

Leah Price

CULTURES OF THE COMMONPLACE

The kind of anthology most familiar to academic literary critics today – delimited by nationality, arranged by chronology – was unknown in Richardson's lifetime. The anthology itself is much older, as we have seen. But the defeat of perpetual copyright in 1774 changed the use to which the form was put. Only once the legal status of earlier works came to diverge from that of new ones did English-language anthologies take on the retrospective function (and the academic audience) that they maintain today. Timely miscellanies of new works gave way to timeless gleanings from the backlist. On or about 1774, as the research of Barbara Benedict and Trevor Ross has shown, literary history became anthologists' job.¹

A generation of late-eighteenth-century anthologies established not only the content of the canon to date, but also the rules by which future literature would be transmitted, notably the expectation that every anthology-piece bear a signature and that its signatory be dead.² Even more important than their ambition to consolidate a national tradition, however, was the near-monopoly that a few school anthologies achieved by the end of the century, allowing large numbers of schoolchildren to share the experience of reading not just the same anthology-pieces but the same anthologies. Looking back on the *Elegant Extracts: or Useful and Entertaining Passages in Prose Selected for the Improvement of Scholars in Classical and other Schools* first published by Vicesimus Knox in 1784, an 1816 edition could boast that the 'uniformity of English books, in schools' which enabled 'all the students of the same class, provided with copies of the same book, . . . to read it together' would have been logistically unthinkable a few generations ago. The class reciting in unison provided an image for a culture cemented not only by the affordability but by the ubiquity of a few standard collections.³

Like other late-eighteenth-century traditions, however, those anthologies backdated their own invention. A companion volume of *Elegant Extracts: or Useful and Entertaining Pieces of Poetry, Selected for the Improvement of Youth in Speaking, Reading, Thinking, Composing; and in the Conduct of Life* (1784) vests editorial responsibility with everybody and nobody, displacing Knox's originality at once by the anthologists who preceded him and by the readers forced to ratify his decisions. 'There was no occasion for singular acuteness of vision, or of optical glasses,' the preface intones heavily, 'to discover a brightness which obtruded itself on the eye.'

The best pieces are usually the most popular. They are loudly recommended by the voice of fame, and indeed have already been selected in a variety of volumes of preceding collections . . . Almost any man, willing to incur a considerable expense, and undergo a little trouble, might have furnished as good a collection . . . It was the business of the Editor of a school-book like this, not to insert scarce and curious works . . . but to collect such as were publicly known and universally celebrated . . . Private judgement, in a work like this, must often give way to public.⁴

An anthology that reproduces the words of poets also records the voice of fame. An amanuensis rather than a creator, its editor represents a community instead of expressing a self. In the same way that each anthology-piece functions (at least in theory) as a representative synecdoche for the longer text from which it is excerpted, the anthologist claims to stand within – and for – the same audience that he addresses. Samuel Johnson had positioned himself within that public when he professed in the *Life of Gray* (itself prefaced to one of the volumes which together make up an anthology writ large of *Works of the English Poets*) to 'rejoice to concur with the common reader; for by the common sense of readers uncorrupted with literary prejudices . . . must be finally decided all claim to poetical honours'.⁵ Johnson's 'common sense' anticipates Knox's 'public judgement' as closely as the latter's lumbering antitheses imitate the former's measured periods, but the *Extracts* go farther to silence Johnson's critical 'I' altogether. Caught between the readers for whom he speaks and the writers from whom he copies, the editor dwindles to a vanishing point. In the last moment of the book marked as Knox's own – since the 'extracts' themselves change him from author to compiler – the speaker writes himself out of existence. The preface ends with a quotation: 'I will, therefore, conclude my preface with the ideas of Montaigne: – "I have here only made a nosegay of culled flowers, and have brought nothing of my own but the thread that ties them."'⁶ By substituting Montaigne's signature for Knox's, this conclusion prefigures the transition from the preface where the editor speaks to the body of the text where other authors' voices displace his. The editor abdicates his individuality as a reader together with his originality as a writer. Far from standing above the undifferentiated passivity of the reading public, the anthologist exemplifies it.⁷

Knox's self-conscious sacrifice of 'private' or 'singular' to 'public' or 'popular' taste erases not only the editor's superiority to his audience but any difference between one reader and another. The only readers whom his ostentatiously inclusive public excludes are precisely those who try to distinguish themselves: antiquarians whose expertise on what he calls 'scarce and curious works' challenges the cohesion of his audience. The *Elegant Extracts* record a double series of discriminations – texts to be represented from texts to be ignored and, within the former, passages to be reproduced from passages to be excised. Yet Knox keeps the act of evaluation decorously offstage. His preface alternately banishes from the 'public' those readers who attempt to act upon their 'private' judgments and displaces his own editorial responsibility onto the 'preceding collections' to which he defers. That precedent itself recedes endlessly, since the preface accuses earlier anthologies of borrowing in turn: 'the freedom of borrowing [from other anthologies], it is hoped, will be pardoned, as the collectors, with whom it has been used, first set the example of it.'⁸ Knox's deference to tradition lends moral significance to the longstanding tension between the demand for new editions to edge older ones out of the market, on the one hand, and the economic incentives to recycle earlier editorial principles or even to re-use old plates, on the other. Indeed, the *Extracts* exclude not only living authors, but new assessments of dead ones. In a characteristically negative formulation, the tenth edition promises that its contents will be 'selected from writers whose characters are established without controversy'.⁹ With what their characters are established remains unspecified, for the anthology defines not only the production but the evaluation of literature as *faits accomplis*.

Knox's disclaimer of originality kept his anthology in print, his selection plagiarized, and his

impersonal persona imitated long after more polemical competitors like Hazlitt's ephemeral *Select British Poets, or New Elegant Extracts from Chaucer to the Present Time* (1824) disappeared from sight. . . . His invocation of an already established consensus has remained formulaic from Kearsley's *Beauties of Shakespeare* (published in the same year as the first volume of the *Extracts*), which apologizes for 'dwell[ing] on perfections which every one confesses', to Francis Turner Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* (1861), which calls 'its fittest readers those who already love Poetry so well, that [the editor] can offer them nothing not already known and valued', through to Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren's influential American textbook *Understanding Fiction* (1943), which promises to include only 'stories which are popular and widely anthologized'. Knox's fantasy of editing by plebiscite was realized two centuries later in Columbia University Press's anomalously explicit *The Classic Hundred: All-Time Favorite Poems* (1990) and *Top 500 Poems* (1992), which select their contents by frequency of appearance in earlier US anthologies as measured by *Granger's Index to Poetry*. When a US Education Secretary's neoconservative *Book of Virtues* (1993) made hackneyed anthology-pieces the vehicle to bring a reluctant public 'back' to basics, his declaration that 'we don't have to reinvent the wheel' lent political point to the reinvention of tradition that has become traditional among anthologists.¹⁰ Repeated with the same unanimity that they describe, these editorial disclaimers not only imply that texts transmit themselves – that as John Hollander and Frank Kermode's preface to the *Oxford Anthology of English Literature* put it more thoughtfully in 1973, 'English literature has generated its own history' – but present the anthology as the effect of an audience's cohesion rather than its cause.¹¹

Knox's scissor-doings

Knox's disclaimers of novelty obscure the role of his *Extracts* in defining a specifically middle-class public which owes more to the endurance of the anthology than to the rise of the novel. By dismissing as 'private' the elite that prizes authorial obscurity and critical originality, Knox reduces the 'public' to the anthology-reading classes. Yet the relation of that audience to its classically educated betters remains strategically ambiguous. Where the first edition of Knox's *Elegant Extracts* (1783) addresses 'school-boys', the tenth (1816), advertised 'for the use of both sexes', presents itself as a corrective to the gender gap embodied in the absence of the 'mother tongue' from the schoolbooks of 'our fathers'. 'What ENGLISH book similar to this volume, calculated entirely for the use of young students at schools, and under private tuition, was to be found in the days of our fathers?' the preface asks. 'None, certainly. The consequence was . . . neglect [of] that mother tongue, which is in daily and hourly requisition.'¹² Knox's claim for the novelty of an 'ENGLISH' anthology (like his announcement that 'this collection may be usefully read at ENGLISH SCHOOLS, just as the Latin and Greek authors are read at the *grammar-schools*') at once acknowledges and dismisses his debt to the centuries-old machinery developed to teach ancient languages to boys.¹³

Collections of classical excerpts designed to exemplify grammatical principles, such as the *Gradus ad Parnassum*, provided a model for the more androgynous vernacular anthologies which began to supplement them in this period. William Enfield, whose academy in Warrington helped institutionalize that shift, uses the preface of his *Speaker* (1774) to reassign the pedagogical function of ancient literature to the moderns: 'Without having recourse to the ancients, it is possible to find in modern languages valuable specimens of every species of polite literature.'¹⁴ The title's invocation of an oratorical training specific to boys overcompensates for the *Speaker's* attack on the ancient/modern opposition which had traditionally helped shape children's gender identity. Indeed, Anna Laetitia Barbauld's *Female Speaker* (published thirty-seven years later) opens by regretting the disappearance of that difference between women's education and men's: 'It is, perhaps, an error in modern education, liberally conducted as at present it is toward females, that . . . when they have

gone through their course of education, they have a general acquaintance with, perhaps, three or four languages, and know little of the best productions of their own.'¹⁵ Barbauld's fear that women's eagerness for the prestige of masculine learning would eliminate students' 'own' literature from the curriculum reverses Enfield's attempt to construct a national canon by teaching men to read like women. Yet both locate gender difference among consumers, rather than, like Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *Norton Anthology of Literature by Women* two centuries later, among producers. Even the inclusion of seven token women – Catherine Talbot, Frances Brooke, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Lucy Aiken, Hannah More, Hester Chapone, and Maria Edgeworth – fails to make *The Female Speaker* significantly more gender-balanced than Enfield's collection, which had already included one in the person of Barbauld herself. Barbauld's interpellation of readers differs sharply from Gilbert and Gubar's representation of writers; the limits of her anthology depend not on who wrote its contents, but who edits and reads them. By making clear that the 'Female Speaker' of her title refers only to the audience who recites from it, Barbauld rules out the possibility that speech might encompass original self-expression.

The *Extracts*' bid to replace the classical curriculum of 'our fathers' by its equivalent in the 'mother tongue' reinforces the feminization of bourgeois culture that Knox exploits in his equally assonant *Elegant Epistles*, whose preface reassures readers that 'merchants, men of business, and particularly the ladies' write better letters than scholars.¹⁶ In the *Extracts*, too, the language of gender slips easily into commercial metaphors. The 1816 preface's description of 'the days of our fathers' concludes:

Persons who had never extended their views to ancient and classic lore, but had been confined in their education to English, triumphed in the common intercourse of society, over the academical scholar . . . It became highly expedient therefore to introduce more of English reading into our classical schools; that those who went into the world with their coffers richly stored with the golden medals of antiquity, might at the same time be furnished with a sufficiency of coin from the modern mint, for the commerce of ordinary life.¹⁷

While adjectives like 'common' and 'ordinary' describe the same community that earlier editions invoke, the 1816 preface transposes them from words denoting evaluation ('universal celebration', 'public judgement') to terms of exchange ('common intercourse', 'the commerce of ordinary life'). Knox had already defended his lack of originality by analogy with the circulation of coins: 'the stamp of experience gave ["whatever was found in previous collections"] currency.' Here, too, the scholar's 'scarce and curious works' are to the anthology-reader's 'commerce of ordinary life' what ancestral 'stores' are to the exchange of 'coins'. Aristocratic inheritance and bourgeois commerce stand for two competing models of literature: one compares it with heirlooms valuable for their rarity, the other with a currency whose worth depends on its circulation.¹⁸

Knox makes even more global claims for the circulation of literature in his later essay collection, *Winter Evenings; or Lucubrations on Life and Letters* (1788), which amplifies the *Extracts*' concern with the relation of culture to commerce. The introduction to the *Evenings* defends the proliferation of new publications by describing the widening social and geographical field through which popular English literature 'flows':

The world is wide, and readers more numerous at present than in any preceding age. A liberal education is more general, and is likely to be still more extensively diffused . . . The English language is the language of a vast continent of people . . . connecting themselves in commercial and other engagements with all nations. English literature is

of course the literature of America. The learning of England has long been flowing from the Thames to the Ganges. The late amicable connection with our neighbours, which reflects so much honour on the liberality and wisdom of the present times, will contribute greatly to extend the language and learning of Great Britain.

The new audience to which Knox appeals here is not only English but British, not only commercial but colonial or post-colonial. Like the audience of the *Extracts*, it derives authority from shared ignorance rather than specialized knowledge. Knox insists, in fact, that the value of learning varies inversely with its rarity:

The erudition which is confined to a few libraries, or locked in the bosom of a few professors . . . may be compared to a stagnant pool; large perhaps and deep, but of little utility; while the knowledge which displays itself in popular works may be said to resemble a river, fertilizing, refreshing, and embellishing whole provinces through which its meanders roll their tide.¹⁹

The analogy of the river alludes to economic circulation as well, for Knox specifies that the 'flow' of English learning depends on 'commercial engagements'. His celebration of global exchange differs not only from antiquarian projects like Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), which define literature as a national inheritance, but even more radically from the factionalism of Ritson's ballad collections.

The fact that the *Elegant Extracts* happen to be edited by a conservative Anglican clergyman – not, like the *Speaker* or the *Female Speaker*, by a woman, a radical, or a dissenter – suggests how little its commercial model of literary circulation and feminized vision of the literary public depend on any individual anthologist's identity (what Knox himself dismisses as 'private judgement') but how inexorably they follow from the genre of the anthology itself.²⁰ The anthologist speaks *ex officio* or not at all. Conversely, Knox's self-consciousness about the relations among money, gender, and the circulation of literature reflects more than a biographical mismatch between his own classical education and his readers' presumed lack of it (or between his gentlemanly pretensions and his anthologies' commercial success). Knox's ambivalence looks back to the ambiguous gender of the figure who oversees the transmission of texts and of property in *Sir Charles Grandison*, and forward to George Eliot's hesitation about being excerpted in gift books marketed to girls. Eliot associates anthologies with private exchange among female consumers, Knox with the international trade carried out by classically illiterate men. Both take the anthology as a limit case for the entanglement of esthetics with money.

The convergence that anthologies like Knox's and Enfield's celebrated between the feminization of schooling and the commercialization of literature was soon turned against the genre, however. Hannah More's charge in *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (1799) that 'the swarms of *Abridgments*, *Beauties*, and *Compendiums*, . . . form too considerable a part of a young lady's library' did not so much reflect facts (since the formal education of boys guaranteed condensers their most centralized and captive audience) as literalize the gendered language that Knox and Enfield had used to define their audience's class position. More adds:

A few fine passages from the poets (passages perhaps which derived their chief beauty from their position and connection) are huddled together by some extract-maker, whose brief and disconnected patches of broken and discordant materials, while they inflame young readers with the vanity of reciting, neither fill the mind nor form the taste; and it is not difficult to trace back to their shallow sources the hackney'd

quotations of certain *accomplished* young ladies, who will be frequently found not to have come legitimately by any thing they know: I mean, not to have drawn it from its true spring, the original works of the author from which some beauty-monger has severed it . . . If we would purchase knowledge we must pay for it the fair and lawful price of time and industry.

That attack on 'the hackney'd quotations of certain accomplish'd young ladies' recalls Richardson's revisionary claim that 'seldom did [Clarissa] quote or repeat from' poets – and, more immediately, More's insistence in *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* that her own feminine paragon, Lucilla Stanley, 'does not say things to be quoted'.²¹ In the *Strictures*, however, More's concern is epistemological as much as moral. Quoting reflects not simply feminine vanity, but feminine imposture. More's argument draws on three turn-of-the-century esthetic concepts that have fueled the backlash against anthologies well into the present: originality (the 'true spring', the 'original works'); organic structure ('position and connection' opposed to 'broken and discordant materials'); and, most of all, the fear of a mass public.

Yet More protests anthologists' appeal to a frivolous feminine audience only at the expense of naturalizing it. Compilation is to complete works as women to men: both secondary rather than 'original', both decorative but 'shallow'. Indeed, More's attack on the 'disconnected' structure of anthologies echoes her description elsewhere of the female mind: 'Both in composition and action [women] excel in details; but they do not so much generalize their ideas as men . . . Women have equal parts, but are inferior in *wholeness* of mind, in the integral understanding.' That taste for detail, including textual beauties, extends from women themselves to feminized men. More's caricature of a fop

. . . studied while he dress'd, for true 'tis
He read Compendiums, Extracts, Beauties
Abregés, Dictionnaires, Recueils,
Mercures, Journaux, Extraits, and Feuilles.²²

Attention to anthology-pieces undermines masculinity as much as does attention to dress.

More appropriates not only Knox's assumptions about gender but his metaphors of community. Her image of the 'swarm' neatly inverts the picture of the busy editorial beehive that decorates the title-page of his *Extracts*. In Knox, the commonplace stands not only for the hard work involved in culling literary 'flowers' but for the sociable character of that project. One contemporary editor's conventional defense of the 'extract' makes clear how well the beehive emblemizes Knox's subordination of the editorial self to the literary community: 'if like the industrious bee I have cull'd from various flowers my share of Honey, and stored it in the common Hive, I shall have performed the duties of a good citizen of the Republic of letters.'²³ But More's substitution of a swarm for a hive turned the apiary image against itself, replacing the republic of letters by the mob. In 1782 the *London Magazine* had already characterized anthologists as a 'swarm of servile imitators' guilty of 'invasion of property'.²⁴ More went farther to hint that unwillingness to pay a 'fair' or 'legitimate' price made anthology-readers receivers of pilfered goods.

More's nervousness about readers' dependence on anthologies provides one measure of their success. Another can be found in Jane Austen's complaint that critics take novelists less seriously than 'the man who collects and publishes in a volume some dozen lines of Milton, Pope, and Prior, with a paper from the Spectator, and a chapter from Sterne.'²⁵ Like Coleridge's, More's and Austen's hostility testifies to the power which anthologists modestly disclaimed. By the turn of the nineteenth century, what Lonsdale calls 'the hypnotically influential way in which the eighteenth

century succeeded in anthologizing itself' had provoked an equally powerful reaction against anthologists and their audience – a public which, like novel-readers, ranked scarcely above illiterates in critics' estimation.²⁶

The difference, however, is that novel-reading went on to become respectable, as anthologies have yet to do. More than a century later, More's scorn for commercial 'beauty-mongers' and mechanical 'extract-makers' could still be recognized in Laura Riding and Robert Graves's attack on 'the all too numerous trade-anthologies that turn poetry into an industrial packet-commodity'. But their *Pamphlet Against Anthologies* proposes no alternative except a kind of hypertrophied anthology: a self-sufficient corpus of self-contained *oeuvres*.

This full Corpus would include all poets who had a certain recognizable minimum of credibility . . . If there were any disagreement at all about whether or not a poet should be included, he would naturally be included. When it was agreed to include a poet, disagreement as to his relative merit would not matter, as each poet would be printed entire.²⁷

Something close to the 'Corpus' imagined by Riding and Graves has finally been realized in the form of Chadwyck-Healey's *English Full-Text Poetry Database*, arranged like theirs by author, and delimited by the 'recognizable minimum of credibility' borrowed (with scattershot additions) from the *New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*. Yet both corpuses are 'full' only in the sense that they exclude *œuvres* wholesale rather than piecemeal, omitting minor poets instead of minor poems. Riding and Graves's metonymic demand for 'each poet entire' simply displaces the canon of anthology-pieces by a catalogue of signatures. The life replaces the poem as the smallest unit that can stand on its own. That substitution depends in turn on the exclusion of anonymous texts, which became conventional in literary anthologies (as opposed to antiquarian ones) at the same moment in which collections like Knox's *Extracts* systematically began to disclaim their editors' individuality. Like the *Extracts*, the *Pamphlet* makes authorial subjectivity the precondition of editorial objectivity. Their doubly impersonal reference to a 'recognizable credibility' spares Riding and Graves from specifying who recognizes 'merit' and who is expected to 'credit' that recognition. Both arguments project the editor's taste onto readers (Riding and Graves's 'recognizable minimum of credibility', Knox's 'voice of fame' and 'public judgment') at the same time as they replace the editor's individuality with the identity of the authors who sign their raw materials.

At a moment when the editors of the *Norton Anthology of English Literature* are experimenting with a *salon des refusés* on the Web – a supplementary collection of texts too unwieldy to fit within its covers – it is tempting to imagine that the electronic database will eliminate the economic constraints which have so long rendered the excerpt unavoidable. But the needs to which the anthology responds are hermeneutic, not just logistical. So far at least, Margaret Ezell's hope that exhaustive full-text databases will render anthologies of women's writing obsolete looks as utopian as the idea that genetically modified crops can end famine. Anthologies more often respond to a surfeit of accessible texts than to their shortage: what they omit is as crucial as what they include.²⁸ Indeed, anthologies like Knox's defined only the minimal limit of an emerging tradition whose maximal form had already been marked by the encyclopedic reprint series beginning with Hugh Blair's *British Poets* (forty-four volumes published between 1773 and 1776).²⁹ The speed with which Knox's necessary canon followed upon Blair's sufficient one reveals how quickly information overload creates a demand for editors, even for censors – not simply to limit the data available, but to order it. What Paul Duguid has argued of the codex remains even truer for the anthology: 'If books [as opposed to digital media] can be thought of as "containing" and even imprisoning information, that information must, in the last analysis, be understood as inescapably the product of bookmaking.'³⁰

Notes

- 1 Barbara Benedict, *Making the Modern Reader: Cultural Mediation in Early Modern Anthologies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 6, 157–60; Trevor Ross, 'Copyright and the Invention of Tradition', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 25 (1992): 1–27; see also Douglas Lane Patey, 'The Eighteenth Century Invents the Canon', *Modern Language Studies* 18 (Winter 1988): 17–37, and Julia Wright, '“The Order of Time”: Nationalism and Literary Anthologies, 1774–1831', *Papers on Language and Literature* 33 (Fall 1997): 339–65. But Richard Terry warns against overstating the novelty of literary-historical self-consciousness in this period ('The Eighteenth-Century Invention of English Literature: A Truism Revisited', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 19 [Spring 1996]: 47–62), while Marilyn Butler dates the process instead to the 1820s ('Revising the Canon', *Times Literary Supplement* [4 December 1987], 1349). I'm indebted as well to William St. Clair's unpublished lectures on the parameters of the post-1774 canon ('The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period', University of Cambridge, 1999); to John Brewer's analysis of cultural retrospection in *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), 427–92; and to Peter Uwe Hohendahl's exploration of an analogous case in *Building a National Literature: The Case of Germany, 1830–1870* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).
- 2 Lonsdale argues that Robert Anderson's *Works of the British Poets* (13 vols., 1792–95) and Alexander Chalmers's *Works of the English Poets* (21 vols., 1810) established the principle of excluding anonymous texts as well as the work of living and female poets ('Introduction', *New Oxford Book of Eighteenth-Century Verse*, ed. Roger Lonsdale [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984], xxxvi). Andrew Ashfield suggests that the canonization of a generation of recently deceased poets in the 1770s set a precedent for excluding living poets ('Introduction', *Romantic Women Poets 1770–1838: An Anthology*, ed. Andrew Ashfield [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995], xi). As early as 1784, Vicesimus Knox felt the need to defend his departure from the practice of excluding living poets: see his *Elegant Extracts: or useful and entertaining Passages in Prose Selected for the Improvement of Scholars in Classical and other Schools* (London: Charles Dilly, 1784), v–vi. On the exclusion of the living in later anthologies, see Sabine Haas, 'Victorian Poetry Anthologies', *Publishing History* 17 (1985): 51–64 (59).
- 3 Vicesimus Knox, ed., *Elegant Extracts in Prose, Selected for the Improvement of Young Persons*, 10th edn (London, 1816).
- 4 Vicesimus Knox, *Elegant Extracts: or Useful and Entertaining Pieces of Poetry, Selected for the Improvement of Youth in Speaking, Reading, Thinking, Composing; and in the Conduct of Life* (London: C. Dilly, 1784), iv–v. On the subordination of individual taste to the public voice, see also John Barrell, *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 4, 82, and Leo Damrosch, 'Generality and Particularity', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism. Vol. 4: The Eighteenth Century*, ed. H. B. Nisbet and Claude Rawson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 381–93 (390).
- 5 Samuel Johnson, 'Gray', in *Lives of the Poets*, ed. Arthur Waugh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 463. On the relation of this passage to Gray's *Elegy*, see also John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 90–91; and, on the origins of Johnson's term, Trevor Ross, 'Just When Did "British Bards Begin t'Immortalize?"', *SECC* 19 (1989): 383–98 (389).
- 6 Knox, *Extracts . . . Poetry* (1784), vi. The quotation is from *Essais*, 3.12.
- 7 See also Jonathan Brody Kraminck's argument that Johnson's common reader 'is common not in his or her social status but in his or her lack of particular traits (of class, region, gender, and so on)' ('The Making of the English Canon', *PMLA* 112 [October 1997]: 1087–101 [1098]).

- 8 Knox, *Extracts . . . Poetry* (1784), v.
- 9 Knox, *Extracts in Prose* (1816), ii.
- 10 *The Beauties of Shakespeare, selected from his plays and poems* (London: G. Kearsley, 1783), i;
Francis Turner Palgrave, ed., *The Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and Poems in the English Language*, ed. Christopher Ricks (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), 5; Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, eds, *Understanding Fiction* (New York: F. S. Crofts, 1943), xiii; William Bennett, ed., *The Book of Virtues* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 11.
- 11 'Preface', in Frank Kermode and John Hollander, eds, *Oxford Anthology of English Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973). See also Guillory's argument that 'by suppressing the context of a cultural work's production and consumption, the school produces the illusion that "our" culture (or the culture of the "other") is transmitted simply by contact with the works themselves. But a text tradition is not sufficient in itself either to constitute or to transmit a culture' (*Cultural Capital*, 43).
- 12 Knox, *Extracts in Prose* (1816), iii. In an earlier preface, Knox bids more explicitly for the widest possible market: 'The title-page describes it as compiled for the use of boys. It is very certain that it is not exclusively adapted to boys . . . Such Books as this are calculated to become the companions of all, without distinction of sex, who are in the course of a polite and comprehensive education' (Knox, *Extracts in Prose* [1783], iv).
- 13 Knox, *Extracts . . . Poetry* (1784), v.
- 14 William Enfield, ed., *The Speaker: or Miscellaneous Pieces, Selected from the Best English Writers, and disposed under proper heads, with a view to facilitate the improvement of youth in reading and speaking* (London: Joseph Johnson, 1774), xxxii. The patriotic pedantry of the *Speaker* replaced what Enfield later calls 'the affectation of introducing foreign words and phrases' (*The Speaker* [London: Joseph Johnson, 1803], xliii). On Enfield's pedagogical career, see P. O'Brien, *Warrington Academy, 1757-86* (Wigan: Owl Books, 1989), 71-72; and for Barbauld's relation to both the Academy and to Enfield's *Speaker*, Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 101-7.
- 15 Anna Laetitia Barbauld, *The Female Speaker; or, Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose and Verse . . . Adapted to the Use of Young Women* (London: Joseph Johnson, 1811), iv. Barbauld's subsequent recommendation of Boileau over Virgil makes clear that she is distinguishing not so much English from foreign languages as modern languages from ancient ones. I draw here on Nancy Armstrong's argument that 'modern educational institutions continued the project of feminizing the subject as they made what had been a specifically female body of knowledge into a standard for literacy in general' (*Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1987], 103), as well as Walter Ong's analysis of the relation between classical education and masculinity ('Latin Language Study as a Renaissance Puberty Rite', *Rhetoric, Romance and Technology* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971]). On collections of women's poetry in this period, see Greg Kucich, 'Gendering the Canons of Romanticism: Past and Present', *Wordsworth Circle* 27 (Spring 1996): 95-102 (which draws a useful distinction between the representation of women in anthologies and miscellanies), and Elizabeth Eger, 'Fashioning a Female Canon: Eighteenth-Century Women Poets and the Politics of the Anthology', in *Women's Poetry in the Enlightenment: The Making of a Canon, 1730-1820*, ed. Isobel Armstrong and Virginia Blain (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 201-15.
- 16 Vicesimus Knox, ed., *Elegant Epistles: Being a Copious Collection of Familiar and Amusing Letters, Selected for the Improvement of Young Persons, and for General Entertainment* (London: Longman, 1795), iii.
- 17 Knox, *Extracts in Prose* (1816), iii.
- 18 See also Trevor Ross's argument that the late-eighteenth-century debate over literary property reflects the conflict described by Pocock between an older conception of civic virtue founded on private possession and an emerging idea of civilization as the result of economic exchange ('Copyright and the Invention of Tradition', 8).

- 19 Vicesimus Knox, *Winter Evenings, or, Lucubrations on Life and Letters*, 2 vols (London: Charles Dilly, 1790), 1.7–9. Knox's association of the modern canon with geopolitical expansion already suggests an awareness of the relation between colonialism and canon formation that Gauri Viswanathan has argued in *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).
- 20 For Knox's biography, see Robert W. Uphaus, 'Vicesimus Knox and the Canon of Eighteenth-Century Literature', *The Age of Johnson* 4 (1991): 345–61. It may be worth noting that Enfield's *Speaker* was published by the radical Joseph Johnson.
- 21 Hannah More, *Coelebs in Search of a Wife*, 2 vols (London: Cadell, 1808), 1.186.
- 22 Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, 2 vols (London: T. Cadell, 1799), 1.7.174–75, 2.26–27; More, *Florio: A Tale, for Fine Gentlemen and Fine Ladies* (London: T. Cadell, 1786). Thanks to Elizabeth Eger for the second reference. On the gender of the detail, see also Naomi Schor, *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine* (New York: Methuen, 1987).
- 23 C[lara] R[eeve], *The Progress of Romance*, 2 vols (Colchester: W. Keymer, 1785), 2.98. On the apiary topos, see Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 12–14.
- 24 Quoted in Allen T. Hazen, 'The Beauties of Johnson', *Modern Philology* 35 (February 1938): 289–95 (290).
- 25 Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, in *Complete Novels* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 1.5.1086. Barbara Benedict argues that this passage ascribes to miscellanies the improbability and coarseness for which romance is traditionally faulted (*Making the Modern Reader*, 215).
- 26 Lonsdale, Roger. 'Gray and "Allusion": The Poet as Debtor', in *Studies in the Eighteenth Century* IV, ed. R. F. Brissenden and J. C. Eade (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1979): 31–56. Compare Walter Ong's argument that originality could become the highest literary value only once Enlightenment encyclopedism had rendered the commonplace redundant (*Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology*, 255–83). Ann Moss explains the decline of the commonplace over the course of the seventeenth century in rather more nuanced terms by 'a growing sense that evidence was empirically and scientifically measurable across a spectrum of probability' as well as 'a social code of polite behavior and a consensual aesthetic of good taste which was inimical to its primary qualities of abundance and display' (*Printed Commonplace-Books*, 275–76).
- 27 Laura Riding and Robert Graves, *A Pamphlet Against Anthologies* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1927), 185.
- 28 Margaret Ezell, *Writing Women's Literary History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 164; that Ezell's plea for teachers to replace the anthology by the database comes at the end of a richly nuanced analysis of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century anthologies lends it extra poignancy. See, however, Marjorie Perloff's argument that a canon which professes to expand continually strips canonicity of any meaning ('Why Big Anthologies Make Bad Text-books', *Chronicle of Higher Education* 45 [16 April 1999]: B6–B7 [B6]).
- 29 See Thomas Bonnell, 'Bookselling and Canon-Making: The Trade Rivalry over the English Poets, 1776–1783', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 19 (1989): 53–89, and 'John Bell's Poets of Great Britain', *Modern Philology* 85 (November 1987): 128–52; Trevor Ross, 'The Emergence of "Literature": Making and Reading the English Canon in the Eighteenth Century', *ELH* 63 (1996): 397–422; and, on the relation between exhaustive series and selective anthologies, Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books*, trans. Lydia Cochrane (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 68–69.
- 30 Paul Duguid, 'Material Matters: The Past and Futurology of the Book', in *The Future of the Book*, ed. Geoffrey Nunberg (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 63–102 (66).