

THE ANTHOLOGY AND THE
RISE OF THE NOVEL

From Richardson to George Eliot

LEAH PRICE

Harvard University

 CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

(*Grandison*, 3.22.137). Grandison's exemplary letters circulate in so many copies that they come to be edited as thoroughly as any published correspondence. Just as Richardson's popularity creates a market for different versions aimed at different segments of his audience – full texts and abridgments, cheap and expensive editions, *Clarissa* for the general public but the *Meditations* for only a few personal friends – Grandison's letters reach their addressees unabridged but are copied selectively for a voyeuristic public.⁴⁵ One letter even passes through two stages of excerpting, when Bartlett shows "some of its contents" to Harriet, who in turn selects a smaller fraction of the text to send to Lucy, after requesting Bartlett's authorization – the editor's, not the author's – to transcribe it (*Grandison*, 4.2.265). The self-willed Olivia, however, dispenses with Bartlett's mediation to expurgate Grandison's letters herself: "Your Letter (for I have erased one officious passage in it) is in my bosom all day. It is on my pillow at night. The last thing, and the first thing, do I read it. The contents make my rest balmy, and my rising serene. But it was not until after I had read it the seventh time, and after I had erased that obnoxious passage, that it began to have that happy effect upon me" (*Grandison*, 5.42.644). Reciprocally, the object of all these editorial attentions expects others to censor what they show him. After their wedding, Grandison tells Harriet that "You must make marks against the passages in the Letters you shall have the goodness to communicate, which you would not have me read" (*Grandison*, 7.5.270). Even within the privacy of the Grandisons' model marriage, letters can neither be received without being reproduced, nor be reproduced without being expurgated.

The very first letter of *Sir Charles Grandison* calls into question the feasibility of that process, however. The novel begins with Greville first reading aloud to Lucy "some passages from the copy of his [letter]," and then giving her the papers themselves with some phrases ineffectually crossed out: he "scratched over two passages, and that with so many little flourishes (as you will see) that he thought they could not be read. But the ink [Lucy] furnished him with happening to be paler than his," the passages remain (*Grandison*, 1.1.8). Although Greville's attempt at censorship opens the novel with the threat that the integrity of texts is always under attack, Lucy's defeat of his stratagem suggests from the outset that texts will resist attempts to fragment them. Harriet's project of "mak[ing] two Letters of" one fails too, because "there is no separating the good from the bad"; and, more concretely, because Mr. Selby detects the pauses in her reading and snatches the letter to examine in

full. While the publishing history of Richardson's novels suggests that his readers have often preferred excerpts to full texts, the characters within the novels themselves unanimously resist epistolary abridgment. Mr. Selby's refusal to hear only part of Charlotte's letter repeats the scene in *Clarissa* where Anna Howe seizes a letter from which her mother is reading aloud selections (197.623) – a protest which Mrs. Howe eventually reciprocates by refusing to trust Anna's transmission of extracts from *Clarissa's* letters (*Clarissa*, 27.132). Lovelace's forgery of Anna's letters ultimately confirms Mrs. Howe's assumption that excerpts distort their originals. Writers like Lovelace and Harriet exploit the slippage from anthology to expurgation that readers like Selby, Anna, and Mrs. Howe suspect.⁴⁶ In making the parts misrepresent the whole, Richardson's characters discredit the figure of synecdoche.

"COPY IN OTHER HANDS"

One explanation for Richardson's ambivalence about quotations, then, is their vulnerability to manipulation. Brand's "restored" letter suggests another: that the ownership of quotations lies securely neither with the author who quotes nor with the author quoted. Brand warns that:

If [Belford] insisteth on taking a copy of my Letter (for he, or any-body, that seeth it, or heareth it read, will, no doubt, be glad to have by them the copy of a Letter so full of the *sentiments of the noblest writers of antiquity, and so well adapted*, as I will be bold to say they are, to the *point in hand*; I say, if he insisteth on taking a copy) let him give you the *strongest assurances* not to suffer it to be *printed, on any account*; and I make the same request to you, that you will not. For if any-thing be to be made of a *man's works*, who but the *author*, should have the *advantage*? . . . I have been told, that a *certain noble Lord*, who once sat himself down to write a *pamphlet* in behalf of a *great minister*, after taking *infinite pains to no purpose* to find a *Latin motto*, gave commission to a friend of *his* to offer to *any one*, who could help him to a *suitable one*, but of one or two lines, a *hamper of claret*. . . . If then *one or two lines* were of so much worth (*A hamper of claret! No less!*) of what *inestimable value* would *such a Letter as mine* be deemed? – And who knoweth but that this noble P——r (who is now living) if he should happen to see *this Letter* shining with such a *glorious string of jewels*, might give the *writer a scarf*?⁴⁷

Brand moves here from his earlier floral simile (italics as daisies) to the lapidary metaphor which provides its most conventional alternative. While the comparison of quotations with jewels equates esthetic with monetary value, the mention of the scarf suggests more specifically that literature can be exchanged for goods. Yet Brand's fantasy of receiving

gifts from a patron softens the commercialism of his competing plan to publish his letters for financial "advantage."

Brand's theory of literary property contradicts itself. He claims at once that compilers should own what they quote – since living English scholars, not dead Latin writers, earn the claret or the scarf – and that compilers do not own what they quote, since no one "but the author, should have the advantage." If the second claim were true – that is, if Brand were correct in denying Belford's right to collect and sell his words – then the legitimacy of the novel as a whole would collapse. It is no more problematic for Belford to print the letters of one of Clarissa's suitors (Brand) than for him to print a novel composed largely of the letters of another of her suitors (Lovelace). On the contrary: far from authorizing Belford to show those incriminating documents to Clarissa, let alone to the general public, Lovelace demands his letters back from Belford more insistently than Brand ever does. And although Belford does in fact "make something" of Lovelace's "works," what he makes – the novel – is very far from giving their "author" any "advantage." While Brand imagines that Belford's publication of his letter will inspire a P—r to give him a scarf, Belford's circulation of Lovelace's letters causes the only peer in *Clarissa* to disown him. Belford's growing prominence in the plot combines with Lovelace's concomitant disempowerment to demonstrate an author's punitive eclipse by his editor.

At the same time, Brand's uncertainty about whether the profits of a book should go to the author or the compiler reflects Richardson's own vacillation about which name – author, editor, publisher – to claim his own property under. The texts that we now call Richardson's bear a superabundance of competing signatories: inscribed letter-writers, inscribed editors like Belford and Bartlett, the unidentified "editor" mentioned in the prefaces and on the title-pages of *Clarissa* and *Grandison*, the equally unnamed "author" to whom the postscript of *Clarissa* alludes, and finally the publisher identified as S. Richardson.⁴⁸ Richardson's name appears on the title-pages of the first editions, not on the top half of the page, where the author's name conventionally appears – a space filled instead, in the later novels, by "the Editor of PAMELA" and "the Editor of PAMELA and CLARISSA" – but at the bottom, as the printer's name.

Layout makes visible a problem that faced Richardson throughout his career: how to claim ownership of texts while disclaiming authorship of their contents. That dilemma became apparent as soon as the popularity of the first two volumes of *Pamela* prompted others to

produce sequels (at least four in the year following its publication). Richardson criticized the publisher of one, in a private letter, for "giving out, that I was not the Writer of the two [volumes] (which, indeed, I wish, and did not intend should be known to more than 6 Friends and those in Confidence)."⁴⁹ Richardson's fear that other authors might fill the vacuum left by his anonymity extended to the characters who function as inscribed authors within the novels themselves. The contradictory logic of his protest against rival sequels reappeared in his declaration that "I want not the letters [in *Clarissa*] to be thought genuine" but that "they should not be prefatically owned not to be genuine."⁵⁰ Characters became competitors. Eventually, the publication of a pirated Irish edition of *Sir Charles Grandison* forced Richardson to contradict in the back matter the fiction of collective composition constructed by the text itself. The first edition of *Grandison* ends with an "Address to the Public" giving an account of Richardson's battle with the pirates (interspersed, in a continuation of the epistolary form, with "extracts" from their correspondence), whom it attacks for stealing "a property so absolutely his own." In a separately published polemic, *The Case of Samuel Richardson . . . with Regard to the Invasion of his Property in The History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), Richardson traces that absolute ownership to his double function as writer and printer: "Never was Work more the Property of any Man, than *this* is his. The Copy was never in any other Hand: He borrows not from any Author: The Paper, the Printing, entirely at his own Expence."⁵¹ By invoking his peculiar status as author/printer, Richardson sidesteps the need to specify whether his "Property" is intellectual or material. His overdetermined claim opposes private property at once to intellectual collaboration in procuring ideas ("he borrows not from any Author") and to financial collaboration in procuring materials ("The Paper, the Printing, entirely at his own Expence"). While the first clause overlooks Richardson's heavy use of quotations, the second denies the collective nature of the publishing industry more generally. *Grandison* was vulnerable to piracy only because it had been, at various points in the printing process, "in other Hand[s]": literally, in the hands of the journeymen bribed to leak the sheets to the Dublin booksellers. The chirographic authenticity invoked by the assertion that "the Copy was never in any other Hand" makes no sense for a printed book.

The generic implications of that claim become more explicit in a letter which again disclaims any "borrowing." "Have I not written a monstrous quantity; nineteen or twenty close written volumes?"

Richardson asks. "And for what? To propagate, instead of virtue, theft, robbery, and abuse from the wild Irish and to be forced to defend a property all my own; that is to say, neither a compilation, nor borrowed from any body."⁵² Richardson's denial that *Grandison* can be called a "compilation" contradicts the preface which terms it a "collection" – and, even more literally, his use of "compilement" as a synonym for epistolary narrative in *Clarissa*, whose heroine describes the collection of letters as "a compilement to be made of all that relates to my Story" (*Clarissa*, 507.1418). The structure of that novel prefigured the course of its author/publisher's career: just as *Clarissa* moves from an "editor"'s preface to an "author"'s postscript, competition eventually forced Richardson to substitute ever more vehement assertions of absolute ownership for his original self-presentation as an "editor" of a correspondence composed by many others.

Yet commercial rivals were not the only threat to Richardson's authority. His admirers appropriated his novels as prolifically as his enemies did: Aaron Hill suggested titles and prefaces, Solomon Lowe sent Richardson an unsolicited forerunner of the *Collection of Sentiments*, and Lady Echlin composed an alternative ending to *Clarissa*.⁵³ Her sister, Lady Bradshaigh, accepted Richardson's invitation for friends to write a sequel to *Grandison* which he himself would merely edit, so "that every one of my Correspondents, at his or her own Choice, assume one of the surviving Characters in the Story, and write in it; and that . . . I shall pick and choose, alter, connect, and accommodate, till I have completed from [the contributions], the requested Volume."⁵⁴ The collaboration that Richardson proposed mirrors the competition that he feared – rather as Brand's worry that Belford would sell his letter for unauthorized publication had translated into cruder commercial terms Lovelace's awareness that Belford had circulated his letters as part of a narrative very different from the one that he would have chosen to write.

That Richardson's novels elicited continuations from both aristocratic amateurs and commercial competitors does not mean that the two kinds of sequel were interchangeable. Where Lady Echlin's and Lady Bradshaigh's represented personal compliments to the author of *Clarissa* and *Grandison*, the sequels to *Pamela* denied Richardson's authorship altogether. Yet within a model of literary property that assigns every text to a single author, collaboration can appear nearly as criminal as the "theft [and] robbery" to which Richardson compares piracy. In the introduction to her richly-annotated edition of *Grandison*,

Jocelyn Harris explains that she chose the first edition as her copy-text because

almost all of the substantial changes of the revised editions were made not for aesthetic purposes but rather in deference or response to the opinions of Richardson's correspondents. To the extent that he allowed outside pressure to influence his work, each edition is progressively less his own, further removed from the original conception.⁵⁵

Harris's attempt to distinguish "outside pressure" from authorial individuality and textual integrity contradicts the novel's own representation of a world in which interiority is revealed only through correspondence and every piece of writing responds to others. At the same time, however, Harris's attempt to isolate the work of a single author from the "pressure" of multiple correspondents repeats Richardson's own ostentatious refusal to pander to readers' desires. Where the postscript to *Clarissa* criticizes female readers' request for a happy ending, *Grandison* concludes with a letter in which Richardson denies a female reader's authority to suggest a longer ending. The "Copy of a Letter to a Lady, who was solicitous for an additional volume to the HISTORY OF SIR CHARLES GRANDISON; supposing it ended abruptly," hastens to correct that supposition: "[I] hope, when you consider the circumstances of the Story, you will be of opinion, that it ends very properly where it does; tho' at the first perusal it may seem, to a Lady who honours the piece with her approbation, to conclude a little abruptly" (*Grandison*, 7.467). Here again, the "gentler sex" is addressed only to be silenced. By paraphrasing rather than quoting those impertinent letters, both conclusions re-establish the division of labor between readers and writers which the novels themselves broke down. Indeed, both reinforce that opposition by gendering their readers female. Yet ironically, as Harris shows, the "Concluding Note" to *Grandison* silently draws several of its rejoinders to readers' objections from a letter written by another woman, Lady Bradshaigh.⁵⁶ The contrast between Richardson's rebuff of the unnamed lady's request for a sequel and his invitation to other ladies to contribute to one suggests the depth of his ambivalence about the competing demands of establishing authority and engaging readers – or of representing epistolary exchange and claiming literary property.

Richardson's use of other writers poses as much of a critical challenge as his relation to readers. Since 1936, when Alan McKillop argued that Richardson drew many of his quotations from Edward Bysshe's *Art of English Poetry* (a popular composition manual that includes a catalogue of

beauties), the extent of his dependence on anthologies has given rise to critical controversy. Michael Connaughton has shown that much of Richardson's canon in *Clarissa* overlaps with Bysshe's: more than two-thirds of the English quotations in the novel appear in the *Art* (sixty-nine out of 103), and nineteen of those sixty-nine show errors or omissions also made by Bysshe.⁵⁷ In contrast, Harris contends that Richardson must have encountered those passages in the original texts: because "Richardson's references are typically not isolated and ornamental, but organic, connected, and controlled, he cannot have been unlearned."⁵⁸ The organicist assumption that dismisses any lack of "connection" as a breakdown of esthetic "control" leaves no room for Richardson's own acknowledgment of the ornamental function of learning or the esthetic value of ornament. While Harris defends Richardson from the charge of "decorat[ing] his work with other men's flowers," the floral metaphor appears more positively in *Clarissa* itself, where Brand enthusiastically compares to an "enameled mead" a page mixing roman text and italicized quotations.⁵⁹ Although Brand's taste is anything but exemplary, his appreciation of the typographical variety which advertises the juxtaposition of multiple genres and signatures can serve as a reminder that discontinuity offers esthetic pleasures of its own. Bysshe himself prefaces the *Art* with the promise that a collection of excerpts will "divert and amuse [the reader] better" than would a "Composition . . . on one intire Subject," "for here is no Thread of Story, nor Connexion of one Part with another, to keep his mind intent and constrain him to any Length of Reading."⁶⁰

The identification of Bysshe as one of Richardson's sources does not have to invalidate source study, as Harris fears and even Connaughton implies when he distinguishes Richardson's "mechanical" and "inept" use of the *Art* from his more "subtle" allusions to the texts that he seems to have read in their entirety.⁶¹ If we chose to accept Harris' thesis that every quotation alludes to an entire "context," and that Richardson's works are influenced by their sources "not only locally but structurally," then consistency would require us to take the *Art of Poetry* seriously as a source in its own right.⁶² As a series of extracts arranged alphabetically by topic, we could then argue, the *Art* anticipates the structure of the *Collection of Sentiments*. Indeed, Richardson's own description of the *Collection* as "divested of Story" echoes Bysshe's claim that the *Art* has "no Thread of Story." The *Art* provides an even closer generic model for the alphabetical index of similes and allusions that concludes *Grandison*. Richardson's compendium of topoi shares its self-conscious literariness

with Bysshe's collection of beauties: a writer who wants to learn what to compare a proud person with can find "peacock" in the index to *Grandison*. No less than Bysshe's poetic toolbox, Richardson's modular *Collection* invites readers like Ben Franklin to reassemble its quotations for their own purposes. *Poor Richard's Almanac* does to the *Collection of Sentiments* what the *Collection of Sentiments* did to Bysshe. Indeed, as a collection signed by multiple authors, *Clarissa* itself owes as much to the structure of Bysshe's anthology as to its content. The fragmentation that leads Harris to dismiss the *Art* as a source is precisely what it shares with Richardson's works. If, as various critics have shown, the drama, from which many of Richardson's quotations are excerpted, forms one of his generic models, it seems equally clear that the anthology, in which many of those same quotations reappear, provides another.⁶³

Critics' efforts to distinguish anthologies like the *Art* from other sources betray an ethical agenda as much as an evidentiary or even esthetic one. While Harris assumes that quoting from Bysshe would prove Richardson "unlearned," the critics who argue that Richardson did depend on the *Art* accuse him instead of dishonesty: A. Dwight Culler classes Richardson jocularly among "recipients of pilfered goods," while Michael Connaughton describes the overlap between the *Art* and *Clarissa* as proof that Richardson has not always "read what he pretends."⁶⁴ Harris addresses the ethics of reading more obliquely when she reproduces Richardson's own representation of his reading practices. To prove the range of Richardson's learning, Harris paraphrases an autobiographical anecdote seized upon by biographers ever since Anna Laetitia Barbauld in 1810. When he read as an apprentice "for Improvement of my Mind," Richardson reminisces in a letter written late in life, he "took Care, that even my Candle was of my own purchasing, that I might not in the most trifling Instance make my Master a Sufferer."⁶⁵ Like Richardson's denial that *Grandison* was "borrowed from any body," the heavy symbolism that Harris invokes dissociates quoting from stealing. Richardson read others, the anecdote suggests, but enlightened himself.

At the same time, though, Richardson's letter implies that an apprentice who reads might be suspected of stealing from his master unless the contrary is specified. Harris' distinction between "isolated" and "organic" quotation repeats Richardson's story of his industrious apprenticeship. Each drags in a kind of crude criminal appropriation from which Richardson can arguably be absolved – cribbing anthology-pieces, pilfering candles – in order to suggest, by contrast, that the

reading in which he undeniably did engage had nothing to do with appropriation at all. But the need to distinguish reading books from stealing candles backfires by reminding us that both sources of enlightenment are for sale.

THE INVISIBLE HAND

The sequels to *Pamela* and the piracy of *Grandison* exposed Richardson's failure to reconcile the disavowal of authorship with the assertion of "a property . . . absolutely his own." In *Sir Charles Grandison* he finally found a more oblique solution to that problem: a hero who divorces authority from authorship by executing other people's wills. Instead of displacing questions about literary property from a central to a minor character as *Clarissa* does by expanding Brand's role in the third edition, *Grandison* substitutes real for literary property and wills for letters.

The proliferation of executorships in *Sir Charles Grandison* demands some explanation.⁶⁶ Grandison executes the will of a man who has tried to kill him, the wills of two men whose lives he has saved, and even a will that does not exist. After his father dies intestate, Grandison takes advantage of the semantic overlap between "will" and "intention" to claim that there is something for him to execute: "that intention will I execute with as much exactness, as if he had made a will" (*Grandison*, 2.21.372). Sir Hargrave Pollexfen asks Grandison to administer his property in the same breath as he asks a clergyman to care for his soul: "Be my executor. And do you, good Bartlett, put me in the way of repentance" (6.31.143). The desire of women throughout Europe to make Sir Charles their husband is matched only by the wish of men throughout England to make him their executor — requests which, unlike the competing demands of four English and two Italian ladies, he never refuses.

In a novel ostensibly about courtship, wills replace women as the means of forging alliances between men and transferring property between families. This explains why so many hapless suitors in *Sir Charles Grandison* decide to bequeath their property to the families of the women who rejected them (as Belvedere does to Clementina's relations, and Pollexfen to Harriet's husband) or even (as does Harriet's second ex-suitor) to the woman herself. Although Richardson claims in the "Letter to a Lady" appended to *Grandison* that the "great and decisive event" of a novel can be either "a *Death*, or a *Marriage*" (3.471), the novel concludes not with Harriet becoming one suitor's wife (an event buried in the sixth

volume), but with her becoming the administrator of another suitor's charitable bequest, "a very large Legacy in money and his jewels and plate" (7.61.462). The ending substitutes something very like executorship for rape as the bond between Harriet and her would-be abductor Pollexfen; from sex without familial consent, the novel progresses to a transfer of property between families (including the Pollexfen family jewels and plate) without sex. The bequest to the jilt or her family strips her refusal of any monetary consequences. In turn, this helps explain why the novel is so boring: less because nothing happens than because what does happen makes no financial difference.

In bypassing the woman's consent and the woman's body, Belvedere's bequest renders the incest taboo redundant, opening the way for Sir Charles's "family of love," in which the only woman labelled off-limits is his ward Emily, not because they have any relationship by blood, but because Grandison (not surprisingly, considering the odds) happens to be her dead father's executor. In a society where women are legally dead, men need to die biologically before they can prove their love of a man by surrendering the administration of their property into his hands. Given that only executorship legalizes men's relationships with other men as marriage does men's relationships with women, it makes sense for Richardson's first novel named after a male hero to give wills the prominence that his previous two novels had reserved for wedding clothes and marriage articles. Conversely, though, Grandison's role as a disinterested conduit for other men's property can be counted among his feminine traits, as much as his virginity or his addiction to smelling-salts. Like a woman, the executor makes possible family alliances and property transfers in which he himself never appears as a principal.

Executorship had already played a prominent role in Richardson's previous novel. The end of *Clarissa* leaves Belford with at least five wills to execute. He begins with two even before he undertakes Clarissa's; he and Morden seal their friendship by promising to execute each other's; and Lovelace quite reasonably asks him to be his executor "since thou art so expert, and so ready at executorships" (*Clarissa*, 528.1464, 535.1483). The amount of time that Belford must be assumed to spend executing wills rivals even that spent by Clarissa and Lovelace writing letters. In fact, Belford himself anticipates the problem of verisimilitude when he insists that his executorships "sit light upon me. And survivors cannot better or more charitably bestow their time" (*Clarissa*, 507.1412).

The importance of executorship in *Clarissa* can be measured by the ease with which the heroine's executor, Belford, takes the place of her lover, Lovelace. After appropriating the ellipsis that Lovelace had used to refer to Clarissa's rape ("I can go no farther") to describe her death ("I can write no more"), Belford goes on to replace Lovelace as the object of the Harlowes' financial and affective jealousy. "They both, with no little warmth, hinted at their disapprobation of you, sir, for their sister's executor," Morden tells Belford. "They said there was no need of an executor out of their family . . . They were surprised that I had given up to you the proceed of her grandfather's estate since his death" (*Clarissa*, 258.883, 481.1362, 501.1401). The Harlowes' jealousy is not entirely unfounded, for Belford does end up uniting himself legally to their family – not through marriage to Clarissa, but by the promise that binds him and her cousin to execute each other's wills.

Between *Clarissa* and *Grandison*, however, the executor eclipses the testator: *Clarissa* takes its name from the author of a will, *Grandison* from an executor. The executor Belford is no more the hero of *Clarissa* than the testators Pollexfen, Sir Thomas, and Danby are the heroes of *Grandison*. (The latter is never even mentioned until after his death: he becomes a character only once his will needs executing.) Clarissa's elaborate death is not matched by their briefer exits, and Grandison himself does not die at all. As eponymous executor replaces eponymous testatrix, our attention shifts from the character who produces and signs a document to the character who interprets and enforces it.

Clarissa herself sets this shift into motion when she transfers authority from the writer of a will to its readers. After referring to "some blanks which I left to the very last" in her will, Clarissa adds:

In case of such omissions and imperfections, I desire that my cousin Morden will be so good as to join with Mr Belford in considering them, and in comparing them with what I have more explicitly written; and if, after that, any doubt remain, that they will be pleased to apply to Miss Howe, who knows my whole heart; and I desire that their construction may be established; and I hereby establish it, provided it be unanimous, and direct it to be put into force, as if I had so written and determined myself. (*Clarissa*, 507.1420)⁶⁷

The phrase "as if I had so written myself" bequeaths the testatrix's authority to her executors. And not just her authority to write, but (no less important for Richardson) her power to compile. Clarissa's last words, the inscriptions on her coffin, reach Anna Howe – previously her primary reader – only after being filtered through her executor's tran-

scription. As Morden reports, the coffin "gave [Anna] so much fresh grief, that though she several times wiped her eyes, she was unable to read the inscription and texts: turning therefore to me: Favour me, sir, I pray you, by a line with the description of these emblems, and with these texts" (*Clarissa*, 502.1404). Unlike the biblical texts contained in the meditations, the "texts" excerpted on Clarissa's coffin are illegible until quoted in turn by her executor. In death, Clarissa goes from quoting to being quoted. While one executor, Morden, replaces her as the compiler of the texts that decorate the coffin, the other executor, Belford, replaces her as the editor of the letters that make up the novel.

The ventriloquistic fiction constructed by the words "as if I had so written" occurs once again in *Grandison*. But while in *Clarissa* the testatrix writes that phrase, in *Grandison* it appears instead in the mouth of the executor. After his father dies intestate, leaving nothing to the daughters he hates and everything to his son, Grandison gives £10,000 to his sister with the words "Look upon me only as an executor of a will, that ought to have been made" (*Grandison*, 2.25.383). Echoing Clarissa's "as if," he asks her to "receive these as from your father's bounty" (*Grandison*, 2.25.382). That phrase reappears in a third case of money-laundering when Grandison asks Major O'Hara's wife to "accept, as from the Major, another 100 *l.* a year, for pinmoney, which he, or which you, madam, will draw upon me for . . . For this 100 *l.* a year must be appropriated to your sole and separate use, madam; and not be subject to your controul, Major O-Hara" (4.9.310). Unlike Sir Thomas, Major O'Hara is not yet dead. In both cases, however, the counterfactual "as [if] from" marks the money's ostensible source as a front. And in both cases, the fiction that the money comes from a third party (Sir Thomas, Major O'Hara) hides the fact that Grandison is disobeying that party's instructions (in Sir Thomas's case) or withholding the money from him (in O'Hara's). Grandison's misattribution of his money and his generosity to other men inverts Clarissa's request that Belford, Morden, and Anna declare their decisions hers. In both cases, the will is authored by its executor but ascribed to the dead.

Grandison disguises the authority of an heir as the obedience of an administrator. His power to enforce non-existent bequests to his sisters and his father's mistress depends on his position as heir male. One hardly knows whether to be more surprised that an executor who routinely flouts testators' instructions should remain in such demand, or that a priggish moral paragon should ostentatiously disobey his father's dying wish. And not just his father's. It is Grandison's status as

Danby's heir, not as his executor, that allows him "to amend a will, made in a long and painful sickness, which might sour a disposition that was naturally all benevolence" – an amendment which consists of dividing the money Danby meant to leave him among those very relatives whom the will was designed to punish (*Grandison*, 2.25.455). Already at the end of *Pamela*, Mr. B., to whom Mr. Longman leaves his money, magnanimously transfers the legacy to the relatives whom Longman had gone to such lengths to disinherit. Not content with making executorship a prerequisite for heroism, Richardson requires his heroes systematically to betray the trust of the dead. Feminized in this as in so much else, *Grandison* seems to have inherited his habit of posing as another's agent from his mother, who, even before Sir Thomas's death,

would confer benefits in the name of her husband, whom, perhaps, she had not seen for months, and knew not whether she might see for months to come. She was satisfied, tho' hers was the *first* merit, with the *second* merit reflected from that she gave him: "I am but Sir Thomas' almoner: I know I shall please Sir Thomas by doing this; Sir Thomas would have done thus: Perhaps he would have been more bountiful had he been present." (*Grandison*, 2.11.312)

From his father *Grandison* inherits property; from his mother, the practice of giving away property in his father's name.

Why should an owner pose as an executor? The answer, I think, lies in an ambivalence about the relation of owning to signing that characterizes the epistolary novel. In misattributing his own decisions to fictitious documents – in asserting authority while disclaiming authorship – Sir Charles lends moral weight to the financial equivalent of Richardson's own editorial self-representation.⁶⁸ In fact, *Grandison*'s strategic confusion between his roles as his father's heir and his father's executor literalizes the double metaphor that structures the "Advertisement" to the second part of *Pamela*, where the "editor" claims the authority to represent the heroine by figuring himself alternately as her literary executor and her literary heir. After criticizing the authors of rival sequels to volumes I and II which "have murder'd that excellent Lady, and mistaken and misrepresented other (suppos'd imaginary) CHARACTERS," he announces that all the copies of *Pamela*'s writings

are now in *One Hand Only*: And that, if ever they shall be published, (which at present is a point undetermined) it must not be, till after a certain event, as unwished, as deplorable: And *then*, solely, at the Assignment of SAMUEL

RICHARDSON, of *Salisbury-Court, Fleetstreet*, the Editor of these Four Volumes of PAMELA; OR, VIRTUE REWARDED. (*Pamela*, 4.495)

The reference to *Pamela*'s death figures the proprietorship of her character at once as a battle between literary executors and as a contested inheritance. The question of who represents and who "misrepresents" *Pamela* is answered by whoever ends up with the letters in hand. Yet ironically enough, Richardson seems to have inherited (if not stolen) both images for literary property from the rival sequel with which he disputes it. *Pamela's Conduct in High Life*, published in the previous year, was already introduced by a correspondence between Mrs. Jervis' niece, who has inherited her aunt's letters, and the publisher, who assures readers that the niece will use the cash value of the inheritance to keep alive her aunt's charitable projects, which are in turn represented as merely an extension of *Pamela*'s will: "A Profit will certainly arise from their Sale . . . and as your easy Fortune sets you above applying to your own Use such unexpected Money, you may succeed your Aunt in the Post of Almoner, as you did in that of House-keeper to the illustrious *Pamela*."⁶⁹

The coincidence of *Grandison*'s efficiency as executor with his power as heir reverses the confusion earlier established between Richardson's knowledge of *Pamela*'s wishes and his possession of her letters. Where *Grandison* distributes money under cover of interpreting documents, Richardson publishes texts under cover of inheriting property. The father's will which *Grandison* claims to execute is as nonexistent as the characters' letters that Richardson claims to edit. The executor's relation to the testator figures the compiler's to the author. *Grandison*'s double role as obedient executor and self-willed heir resolves the long-standing tension between Richardson's self-presentation as editor and as author; between the polyvocality of the epistolary form and Richardson's monopoly on the right to produce a sequel; between the collective correspondence that forms the body of each novel and the anonymous editorial paratexts that frame it; or, to put it differently, between the presentation of the epistolary novel as the work of several hands and as the property of "One Hand Only."

The image of letters "in One Hand" would resurface at the other end of Richardson's career in the claim that *Grandison* was "never in any other hand." At the same time, the pains that it costs Lovelace to forge *Clarissa*'s and *Anna*'s handwriting remind us that epistolary collections are also presented as having been written in various hands before being reproduced in a single standard type (*Clarissa*, 229.752, 239.814). Brand

devises a typographical equivalent for that chirographic diversity when he uses the contrast between roman and italic print to distinguish other writers' words from his own: "I have considered a page distinguished by *different characters*, as a verdant field overspread with *butter-flowers* and *daisies*, and other summer-flowers." Brand's pedantic appeal to multiple authorities set off by (typographical) "characters" literalizes Richardson's own strategy of ascribing each letter to a different (literary) character. But Brand's absurd comparison of typographical with horticultural variety – a pastoral metaphor for mechanical reproduction – recalls as well Fielding's earlier pun on the "common place," as a term for both literary and real property: "The antients may be considered as a rich common, where every person who hath the smallest tenement in Parnassus hath a free right to fatten his muse."⁷⁰ That Brand's appreciation of the page as a many-charactered field leads immediately into his refusal to share with other characters the value of whatever "be to be made" from it suggests the strength of the tension between anthology and authority, compilation and continuity, that generates Richardson's works and the work of his readers.

POSTSCRIPT: SCOTT AND THE LITERARY-HISTORICAL NOVEL

Richardson's fate was extreme, but not unique. Epistolary exchange has always attracted editorial appropriation. *Clarissa's* most ambitious successor, *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761), gave rise just as quickly to Samuel Formey's *Esprit de Julie, ou Extrait de la Nouvelle Héloïse* (1763), which reinvented the modular moralism and the anti-narrative form of Richardson's *Collection of Sentiments*.⁷¹ In the same year, a more comprehensive collection of *Pensées de J. J. Rousseau* appeared, followed by fourteen more editions in Rousseau's lifetime and soon pirated by an *Esprit, Maximes et Principes de Monsieur Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (1764), which in turn would immediately be incorporated into the 1764 Duchesne edition of Rousseau's collected works.⁷²

One can understand, then, why the anthology became such a central motif in *Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques* (1782), Rousseau's dialogue between an imaginary biographer who spies on Jean-Jacques and an imaginary editor who compiles a series of "Extraits" inscribed in the text itself. The anthologist scans Jean-Jacques's work for passages that can be strategically decontextualized to make them more topical – hence more offensive. Or rather, recontextualized, for the categories under which the anthology reclassifies extracts (writers, doctors, kings, women, English-

men) conflate theme with audience, as if people read only for passages applicable to themselves. The splintering of Jean-Jacques's work into anthology-pieces reflects the fragmentation of the public into special-interest groups. Only the editor in the *Dialogues* is finally converted – ironically, by the contact with Jean-Jacques's writing which his task requires – to a more organicist method of reading that renounces "plucking out separate phrases scattered here and there" in favor of "grasping the whole."⁷³

Where Richardson had fought back legally, on the margins of his last novel, Rousseau counterattacked through fiction. *Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques* conflates decontextualization with personal violence, accusing anthologists of "isolating and disfiguring" the author's words.⁷⁴ The *Dialogues* juxtapose Rousseau's parodic auto-anthology not only with the charge that portrait-painters have taken bribes to lend Jean-Jacques an unflattering scowl, but also with the narrator's memory of being hung in effigy while *Emile* was burnt in his place and with an anecdote of another man arrested for crimes committed by a sinister look-alike. The chiasmus where textual mutilation intersects with bodily misrepresentation looks forward to George Eliot's triple fear of anthologists, photographers and autograph-seekers. But Rousseau's attempt to counteract that double violation by circulating signed, handwritten copies of his own text looks back as well to Richardson's futile insistence on never letting the printing process out of "one hand."⁷⁵

Rousseau's novel and Richardson's invite excerpting not simply through their bulk, but through the surplus of signatures built into the epistolary novel. *Clarissa* and *Julie* are prefaced, concluded, and ostensibly abridged (in Richardson's case) or ostentatiously censored (in Rousseau's) by a figure whom both name alternately as their "editor" and "publisher" but implicitly identify as their author. Where the title-page of *Clarissa* gives no author but names Richardson (accurately) as its publisher, *Julie* juxtaposes three authors' names on its title-page. The only one labeled as such is Petrarch, to whom the novel's epigraph is unequivocally attributed; but the title itself, "Letters of two Lovers . . . Collected and Published by Jean-Jacques Rousseau," adds two competing signatures, the letter-writers' on the one hand and the novel-publisher's on the other. Yet that ambiguity is resolved twice over, by the announcement repeated at both ends of the book – in its preface and again in the appended "Entretien sur les Romains" – that "I name myself at the head of this collection, not to appropriate it, but to take responsibility for it [*pour en répondre*]."⁷⁶ Put differently, *Julie* and

Grandison each frame first-person letters signed by characters not only with the name of a publisher, but with the signed first-person statement of a heterodiegetic editor who demands the profits in *Grandison* or the blame for *Julie*. If Richardson's peculiar position as an author-printer crystallized the tension between compilation and authority in his novels, his career-long struggle to reconcile documentary authenticity with narrative unity also reflects a larger contradiction inherent in the composite structure of epistolary fiction.

One might have expected that problem to disappear as third-person narration began to dominate nineteenth-century fiction. Yet paradoxically, the dwindling viability of the epistolary mode actually increased its centrality to the self-definition of the novel. In what remains of this chapter, I work backward from two abridgments of *Clarissa* published in 1868, to J. G. Lockhart's life-and-letters biography of Sir Walter Scott (1837), to Scott's own flirtation with the epistolary novel in *Redgauntlet* (1824, 1832) and his equally ambivalent republication of Richardson's work in Ballantyne's *Novelist's Library* (1824), in order to explore how old epistolary novels came to be read once new ones ceased to be written. Different as they are in their form and their ambitions, each of these works uses the letter to stand at once for narrative inefficiency and historical retrogression – and, by extension, for the historicity of literary form.

The fate of the epistolary novel after the turn of the nineteenth century is usually conceived as a steady decline. Certainly fewer new epistolary novels appeared every year.⁷⁷ But if we take the history of the genre to encompass the reproduction of old works as well as the production of new ones, then that pattern begins to look rather less linear. As we saw earlier in the chapter, the first abridgments of *Clarissa* and *Grandison* unanimously replaced the epistolary mode with a single, retrospective, omniscient narrator writing not “to the moment” but in a preterite as temporally unsituated as the present tense of the *Moral and Instructive Sentiments*. At the height of the epistolary novel's popularity, abridgers equated epistolarity with wasted words: they transposed the first person into the third and the present tense into the past as automatically as they substituted one sentence for many. Conversely, in 1868 two new abridgments of *Clarissa* – the first to appear since 1813 – suddenly resurrected the epistolary form. The first epistolary abridgments appeared when the novel in letters was safely dead. The letter became legible only as a historical relic.

Together, the two abridgments of *Clarissa* published in 1868 mark a break. I have found no English-language abridgment before them that

preserves the epistolary form, and no book-length abridgment after them that does not. The impersonal mode of earlier abridgments did not disappear on that date, though, for every abridgment from 1868 to now has used third-person past-tense plot summaries to connect the epistolary excerpts with one another. That strategy has remained unanimous from E. S. Dallas's *Clarissa* (London: Tinsley, 1868) to Mrs. Humphry Ward's *Clarissa Harlowe, a New and Abridged Edition* (London: Routledge, 1868) to J. Oldcastle's *Sir Charles Grandison* (London: Field and Tuer, [1886]) to George Saintsbury's *Letters from Sir Charles Grandison: selected . . . with connecting notes* (London: G. Allen, 1895) to Sheila Kaye-Smith's omnibus abridgment *Samuel Richardson* (London: Herbert and Daniel, 1911) to John Angus Burrell's *Clarissa* (New York: Random House, 1950) and George Sherburn's *Clarissa* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962), still, outrageously, being used in American classrooms.⁷⁸ In the process of linking letters, this second wave of abridgments exaggerates the fluctuation between editorial distance and epistolary immediacy already latent in the novels themselves. Indeed, Lovelace shows uncanny literary-historical prescience when instead of sending Belford a full transcript of the letters he has intercepted between Anna and Clarissa, he excerpts the juiciest bits and fills in the gaps by summarizing the rest in indirect (would-be omniscient) discourse (*Clarissa* 198.632–38).

More seriously, abridgers' narratological strategy can be traced to the model of life-and-letters biographies – a genre whose founding example, William Mason's *Poems of Mr. Gray. To which are prefixed Memoirs of his Life and Writings* (1775), anticipated by almost a hundred years Dallas's and Ward's tactic of alternating heavily excised epistolary fragments with retrospective editorial summaries. The reappearance of epistolary abridgments coincided not only with the decline of the epistolary novel, but with the rise of epistolary memoirs which literalized Rousseau's fear of an alliance between the biographer and the anthologist. Like Dallas's and Ward's *Clarissas*, Victorian biographies used a modern editor's narrative to string together truncated excerpts from letters situated firmly in a historical past. The motives for the two oscillations between editorial summary and epistolary quotation differ sharply, of course: in one case, the need to cram more plot into fewer pages; in the other, the duty to protect the privacy of the dead. But the binary structure of both reflects a common tension between the historical authenticity of excerpts and the modern efficiency of narrative. Where twentieth-century biography inherits its mode of narration from the Victorian novel, Victorian biographers appropriated the composite structure which the

novel had earlier borrowed from published collections of correspondence. Biography memorializes more than dead people; it also provides a resting-place for obsolete forms. In Frederic Harrison's metaphor, life-and-letters biographies embed letters "like fossil shells in the chalk cliff of the editorial big print," the relics of an earlier era.⁷⁹ A superannuated narrative technique commemorates the dead.

The method that Ward and Dallas developed to condense Richardson for a more efficient age bears an even more striking resemblance to the technique which one of the most successful Victorian biographers, J. G. Lockhart, had already invented to abridge his own equally massive *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott*. The title of Lockhart's 1848 abridgment, *Narrative of the Life of Sir Walter Scott*, announces the change worked on the ten-volume *Memoirs* published a decade earlier. The plural "memoirs," which can refer to autobiography as easily as biography, encompasses fragments in Scott's own voice as well as the narrative by Lockhart that frames them. In the condensed *Life*, the "Narrative" of the title displaces those first-person "Memoirs": as editorial summaries replace the original letters, the narrator's voice comes to form a growing proportion of the shrinking text. Even those excerpts that remain are typographically assimilated to their frame, as the *Narrative* substitutes a uniform typeface for the two font sizes which the original *Memoirs* used to set off Scott's writings – rather as red-letter Bibles distinguish Christ's words from those of the evangelists.

In isolation, Lockhart's abridgment could be explained by the self-aggrandizing desire to encroach on Scott's share of the text. Yet the convention goes beyond personal vanity, for a different abridger, in 1869, promises not only to excise large stretches of Scott's diary and "the letters not strictly biographical," but to "shorten the work by omitting the extracts from Scott's prefaces (which will be found in his works)."⁸⁰ With each new edition, the *Life* differentiates itself more sharply from the "works" – or more precisely, from an anthology of elegant "extracts" from them. Even the correspondence that remains changes its function from a collection of stylistic models to a source of "strictly biographical" information. As Lockhart's preface to his abridgment acknowledges, quantitative changes enforce esthetic choices: "in the case of written composition there are no mechanical appliances, as there are in painting and architecture, for varying the scale."⁸¹ In fact, the abridgment opens by acknowledging that Lockhart's decision to subordinate the quotations to the narrative could just as easily have been reversed:

If I had been to consult my own feelings, I should have been more willing to produce an enlarged edition; for the interest of Sir Walter's history lies, I think, even peculiarly, in its minute details – especially in the details set down by himself in his letter and diaries . . . [The publisher], however, considered that a book of smaller bulk, embracing only what may be called more strictly narrative, might be acceptable to certain classes of readers.⁸²

Although his substitution of narrative for letters anticipates the procedure of Richardson's Victorian abridgers, Lockhart's rhetoric also looks backward to Richardson's own. His assumption that "smaller bulk" implies "what may be called more strictly narrative" repeats Richardson's claim that rewriting *Clarissa* "into a merely Narrative Form . . . has help'd me to shorten much."⁸³ The contrast between Lockhart's reluctance to write a "strictly narrative" abridgement and the putative desire of "certain classes" to read one echoes Richardson's condescension to "young People; who are apt to read rapidly wth. a View only to *Story*."⁸⁴

Yet Lockhart's attempt to shift responsibility for the abridgment onto "classes of readers" (or onto his publisher's greed for a larger share of the market) obscures the role that abridgment plays in the *Memoirs* from the beginning. Already in the first edition, the narrator pauses periodically to point out his omissions. "I abstain from transcribing the letters," he announces at one point; at another, "I regret, that from the delicate nature of the transactions chiefly dwelt upon in the earlier of these communications, I dare not make a free use of them; but I feel it my duty to record the strong impression they have left on my own mind." Halfway through the first edition, he interrupts himself to warn that "the editor has, for reasons which need not be explained, found it necessary to omit some passages altogether – to abridge others."⁸⁵ Lockhart's choice of "abridge" as a euphemism for "expurgate" suggests how little divides the condenser's narratological manipulations from the original biographer's moral agenda. The revised *Life* simply changes the abridger of another man's correspondence into an abridger of his own work.

Lockhart's biographical method banishes letters at once to the private sphere and to the prehistory of literary composition. The abridged *Narrative* modernizes and popularizes the *Memoirs* by cutting even more letters. In retrospect, the intermittently epistolary original *Memoirs* – published but still unable to reach "certain classes of readers" – can be situated halfway between the undigested private correspondence to which only the narrator has access and the single-voiced summary that

will eventually reach that mass market. The full-length *Memoirs* already projects that publication history onto the time of reading, for Lockhart's decision to retitle the abridged *Memoirs* as a *Narrative* simply repeats the progression from a framed memoir to a frame narrative which structures the original text. The first volume of the first edition opens with an "autobiographical fragment" by Scott, which Lockhart claims to have "discovered in an old cabinet": the same antiquarian conceit that his hero invokes in the postscript to *Waverley*, which traces Scott's novelistic career to an abandoned manuscript "found again among other waste papers in an old cabinet."⁸⁶ Over the course of the *Memoirs*, we move from the false start provided by Scott's memoir – an autobiographical document longer than all but one of the subsequent fragments – to an extradiegetic narrative punctuated with ever-shorter epistolary snippets, concluding ten volumes later (like *Clarissa*) in the editor's voice.⁸⁷ Put differently, Lockhart's *Memoirs* recapitulates the shift away from epistolary narrative that shaped the novel in the previous decades. So did the history of its composition; so did its successive editions. From the beginning, the *Life of Scott* marked the death of the letter.

One can only speculate whether those parallel histories are causally related: whether "a certain class of readers" – or even a certain class of editors – became impatient with correspondence as the habit of reading epistolary novels receded further into the past. But a more direct analogue for the *Memoirs'* recapitulation of literary history can be found in the work of Lockhart's hero. The shift from autobiography to biography in the original *Memoirs* combined with the replacement of letters by narrative in successive editions to repeat the structure of *Redgauntlet* (1824), Scott's most extended experiment with the epistolary mode. Backdated to the eighteenth century and riddled with Richardsonian allusions, *Redgauntlet* opens as an epistolary novel; but the correspondence that makes up the first volume of the text eventually gives way to a "Journal" with no inscribed reader, interrupted in turn by a narrative with no inscribed author. By the end of *Redgauntlet*, third-person narration has displaced not only the epistolary "I" but the epistolary "you." The conclusion of the novel opens not, like the first volume, with a first-person character writing to a second-person character, but with an impersonal narrator addressing a third-person reader: "The reader ought, by this time, to have formed some idea of the character of Alan Fairford."⁸⁸ In turn, the "Letter to the Author of *Waverley*" tacked on to the end of that "Narrative" recapitulates the novel's shift away from

epistolary by taking us from a first-person salutation ("I am truly sorry, my worthy and much-respected sir") to a third-person conclusion which breaks off without even the signature that would normally conclude a letter. In concert with the "Introduction" added to the Magnum Opus edition of 1832, this last-minute swerve to an epistolary conclusion overlays the novel's progression from letter to omniscient narrative by a more symmetrical pattern which alternates the two. As if to underscore that contrast, the writer of the concluding "Letter to the Author" – a counterpart to the letters to the editor which Richardson attaches to the other end of *Pamela* – is as different as possible from the narrator of the preceding section. Far from being omniscient, he barely remembers the characters' names. Like Lockhart's *Life*, then, *Redgauntlet* sandwiches its retrospective summaries with an ever-dwindling proportion of journals and letters "written to the moment" a generation ago.

Set sixty years since, subtitled "A Tale of the Eighteenth Century," and signed by the Author of *Waverley*, *Redgauntlet* is instantly recognizable as historical fiction. But what emerges more gradually is a less identifiable genre that could be called literary-historical fiction. Progressing from the epistolary conventions of the mid-eighteenth century to the heterodiegetic narrative popular in the 1820s, the form of *Redgauntlet* spans a much longer historical trajectory than does its action (an abortive Jacobite rebellion that fizzles before being properly begun). As Nicola Watson has noted, the novel gradually moves from a narrative mode contemporary with the historical period being represented to a different set of conventions associated instead with the moment of representation.⁸⁹ As ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny with a bravura equalled only by the "Oxen of the Sun" chapter in *Ulysses*, the historical gap distancing the novel's style from its readers gives way instead to anachronism relative to its characters.

Redgauntlet juxtaposes literary history with dynastic succession as ostentatiously as it parallels political history with the time of reading. Its plot pivots on a fictional 1765 Jacobite rebellion organized by veterans of the (historical) rising of 1745; indeed, we can date its action largely through the hero's reference to "those fanatical Jacobites whose arms, not twenty years since, had shaken the British throne, and some of whom, though their party diminished daily in numbers, energy, and power, retained still an inclination to *renew* the attempt they had found so desperate" (*Redgauntlet*, 206, my emphasis). By staging a rebellion only to defuse it and adopting the epistolary form only to abandon it, the novel makes the impossibility of re-enacting the Forty-Five rebellion in

'65 (or, by extension, of reviving the Stuart cause in 1745 or even 1715) stand for the impossibility of transplanting mid-eighteenth-century narrative conventions to 1824. In each case, a relic of the 1740s is revived in order to lay it to rest.

Yet however energetically the novel gestures at synchronizing its narrative conventions with the action represented, the correspondence is never in fact so neat. Oddly, the novel situates the epistolary form not in the 1760s, but in the decade stretching from the first publication of *Pamela* (1740–41) to the appearance of *Clarissa* (1747–48). The characters read novels written twenty years since; the text as a whole never echoes the publications of 1765. The resulting time-lag undermines the homology of literary form with historical content that the novel elsewhere takes such pains to establish. Scott's allusions skip a generation to Richardson and, more obliquely, to Fielding – that is, to literature contemporary with the real rising of '45 rather than with the later rebellion represented in the novel. In fact, the correspondence of Scott's protagonists quickly becomes a dialogue between competing novelists of the previous generation. When Alan Fairford writes to Darsie Latimer that his father has taxed him with reading *Tom Jones*, Darsie retorts that "it is well for thee that, Lovelace and Belford like, we came under a convention to pardon every species of liberty which we may take with each other" (*Redgauntlet*, 21, 26). However, Scott's hero turns out to be less "Lovelace-like" than Pamela-like and Clarissa-like (or even Grandison-like, once his cross-dressing and passivity come to the fore). Spied on and served by a namesake of Clarissa's treacherous maid Dorcas, imprisoned like Clarissa by a family determined to break his reluctance to cooperate with their dynastic ambitions, and abducted like Pamela to the house of a reactionary "Squire" who promises to substitute love for cruelty as soon as his prisoner submits to his desires, Darsie also sings the same psalm in his captivity that Pamela does in hers, and, in a blatant echo of *Pamela*, replaces his letters by a journal hidden "about my person, so that I can only be deprived of [it] by actual violence" (*Redgauntlet*, 221, 181). More fundamentally, although the epistolary false start of *Redgauntlet* can at first be taken to refer to any of a number of eighteenth-century novels, Scott's move away from that initial form eventually narrows the field to *Pamela*. Both novels begin with a correspondence but use the abduction of the protagonist to interrupt it. Both follow that break first by an editorial explanation and then by a first-person journal, before replacing that journal in turn by an even more distanced omniscient conclusion. *Pamela* anticipates not only the epistol-

ary form with which *Redgauntlet* begins, but every stage of Scott's move away from it.

Although the presence of *Pamela* is nowhere more ostentatious than when Darsie's kidnapping forces the correspondence to give way to an omniscient narrator, Scott's transition between the two modes swerves instead to invoke a rival precedent.

The advantage of laying before the reader, in the words of the actors themselves, the adventures which we must otherwise have narrated in our own, has given great popularity to the publication of epistolary correspondence, as practised by various great authors, and by ourselves in the preceding chapters. Nevertheless, . . . it must often happen that various prolixities and redundancies occur in the course of an interchange of letters, which must hang as a dead weight on the narrative. To avoid this dilemma, some biographers have used the letters of the personages concerned, or liberal extracts from them, to describe particular incidents, or express the sentiments which they entertained; while they connect them occasionally with such portions of narrative, as may serve to carry on the thread of the story. (*Redgauntlet*, 140)

While the placement of this voice-over at the end of a correspondence echoes the structure of *Pamela*, its editorial "we" and its position at the beginning of a volume recall instead the narrator (also first-person-plural, also mock-theoretical) of the chapters that introduce each book of *Tom Jones*. Like the exchange between Alan's letter referring to *Tom Jones* and Darsie's response alluding to *Clarissa*, Scott's shift from a narrative mode borrowed from Richardson to a narratorial persona taken from Fielding carefully balances the invocation of an epistolary novelist against the non-epistolary narrative of an anti-epistolary polemicist.

Moreover, although its allusions to *Pamela* and *Clarissa* radically outnumber Alan's one explicit mention of Fielding, *Redgauntlet* repeats the plot of *Tom Jones* even more closely than that of *Pamela*. In both, a young man is banished from his adoptive home to wander unwittingly into a Jacobite rebellion; en route, each hero's ignorance of his parentage leads to a narrow escape from real or imagined incest.⁹⁰ (Scott's departure from one key aspect of Fielding's plot, however, reflects the passivity that Alexander Welsh has shown to characterize Scott's heroes: where Allworthy banishes Tom for wenching and drinking, the only crime that motivates Darsie's expulsion is the negative one of lacking an interest in the law – and Mr. Fairford attributes even that fault less to Darsie's preference for other activities than to the inheritance which forces him to idle.)⁹¹ By invoking the Forty-Five as a precedent for his 1765 rebellion, Scott positions his use of (bogus) history

as a successor to Fielding's innovative inscription of the Forty-Five within his plot. Indeed, Redgauntlet's crazed conviction that Darsie's pro-Hanoverian upbringing conceals his real Jacobite potential harks back to the more comic incident in *Tom Jones* where a landlord briefly mistakes Tom's beloved Sophia for the Pretender's mistress.⁹²

Ultimately, *Redgauntlet's* references to Fielding undermine its Whig literary history. The "Narrative" replaces the epistolary form of the first volume not by pastiching Richardson's non-epistolary successors – as the structure of the novel leads us to expect – but rather his anti-epistolary contemporary. While the introduction quoted above places epistolarity and omniscient narration at opposite ends of a historical progression, its formal debt to Fielding disrupts that teleology by situating both in the 1740s. Competition replaces evolution. Just as Redgauntlet challenges the history that places the Stuarts in the past and the Hanoverians in the future, so Scott's allusions to *Tom Jones* make it impossible to project alternative narrative modes onto a chronological axis as neatly as the novel invites us to do. Fielding's presence suggests that, far from progressing from the epistolary form of the 1760s to the narrative conventions of the 1820s, the novel never gets past the controversy about epistolarity waged twenty years before its action begins.

Yet even in his Fielding-esque volume introduction, Scott lends the terms of that debate an unmistakably modern inflection. In the mock-historical language of eighteenth-century fiction, the "biographer" would have designated a novelist – like Richardson, whose acknowledgment that "Prolixity, Length at least, cannot be avoided in Letters written to the Moment" anticipates Scott's self-referential claim that letters generate "prolixities and redundancies." By 1824, however, those "biographers" could also be taken literally to refer to more recent authors of life-and-letters biography, which did in fact use "narrative" to "connect" epistolary "extracts." The "dead weight" of letters, too, could be read either as a pun on the necrological function of biography or as a reference to the obsolescence of the epistolary novel. Or even, more literally, to the heft of Richardson's volumes. The letter becomes a bloated corpse whose burden the "narrative" must "carry."

The strategy that Scott describes of "connecting" extracts from letters with "occasional . . . portions of narrative" not only recalls the editorial summaries that replace the letters truncated at the close of *Clarissa*, but anticipates the alternation of epistolary excerpts with third-person summaries which Mrs. Humphry Ward would later develop to counteract what she calls, in an echo of Scott, "the redundancy of Richardson's

style." *Redgauntlet's* rewriting of Richardson prefigures more than the form of post-1868 abridgments: it also sets into motion their project of historicizing the epistolary novel. Instead of simply implying, as does the structure of *Redgauntlet*, that the letter is incompatible with modernity, Ward declares boldly that large novels must go the way of small dogs: "The redundancy of Richardson's style had a charm for the readers of his day, when time hung heavy on the hands of fine ladies shut up in country houses, or dawdling over fancy work and pug-dogs, with small interest in passing events, and dead to the delights of that earnest work for good which all may find who seek it."⁹³ More explicitly than *Redgauntlet*, Ward's abridgment revives the letter only to dismiss it more conclusively as a relic of the past.

In reminding readers of the existence of a longer text, Ward's preface departs sharply from the front matter of earlier, cheaper abridgments such as *The Paths of Virtue*. Given how many earlier abridgments evade any acknowledgment of their omissions – for good commercial reasons – why should a preface deliberately draw readers' attention to the gaps in the text? The answer, I think, is that relative incompleteness had come to replace absolute brevity as abridgments' selling point. While literary critics studying abridgment have usually focused on the specific content of what gets omitted, what mattered to readers of late-nineteenth-century *Clarissas* was rather the sheer fact of omission itself.⁹⁴ If Richardson's *Collection* is *Moral* less because of the information it contains than because of the modes of discourse that it excises (and the ways of reading that it rules out in the process), conversely Ward's abridgment updates Richardson less by discriminating those passages likely to interest modern readers from those that have lost their relevance, than by differentiating the efficient readers of abridgments in the present from the lazy readers of complete texts in the past.

Where Haywood equates skipping with "Loyter[ing]," Ward finds no kinder term than "dawdling" to characterize the reading of unabridged novels from cover to cover. The pace of reading retains its moral value, but impatience goes from a symptom of idleness to a mark of industry.⁹⁵ For Ward, epistolary narrative is to "events" what "fancy-work" is to "earnest work": the letter against the newspaper. Narrative means business. And that prophecy fulfilled itself. Where Ward claimed to respond to modern readers' need for an abridgment like hers, reciprocally such an abridgment interpellated a new kind of impatient, plot-oriented reader. The supply of abridgments created its own demand. The distaste for sententious matter and epistolary form which Ward

identifies as the cause of her editorial strategy can also be explained as its by-product.

In that sense, Ward simply extended to Richardson's readers a historical model which the contemporary journalist R. H. Hutton applied instead to Richardson's characters. According to Hutton, the distance "from the lively rattle of our railway novels to the solemn coach-and-six of Richardson's full-dress genius" makes clear that "in that less busy age, the leisurely classes made a great deal more of one purpose than we do of many, and hence the characters themselves were less mobile than now." One wonders, he adds, whether "any family nowadays could by any chance devote the *time* to breaking in a refractory girl to a disagreeable alliance which the Harlowes devoted to attempting to force Mr. Solmes on Clarissa."⁹⁶ Yet Hutton's invocation of the railway novel undercuts itself by reminding his audience that modern time-saving technologies have also created the need to kill time – as ever, by reading. The "railway novels" to which he refers had come into being at mid-century precisely because the faster people could travel, the more they had to travel, and the more time they found on their hands in which it was impossible to do anything more productive than reading a one-volume reprint of a three-volume novel. That contradiction forces Hutton to shift the charge of "leisurely" idleness from fiction-readers to fictional characters. Because the former (slothful by definition) cannot easily be shown to have become more efficient in modern times, the latter must become businesslike on their behalf.

Ward's literary history is even more glaringly wrong. Long novels never stopped being written in the mid-nineteenth century, let alone read. Ward herself went on to produce several didactic novels as oversized and maxim-packed as anything that Richardson ever wrote. She may have cut Richardson down to size, but showed no urge to censor herself. Paradoxically, her own novels return obsessively to the problems that she raised at the beginning of her career in the preface to *Clarissa*, while severing those thematic concerns from the formal corollary that she took for granted there. While her novel *Robert Elsmere* (1888) is structured by the hero's progress from a contemplative to an active life, and *Marcella* (1894) circles back even more uncannily to the question of whether ladies should waste their lives on novels and lapdogs, or engage in what Ward had earlier called "earnest work for good," both of those plots stretch out to three leisurely volumes. Where Ward's abridgment promises to abbreviate an eighteenth-century form to fit the attention span of modern readers, *Marcella* – published at the very

moment when the triple-decker was giving way to the one-volume novel – couches self-consciously modern problems in an anachronistically lumbering form.

That biographical paradox is already foreshadowed by the internal structure of Ward's abridgment. A preface relegating the letter to the dustbin of history undermines her decision, in the body of the edition, to restore the epistolary form which earlier abridgers had transposed. The efficiency that Ward's preface attributes to impersonal, retrospective narration paradoxically allows the text that follows to rehabilitate the epistolary as one of the few excuses left for the conspicuous consumption of paper and time. Her edition resuscitates the letter not as a functional form, but a stylized relic. Hutton's tone, too, hovers between socio-historical triumphalism and literary-historical nostalgia. But another hundred and thirty years since, it has become easier to see that *Clarissa*'s putative outdatedness provides part of its force – not only for the Victorians, but for us. Once modern efficiency forbids characters to waste on domestic politics, or writers to waste on epistolary narration, the time that both should be saving for "earnest work," it becomes natural to turn to old novels for the emotional depth that we can no longer enjoy (by bullying our own daughters or sisters in real life), nor even experience vicariously by reading new novels.

Hence the need to reprint, reread, and rewrite Richardson. Scott did all three. At the same moment as he reworked *Pamela* in *Redgauntlet*, Scott reproduced Richardson more literally by including all three of his novels in Ballantyne's Novelist's Library. As editor of Ballantyne's collection, Scott republished epistolary novels; but by ending the series with Radcliffe, he inscribed them within a historical progression leading up to the non-epistolary novel no less irreversibly (even if less explicitly) than Ward would later claim.⁹⁷ Scott's preface to Richardson already anticipates the sense of inertia conveyed in *Redgauntlet*'s image of narratological "dead weight," in Hutton's metaphor of characters' emotional "[im]mobility," and in Ward's charge of readerly "dawdling." Whatever appeal the epistolary mode presents, Scott argues, "is at least partly balanced, by arresting the progress of the story, which stands still while the characters show all their paces, like horses in a manege, without advancing a yard."⁹⁸ Where Hutton figures the epistolary novel as a slowcoach, Scott refuses to acknowledge that it moves at all. Scott names Richardson less openly in *Redgauntlet* than in the Ballantyne's preface, of course, but the novel's form opposes letters just as clearly to "the progress of the story" – a term that conflates narrative pace with

political change. Yet the clumsy gap that *Redgauntlet* leaves between the politics of the 1760s and the literary conventions of the 1740s suggests what a weak bridge literary history provides between social and narrative progress. Hence Ward's need to replace that missing link by the more direct connection of readers' work rhythms. In the process of relegating the epistolary novel to the past, Richardson's belated readers politicized his understanding of the letter as a delaying tactic. Scott's novel, Scott's preface, Hutton's essay, and Ward's abridgment all encouraged contemporaries to re-read the epistolary novel only in order to measure their difference from the readers of the 1740s – and the irreversibility of the social transformations which shifting narrative conventions made visible.

The ambition to historicize genre which *Redgauntlet* shares with Ballantyne's *Novelist's Library* – or indeed with Scott's *Border Minstrelsy* – sets it sharply apart from the mass of the Waverley novels. *Ivanhoe* is more typical in coupling historical nostalgia with literary-historical amnesia: its dedicatory epistle asserts that the novelist's "knights, squires, grooms, and yeomen may be more full drawn than in the hard, dry delineations of an ancient illuminated manuscript, but the character and costume of the age must remain inviolate; they must be the same figures, drawn by a better pencil, or, to speak more modestly, executed in an age when the principles of art were better understood."⁹⁹ Like the ancient Rome of early Hollywood, the eighteenth century allowed Scott's self-consciously modern medium to test its historical reach. Although the characters in *Redgauntlet* confine their reactionary politics to words – the Jacobite toasts of "gray-haired lairds over their punch," or old ladies' stories of "having led a dance down with the Chevalier," or the Jacobite joke displayed at the bottom of Justice Foxley's tankard (*Redgauntlet*, 206, 204) – the Waverley novels as a series show even less interest in reviving literary forms than in reviving anything else. Explicitly classified within a modern genre (Waverley Novels, not Romances) they represent past political struggles without re-enacting past literary forms. Or rather, those genres – notably the ballad – remain safely contained within the modern prose frame that they decorate. In *Redgauntlet*, the letter takes over that position and that function. Like the ballads interpolated in other Waverley novels, the letters inscribed in *Redgauntlet* turn back the march of literary history while delaying the progress of the narrative.

Conversely, the ballad first appears in *Redgauntlet* as a substitute for the letter. No sooner does Darsie's confinement cut him off from the post

than his solipsistic journal-writing is interrupted by the sudden re-appearance of Wandering Willie, the blind fiddler whose tunes carry coded messages. Darsie soon "trust[s] to my own and my *correspondent's* acuteness, in applying to the airs the meaning they were intended to convey" (*Redgauntlet*, 221, my emphasis). The metaphor makes the illiterate's music interchangeable with the letters which it must now replace as Darsie's link to the outside world. The songs provide an oral equivalent not only for written correspondence, but for Lilius's equally oblique message conveyed to Darsie in the form of a poem "in a beautiful Italian manuscript," and for the schoolboy Latin tags which will later provide Alan and Nanty Ewart with a code (*Redgauntlet*, 223, 299).

Yet while the novel's hero experiences his feudal retainer's songs as part of an oral tradition, its readers can recognize them only because of the scholarly project of publishing that tradition which lends the Scottish Enlightenment its distinctive editorial cast. As Kathryn Sutherland has documented, Wandering Willie's tunes can all be found in earlier anthologies such as Allan Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany* (1723), James Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum* (1787–1803), and Joseph Ritson's *Scottish Songs* (1794) – not to mention Scott's own *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802–3). Indeed, *Redgauntlet* reproduces not only the content but the structure of Ritson's anthology. Where Scott's novel represents a failed re-enactment of the Forty-Five through an abortive revival of epistolary conventions, Ritson's preface juxtaposes an elegy for Jacobitism with an elegy for "Scottish song." Toward the end of the preface, Ritson asserts that "the aera of Scottish music and Scottish song is now passed . . . All, therefore, which now remains to be wished, is that industry should exert itself to retrieve and illustrate the reliques of departed genius." Fifty pages earlier, he had defended his inclusion of Jacobite songs in similar terms: "The rival claims of *Stewart* and *Brunswick* are not more to the present generation than those of *Bruce* and *Baliol*, or *York* and *Lancaster*. The question of RIGHT has been submitted to the arbitration of the SWORD, and is now irrevocably decided: but neither that decision, nor any other motive, should deter the historian from doing justice to the character of those brave men."¹⁰⁰ Despite their radically different attitudes toward the Jacobite cause, Ritson's anthology and Scott's novel both use the defeat of Jacobitism as an image for the obsolescence of an eighteenth-century literary form – the song in one case, the epistolary novel in the other – which becomes open to appropriation precisely at the moment when it ceases to be anything more than a "relique" of a past era.¹⁰¹

Where Wandering Willie's first appearance prompts Darsie to the "frolic" of playing second fiddle at a fishermen's dance, "assuming an office unworthy of a man of education," his re-appearance in the following volume turns the truant instead into a gentleman-scholar (*Redgauntlet*, 125). The fiddler's intrusion prompts Darsie's journal to take on an uncharacteristically antiquarian note: "It is well known that, in Scotland, where there is so much national music, the words and airs of which are generally known, there is a kind of free-masonry amongst performers . . . I ventured to sing a verse, which, in various forms, occurs so frequently in old ballads" (*Redgauntlet*, 220–23). Darsie's repetition of "known" glosses over the difference between the listeners to whom the music is "generally known" and the readers by whom their knowledge is "well known" in turn. In the same way that the conspirators use tunes as a disguise for verbal messages, the invocation of performance masks the resemblance of those explanatory asides to editorial annotations. When Darsie slips another piece of ethnographic information into his account of "intimat[ing] my speedy departure from my present place of residence, by whistling the well-known air with which festive parties in Scotland usually conclude the dance," he neglects to add that the air is also used to conclude printed collections of songs (*Redgauntlet*, 222; see Sutherland's note, 448). The scene as a whole reduces popular performance to a protective noise, as Darsie "heard a clattering noise of feet in the court-yard, which I concluded to be Jan and Dorcas dancing a jig in their Cumberland clogs. Under cover of this din, I endeavoured to answer Willie's signal by whistling" (*Redgauntlet*, 221). Just as the inarticulate racket made by the ethnographically-attired dancers camouflages Darsie's conversation, so Scott's invocation of oral folklore draws attention away from the print culture in which ballads are collected and novels read.

The shift from Alan's letters to Wandering Willie's airs reverses the career of Scott himself, who began by collecting, translating, and imitating ballads and only belatedly turned to his anomalous pastiche of the epistolary novel. In fact, Darsie's last ballad forms a variant of one that had already appeared in Scott's *Border Minstrelsy*.¹⁰² Not surprisingly, the path from the compilation of the *Minstrelsy* to the composition of the Waverley novels left traces in the latter. Divided by chapter mottoes, annotated with antiquarian excerpts, embellished by ballads, appended with documents, each novel points outward to a range of older genres. Scott's cultural project of reconciling civilized blandness with raw authenticity corresponds to a formal oscillation from the historical and

stylistic discontinuities of the anthology to the glib, even, inexorable flow of the narrative, and back again.

Robert Crawford has argued that the "synthetic and eclectic" structure of the Waverley novels comes out of a Scottish literary tradition whose paradigmatic figures "were as much major collectors as major creative artists . . . Sometimes, as in the case of the Ossianic works, collection and creation became so confused as to be virtually inextricable."¹⁰³ Scott himself defines authorship in terms of that confusion. The *Minstrelsy* glosses the Scots term "maker" as a synonym for "troubadour," which Scott translates in turn as "finder": "the French Trouvers, or Troubadours, namely, the Finders, or Inventors, has the same reference to the quality of original conception and invention."¹⁰⁴ By invoking the etymology of "invention," the gloss erases any distinction between the original "maker" and the compiler of found objects. Later, Scott boasted of misrepresenting his "made" epigraphs as "found" ones: according to a pivotal scene of Lockhart's *Memoirs*, he

happened to ask John Ballantyne, who was sitting by him, to hunt for a particular passage in Beaumont and Fletcher. John did as he was bid, but did not succeed in discovering the lines. "Hang it, Johnny," cried Scott, "I believe I can make a motto sooner than you will find one." He did so accordingly; and from that hour, whenever memory failed to suggest an appropriate epigraph, he had recourse to the inexhaustible mines of "old play" or "old ballad," to which we owe some of the most exquisite verses that ever flowed from his pen.¹⁰⁵

While his critics attacked the heterogeneous structure of the Waverley novels on ethical grounds – what Hazlitt calls "patch-work and plagiarism, the beggarly copiousness of borrowed wealth" – Scott forestalled the accusation of plagiarism by presenting himself on the contrary as a forger.¹⁰⁶ Far from claiming others' words as his own, Lockhart's hero passes off "original" poems as "borrowed." Each novel masquerades as an accretion of fragments written at different times by different persons – or rather non-persons, as long as the Author of Waverley still shared the anonymity of "Old Ballad." The epigraphs riddle Scott's work with inscribed signatures as fictitious as those in any epistolary novel. In retrospect, Lockhart's narrative of compilation motivates the novels' composite form. Even within *Redgauntlet*, the proliferation of inscribed ballads and inset tales makes clear that Scott's eventual turn away from the epistolary novel did not end the characteristically eighteenth-century strategy of presenting the work of one author as the work of many.

The modular structure of Scott's novels can perhaps best be measured by anthologists' urge to break them back down into fragments.

Popular, prolix, and plotted, the Waverley novels might logically be expected to resist the anthology. Carlyle posited an inverse ratio of quantity to quotability: "no man has written as many volumes [as Scott] with so few sentences that can be quoted." Bagehot, too, measured the immediacy of the novels by their resistance to quotation: "nobody rises from [Scott's] works without a most vivid idea of what is related, and no one is able to quote a single phrase in which it has been narrated."¹⁰⁷ Yet the epigraphs collected in *The Poetry contained in the Novels, Tales and Romances of the Author of Waverley* (1822) soon gave way to more miscellaneous compilations ranging from *The Genius and Wisdom of Sir Walter Scott* (1839) to *Beauties of Sir Walter Scott* (1849) to the *Waverley Poetical Birthday Book* (1883, immediately imitated by a *Waverley Proverbial Birthday Book* and a *Scott Birthday Record*) to albums that reduced textual excerpts to captions for engravings for (and of) women: *Portraits of the Principal Female Characters in the Waverley Novels; to which are added, Landscape Illustrations* (1833), *The Waverley Gallery of the Principal Female Characters in Sir Walter Scott's Romances* (1841), *Female Portraits from the Writings of Byron and Scott, with poetical illustrations* (1845), and *The Waverley Keepsake* (1853).¹⁰⁸ Where collections of epigraphs severed verse fragments from the prose narrative that bound them together, albums of engraved "scenes" and "portraits" froze the narrative itself into a series of self-contained stills.

The Waverley novels' ridicule of women readers like Mrs. Mailsetter in *The Antiquary* and Martha Buskbody in *Old Mortality* and *The Heart of Midlothian* never prevented publishers from reducing them to raw material for ladies' gifts. The bindings and engravings of those collections of verbal, topographical, and human "beauties" showcased the latest technologies for drawing attention to the materiality of the book.¹⁰⁹ Visual special effects placed them even farther opposite Scott's invocation of a dying oral folklore than the Magnum Opus edition of the novels themselves. The metonymic title of Allan Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany* had already transferred an oral tradition into the drawing-rooms of readers defined at once by their gender and by the luxury goods that they consumed. Scott's anthologists, too, showed readers how far they had come from the ballad and even from the more recent past connoted in *Redgauntlet* by the epistolary novel. Darsie's shift from writing letters to collecting ballads makes clear that by 1824 the inscribed fragment had come to stand for modishness as surely as the inscribed letter for obsolescence. Coffee-table albums completed the progress of romance set into motion at Ramsay's tea-table.

CHAPTER 2

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