80 Posner 10.
81 Posner 11.
82 Seelye, "Hands-On" C4.
83 Quoted by Seelye, "Hands-On" C4.
84 Ralli C8; Ralli quoting Jarvis.
85 Seelye, "Take That" C3; Seelye quoting columnist Craig Crawford C3.
86 Leadbeater, "Design Your Own Revolution."
87 Baym, *American Women*.
88 Monastersky A30.
89 Thompson, "Professional Amateurs" 88.
90 Hunt, "Democratization" 30.
91 Pease and Wiegman cast their volume *The Futures of American Studies* in "the hybridized zone in between emergent and residual whereby futurity enters the field" ("Futures" 22). I depart from their configuration of the hybridized zone, with its exclusive focus on "structures of academic knowledge formations that continue to bifurcate the realms of the economic, political, and cultural" (25), inhabiting as it does an exclusively top-down vision of knowledge formation.

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