My title is intended not only to suggest the necessity of generic diversity in recovery work, but also, of course, to underscore the efforts (the "prose") that underlie the pleasures of rooting around in rare book rooms and well-equipped research libraries (the "poetry"). Beyond gaining the satisfaction of ushering into print again such writers as Martha Wolfenstein and Onoto Watanna, I have been reminded that a number of nontrivial, non-intellectual realities help determine what can or cannot be accomplished in today's corporatized academy and its affiliated publishing culture. I will touch here upon the role of power and privilege of varying sorts in recovery work and in the anthologizing and criticism that complement it. With examples drawn principally from nineteenth-century American women's writing, because it is the field in which I have worked most, I will outline some of the central challenges in recovery work today. These challenges are aesthetic, political, and economic, and both internal and external to the subject field and to the profession; although I separate them for ease of discussion, they are inextricably interconnected. Some of the remarks that follow will be familiar to those who have completed anthologies, but I believe that the [End Page 36] discussion as a whole will carry new insights for virtually everyone. Many of my observations have relevance for anthologizing in general, as well for the writing of white males, whose work has not enjoyed the recovery efforts expended elsewhere. At the heart of this discussion and the questions it raises resides my uncomfortable insights for virtually everyone. Many of my observations have relevance for anthologizing in general, as well for the writing of white males, whose work has not enjoyed the recovery efforts expended elsewhere. At the heart of this discussion and the questions it raises resides my uncomfortable awareness of the degree to which economics drives the recovery process. As Duncan Wu has observed of the elements in anthologizing that scholars resist, those related to money are among the most frequent: "Scholars haven't traditionally needed to think about the commercial marketplace, and there remains the suspicion that it's improper for them to do so" (n.p.).

"Standards":
The Politics of Aesthetics

"Representativeness" incurs other difficulties. Here there appears to be a more concrete, objective standard, yet the difficulties of claiming representativeness status remain as tangled as those relating to excellence, especially in our multicultural era. In the creation of Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers, I excluded more than four filing drawers of materials; the final volume in no way "represents" the concerns or aesthetics of thousands of texts that I eliminated in the early stages because of insufficient excellence. No anthology can make a serious claim to being characteristic until its editor has read virtually everything in the field, clearly an impossibility even in the nineteenth century, let alone in the twentieth. Here, too, political agendas can--and at this historical moment should--inform the selection process. For example, my anthology aimed to encompass authors diverse by region, ethnic group, and genre, among other categories, in an effort to convey the scope of the cultural conversation in which these writers engaged--to seek representativeness over a broad field, not necessarily always to represent individual writers by their best work. What (and whom) should we represent in our anthologies? What do we mean by such terms as "diversity" and "inclusiveness"? Too often, as I will explore in more detail later, class is elided as a principle of selection. Comprehensiveness--or breadth--is a related concept, implying perhaps a less refined selection process and a much larger scope--along the lines encompassed by Evart and George Duyckinck's 1856 Cyclopaedia of American Literature. Given the economic realities of publishing outlined below, today we can expect genuine comprehensiveness only in electronic formats.

"Interest" slips and slides as much as the two other selection criteria. As Nina Baym has indicated in her discussion of antebellum nineteenth-century novels, interest has been a consistent touchstone for evaluation in American literary history; the obvious question, again, is interest to whom, and on what basis? I used this measure in combination with the criterion of diverse themes to help assemble my first anthology, aimed at a certain narrow territory."

Karen L. Kilcup - Anthologizing Matters: The Poetry and Prose of Recovery Work

"Let our readers be assured that (as matters are managed among the four or five different cliques who control our whole literature in controlling the larger portion of our critical journals,) it requires no small amount of courage, to an author whose [End Page 37] subsistence lies in his pen, to hint, even, that any thing good, in a literary way, can, by any possibility, exist out of the limits of a certain narrow territory."

--Southern Literary Messenger, 1849

Copyright © 2001 symploke. All rights reserved.
large group that includes students, scholars, and general readers. One extension of interest relates to the vexed notion of popularity. Anthologies of popular genres such as humor and science fiction have ready markets; even putatively academic collections such as Nancy A. Walker and Zita Dresner's important Redressing the Balance: American Women's Literary Humor from Colonial Times to the 1980s (1988) and Mary Suzanne Schribner's Telling Travels: Selected Writings by Nineteenth-Century American Women Abroad (1995) have a much wider audience than [End Page 38] collections of "serious" or canonical writing. Perhaps those of us in the process of recovery work need to take Jane Tompkins's views about popular texts more seriously, to interrogate our assumptions about audience and pleasure (if a work is pleasurable and accessible, it can't be good), and to expand the audiences for our work. This strategy represents not simply a matter of appropriating politics—or better sales—but of breaching the artificial and self-interested boundary between the academy and the "real world," a boundary that has, for most of us in state universities and public colleges at least, already been breached by hostile forces interested only in such matters as "measurable student learning outcomes" and "efficiency."

A less frequently articulated selection criterion is "challenge." At first glance one might assume that I denote aesthetic excellence, but I intend rather to emphasize the ambition of the anthologist to invite or propel readers to interrogate existing standards, however murky or implicit such standards may be. For Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers, I extended the principles of the groundbreaking Heath, which encompassed (for example) Sui Sin Far, a Chinese Canadian author who traveled and worked in the United States for a number of years, and I included other writers who were American in a flexible sense and who invited students to think in transnational terms. Equally important, I wanted to include texts that were not, in the strictest sense, "literary," in both this collection and Native American Women's Writing, hence, the former includes an obituary of Emily Dickinson by her sister-in-law, Susan Gilbert Dickinson, and cookbook writing by Catherine Owen, while the latter includes testimony to the U.S. Senate by Sussette LaFlesche as well as the coauthored report by Zitkala-As, Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians, on the exploitation of the western Indians. The important point here (as I've suggested with advice writing) is that putatively nonliterary texts exist on a continuum with literary texts, and understanding the aesthetics of the former can help illuminate the literariness of the latter ("Essays of Invention"). We should continue to expand the canon of great or good texts to include interesting ones that converse with more conventionally canonical forms. This standard of challenge may seem to be incommensurate with a moment ago that we consider expanding our audiences, but what challenges academic audiences might interest non-academic readers.

With rigid conceptions of literary and nonliterary genres, restrictive notions of major and minor authors continue to diminish our conceptual scope and historical understanding. Our selection criteria often remain circumscribed by unconscious or unarticulated hierarchies of length and genre, as we see in the case of the brilliant sketch writer and poet Rose Terry Cooke, arguably one of the most important U.S. writers in the nineteenth century. In this case, as in many others, what we might call the "circularity of absence" governs her availability: a writer's continued omission from mainstream collections is virtually guaranteed by the publishers' resistance to critical work, even when, as in Cooke's case, a volume has been proposed by a distinguished scholar with groundbreaking books to her credit; simultaneously, the absence of a major book on a writer confirms her or his status as minor and legitimates exclusion from collections. Even when such irritating pressures are conscious, editors often cannot resist publishers' (or teachers') demands, as is apparent from the presence, disappearance, and subsequent reappearance of The Scarlet Letter in the Heath. The perpetuation of the "Star System" (see Shumway) for writers has powerful aesthetic as well as economic resonances, hampering development of the broader field because we spend our energies focused on a very small proportion of writers. I appreciate the fact that, politically, scholars in the field of nineteenth-century American women's writing (and other recovery fields) have to be careful about spreading ourselves too thinly and that too much breadth can also be counterproductive, dispersing limited energies. Nevertheless, I wonder if, and how, major and minor continue to be useful terms for study? The Star System of writers, much more prevalent in the twentieth century than in the nineteenth, represents a form of cultural amnesia, with the advent of modernism being the customary explanation (Clark; Golding); nineteenth-century anthologists like Griswold aimed at breadth rather than depth. We might usefully remember that most authors, even those we today consider major, wrote both "highbrow" and "lowbrow" work, to borrow Lawrence Levine's terms; we too rarely account for this fact either in our anthologies or our criticism. Sarah Orne Jewett represents just one example of an author whose popular work, such as her newspaper writing, has been virtually deleted from contemporary criticism and canonical significance (Johanningsmeier; Kilcup and Edwards).

Martha Banta acknowledges the hospitality of anthologies to shorter works. For my collections of nineteenth-century American women's writing, I determined that, aside from the fact that excerpts were generally problematic and that I would exclude them except in cases where a selection could stand alone, one principal consideration was the domination of the novel (and fiction more generally) and the elision of nontraditional and shorter genres in recent literary studies. On the other hand, representativeness trumped aesthetic concerns with form: if in a particular period I needed the perspective, say, of a Western writer, I chose that writer with the awareness that her excellence might be secondary to her interest. I also hoped to avoid cloning prior recovery work, even reprinting now-familiar texts that had achieved nearly canonical status, such as "The Yellow Wall-Paper" for Charlotte Perkins Gilman and "Old Woman Magoun" for Mary Wilkins Freeman. As Banta astutely underscores, "the anthology that works must be a sum of voices that are talking back and forth with one another to some purpose" (333). It is difficult for the anthologist to conceptualize this conversation if she is thinking about money--either the profit she will make or the commercial requirements of her publisher.

### Economics:

**Publishers, Purchasers, Purveyors**

My answer to the question of criteria was, in fact, partially informed by economic forces beyond my control: my publisher urged me to include at least a few familiar texts that would entice people to buy my first collection, although the final selections were mine--hence, "The Yellow Wall-Paper" was included, though in a newly-discovered manuscript version. The power exerted by presses/publishers over the recovery process represents an important element in the economics of recovery work; as Wu notes, "commercial considerations will inevitably play their part in determining the contents of each different anthology; scholarly or pedagogical factors cannot be the sole determinants." Unlike Paula Bennett's economists who were American in a flexible sense and who invited students to think in transnational terms. Equally important, I wanted to include texts that were not, in the strictest sense, "literary," in both this collection and Native American Women's Writing, hence, the former includes an obituary of Emily Dickinson by her sister-in-law, Susan Gilbert Dickinson, and cookbook writing by Catherine Owen, while the latter includes testimony to the U.S. Senate by Sussette LaFlesche as well as the coauthored report by Zitkala-As, Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians, on the exploitation of the western Indians. The important point here (as I've suggested with advice writing) is that putatively nonliterary texts exist on a continuum with literary texts, and understanding the aesthetics of the former can help illuminate the literariness of the latter ("Essays of Invention"). We should continue to expand the canon of great or good texts to include interesting ones that converse with more conventionally canonical forms. This standard of challenge may seem to be incommensurate with a moment ago that we consider expanding our audiences, but what challenges academic audiences might interest non-academic readers.

Economics:

Publishers, Purchasers, Purveyors

My answer to the question of criteria was, in fact, partially informed by economic forces beyond my control: my publisher urged me to include at least a few familiar texts that would entice people to buy my first collection, although the final selections were mine--hence, "The Yellow Wall-Paper" was included, though in a newly-discovered manuscript version. The power exerted by presses/publishers over the recovery process represents an important element in the economics of recovery work; as Wu notes, "commercial considerations will inevitably play their part in determining the contents of each different anthology; scholarly or pedagogical factors cannot be the sole determinants." Unlike Paula Bennett's

If we were able to resist or evade the economic pressures of publishers, perhaps we could envision anthologizing in a comprehensive as well as individual sense, that is, to consider press series (or even the publishing landscape in individual areas) as another form of this activity. The ambitious Rutgers University Press American Women Writers Series has broken important new ground, but as the market indicates, their production quality--a.k.a. costs--may be too high, for the press has not issued a new volume for a number of years. One of their success stories is Catharine Maria Sedgwick's Hope Leslie, which the press brought out in 1987. Since then this innovative 1827 novel on racial and gender politics has sold tens of thousands of copies at $15.00. According to online Books in Print, the book has been available beginning in 1972 from Irvington Press, but at a retail price of $29.50. In 1998, Penguin saw a good market opportunity and issued its edition for $13.95. On the one hand, the sales price is determined by the press, [End Page 41] often with significant pressure from the marketing department and equally often in departure from the contracted price.

If we were able to resist or evade the economic pressures of publishers, perhaps we could envision anthologizing in a comprehensive as well as individual sense, that is, to consider press series (or even the publishing landscape in individual areas) as another form of this activity. The ambitious Rutgers University Press American Women Writers Series has broken important new ground, but as the market indicates, their production quality--a.k.a. costs--may be too high, for the press has not issued a new volume for a number of years. One of their success stories is Catharine Maria Sedgwick's Hope Leslie, which the press brought out in 1987. Since then this innovative 1827 novel on racial and gender politics has sold tens of thousands of copies at $15.00. According to online Books in Print, the book has been available beginning in 1972 from Irvington Press, but at a retail price of $29.50. In 1998, Penguin saw a good market opportunity and issued its edition for $13.95. On the one hand, the sales price is determined by the press, [End Page 41] often with significant pressure from the marketing department and equally often in departure from the contracted price.
writer against another; with only so many resources in the publishing world, those authors with institutional power and recognition dominate. Moreover, even for recovered writers, a single text (usually a novel or longer work) often dominates. Thus, in spite of the lack of a comprehensive collection of short stories—beyond the handful usually reprinted—by Sarah Orne Jewett, publishers are cashing in on her growing reputation, with reprints of The Country of the Pointed Firs included in volumes by David Godine ($20.00), New American Library ($3.95), Oxford (price not listed), Macmillan ($22.95), University Press of New England ($14.95), Library of America ($11.95), Viking Penguin ($8.95), Random House ($13.95), Norton ($9.95), and the ubiquitous Dover ($1.00) to cite only the most prominent.

Purchasers, the students, represent another node in the anthologizing matrix—the principal one, in fact. As Wu reminds us, "perhaps it is in the interests of publishers, who care only about profits, to discourage . . . enquiry" about the appropriate relationship of the student to the anthology (n.p.). Kenneth Warren asserts:

[We need] to continue reminding ourselves of the extent to which our students embody the conflicts we face in attempting to mediate between text and audience, between "history" and people of the [End Page 42] present. What we teach is inextricably linked to those whom we teach and our impressions of their deficiencies and needs; and our sense of what we ought to teach has changed, and will change, with our shifting student populations. (341)

I agree wholeheartedly with Warren's perspective; but, beyond his observation, I want to explore first, who are "our students," and (later in this discussion) who are "we"? Community colleges serve about 40% of the students in higher education in the United States; another large percentage attends regional state universities or small private colleges. Although many of the students at my home institution, a medium-sized doctoral-granting university in the South, are middle-class, a significant number come from families of the working poor; some are first-generation college students. "We," then, need to remember that when it comes to students' needs and priorities, economic diversity often matters at least as much as gender, ethnic, or racial diversity; "their deficiencies and needs" vary widely and include more than the lack of access to a particular literary text or understanding of a tradition. Not too long ago, one of my undergraduates came into my office to apologize that he had not done the reading because he had lost his job; there was no money left over for textbooks, but he hoped to have another job in a few days. Such situations require us (apart from individual action) to consider multiculturalism more fully and explicitly in class-based terms. How well can the academic literary anthology, a textbook, serve the vast majority of U.S. students, as well as their elite counterparts? How does it serve different populations differently? What roles do our students serve as audiences for anthologies—are they or should they be "guinea pigs" for the investigation of new canons, as Duncan Wu pointedly asks? Or, as he suggests, do they literally help pay for vacations in the Caribbean; and do we fill our anthologies with "what's good," or "what's good" for students, or "what's good" for the bottom line, our own or our publishers'?

Given the economic situation of most students, instructors in literary studies at the large majority of institutions in the U.S. are under heavy pressure to keep course book costs low; students complain if they are required to buy a book and then only read a small portion. There is also a threshold price for books, and some students will not purchase a humanities textbook over fifteen dollars unless it's an anthology. [End Page 43] Ironically, students' lack of time and money may help create a market for shorter works: anthologies, by my home institution, as at numerous others, many students have jobs, often full time, and now more than ever they need access to inexpensive collections that provide a wide range of materials. This economic situation is exacerbated abroad, where the price of textbooks is sometimes fifty to one hundred percent greater than in the U.S. In addition to having sensitivity to cost, students are acutely attuned to locations of social and cultural power. Not only are "classic" novels perceived as "a good buy"—with paperbacks available from Dover, for example, for a dollar or two—but the privilege of novels over shorter genres, especially in the last twenty years, has significantly distorted the field of literary studies. Collections of short fiction, especially by a single author, are difficult to sell, as witnessed by the disappearance of Judith Fetterley's important collection of sketches by Alice Cary in the literary heritage series. Aesthetically and politically powerful, Cary's writing nevertheless does not fit securely or tidily into canonical genre categories. When the profit-making enterprise of publish-ing—invading even the world of university presses—reinforces the dominant scholarly model of major and minor authors and genres, our collective "anthology" of American women's writing is substantially diminished. This situation occurs in part because of the more limited student audience (usually upper-level undergraduate and graduate students) for many recovery collections. 12

English departments are the purveyors of texts, including anthologies, and they are often at least as conservative as publishers. The "culture wars," "crisis in the humanities," and general retrenchment in English departments have often resulted in little self-examination. Instead, if a dean funds a "crisis in the humanities," and general retrenchment in English departments have often resulted in little self-examination. Instead, if a dean funds a grant or a retiring colleague, there is a rush to replacement, because department heads are so concerned (often with good reason) that the line will otherwise "crisis in the humanities," and general retrenchment in English departments have often resulted in little self-examination. Instead, if a dean funds a line for a retiring colleague, there is a rush to replacement, because department heads are so concerned (often with good reason) that the line will disappear. Without attention to constructing goals for the future we may foster outsiders' sense of our irrelevance as we cling to the institutionalized structures and writers of the past without fully articulated rationales for doing so. Such replacements often have other, equally inappropriate rationales. I know of one mid-sized department that recently decided to hire its fourth Renaissance specialist because "students want to take Shakespeare and we can't meet the demand." The consumption of new canons, as Duncan Wu pointedly asks? Or, as he suggests, do they literally help pay for vacations in the Caribbean; and do we fill our anthologies with "what's good," or "what's good" for students, or "what's good" for the bottom line, our own or our publishers? 12

In addition to these economic constraints dictated by the publisher, student, and department, recovery work is very time-consuming and expensive for the editor. For example, in the summer of 1995 alone I spent over $1200 on photocopies related to my projects; travel costs to libraries were much higher. Working at the time at an "old" university in England, I was fortunate to have extensive institutional support and a teaching load of about 6.5 hours per week (with only 23 weeks of teaching over the year). For Native American Women's Writing I received institutional support in the form of numerous graduate student research assistants and hundreds of expensive interlibrary loan requests. 13 What does it mean to have a field that only people with money (or significant institutional support, as I had) make the selections? In some cases, the social class of the editor, as much as that of the consumer (student), affects what kind of work can be done. This reality suggests a relatively homogeneous perspective that potentially impoverishes scholarship, and it is connected at least indirectly to the "Star System" of scholars. Because this system influences what will count as literature and, of course, what will be included in anthologies, it becomes in some sense a stand-in for class, with academics at elite, well-funded institutions more frequently possessing access to the prestigious publishing outlets that effectively determine the canon. 14 In recent years, as anthologies have become [End Page 45] standard fare for university and college survey courses and certain "star" scholars have capitalized, sometimes literally and cynically, upon their names to sell texts, repackaging the work of less famous editors has become more common. The obvious but necessary point here, to return to Warren's observation, is that "we" are not all the same, however much some might aspire to be part of a particular "we."

From this angle, it is possible to identify an important question neglected in the earlier discussion about selection standards: How might notions of excellence, representativeness, and interest—and hence selections—be circumscribed by the class of the anthologist? Such questions seem so transparent and familiar that we may forget to ask them. Even some scholars may take for granted, for example, that individuals choose selections most amenable to their experience, whether in subject matter, genre, or form. Thus, they might assume, with some justification, that a woman anthropologist would decide to compile an anthology of women's writing or to emphasize women's literature in what publishers like to call a "mainstream" anthology. But how accurate is a similar assumption concerning the working-class anthropologist who, with the education acquired in becoming an academic, can (and sometimes must) "pass" for middle-class. Supposing that we can even define "working class" satisfactorily, is
she more or less likely to include working-class voices in a collection, given that education? Today's anthologists have been trained by the
descendants of the nineteenth- and early-twentieth- centuries' academic elite, who tended to value some genres--primarily, fiction, poetry, drama, and autobiography--over others. Advice writing, travel writing, children's writing, and the like, were infrequently serious candidates for canonical inclusion, in part because they were not "excellent" (and "complex") and in part because they "interested" the wrong people (and hence, as Levine and Huyssen have detailed, couldn't have detailed it might). To a significant degree, although popular texts have engendered tremendous interest in recent years, they remain marginalized within the canon. I would argue that genre hierarchy offers one measure of class differentiation in anthologizing, and such a hierarchy may be fostered by the class structures of academe.

Although my understanding here may be based primarily upon my knowledge of people who have engaged in recovery work, individuals at "major" research universities and/or those with the personal resources to undertake recovery work seem more likely to be predisposed to regard certain kinds of writing as "nonliterary" than those with different kinds of institutional and personal affiliations. This situation translates [End Page 46] into an absence of recovery efforts, for example, on working-class writers; such collections as The Lowell Offering: Writings by New England Mill Women (1840-1845) and The Factory Girls: A Collection of Writings on Life and Struggles in the New England Factories of the 1840s, were compiled by cultural historians, Benita Eisler and Philip Foner, rather than by literary scholars. While this different perspective brings a welcome diversity to the intellectual conversation, historians possess different values than scholars in literary studies. Even if a literary editor is aware of how her class situation influences her selections, however, acting on that knowledge is not necessarily straightforward. For one thing, the term "working

Women (1840-1845)

and Huyssen have detailed, couldn't have aesthetic merit). To a significant degree, although popular texts have engendered tremendous interest in recent years, they remain marginalized within the canon. I would argue that genre hierarchy offers one measure of class differentiation in

Recovering working-class writing often means more than reviewing the influential periodicals of the time; it might mean a commitment to archival research, an expensive and time-consuming effort. My recovery of the European travel diaries of the Boston domestic servant, Lorenza Stevens Berbineau, was supported by a Mellon Fellowship as well as by a series of substantial research grants from my home institution at the time, the University of Hull in England. Even people who can "afford" to do the work, both financially and professionally, are often overburdened with other projects. Those entering the profession frequently cannot afford it financially, nor can they risk their professional futures by embarking on long-term studies of writers and works considered "marginal" ("it's only ever done even at non-elite institutions among working faculty judging the work of untenured faculty."). Anthologizing work, in fact, can be "innovative" that it is literally unrecognizable to some as a legitimate scholarly enterprise containing a rich intellectual critique; if it doesn't fit within, or reside at least at the edges, of some traditional field or theory, it may be denied as genuinely academic work, in spite of the current permeability of literary studies. In the most extreme case, such work might never be published. That scholars are aware of this matter at some level is evident from the relative lack of critical work done on nineteenth-century American women's writing, especially on poetry despite the emergence of cultural studies and what we might expect to be the consequent diminishment of genre hierarchies, Judith Fetterley's 1994 lament concerning the significant gaps in the field remains largely accurate. The disparity between workers in the profession, with specializing assistant professors at many institutions teaching 4-4 loads, compounds the difficulties and contributes to what I would call canon calcification. Even if they have no intention of engaging in recovery work themselves but desire to teach recovered authors, those individuals with heavy teaching and service loads often do not have time to learn about new writers unless they make substantial professional--and sometimes personal--sacrifices.

Finally, such matters as permissions costs also influence who does the work and what is recovered. Anthologists complain endlessly about these costs, but colleagues who have not encountered the problem may be surprised at its significance. For example, I was forced to exclude from my first collection an early oral narrative by a Mexican American woman, Edaliza Perez, because the library that held the materials wanted $2000 for roughly eight pages. To republish approximately seven of the previously published works covered the expenditure, although publishers sometimes limit their contributions severely. As I discovered when I applied to my home institution for permissions costs for another project, many--probably most--institutions have extremely limited funding for such purposes; more often these costs come out of the editor's profits—if, indeed, there are any. If one is editing a recovery anthology, profits are often microscopic, whereas reprinting familiar authors can be very rewarding indeed. Dale Bauer's observation in another context are extremely useful here: "Who controls representation controls social power" (120).

(Identity) Politics

Recovery work and the accompanying criticism can often be profoundly influenced by identity politics. For example, in spite of Nelly McKay's recent call for a non-essentialist perspective on literary studies, white scholars are often discouraged or even excluded from recovery and criticism of non-white texts. Permissions-granting institutions and publishing houses may fail to appreciate the work done by white scholars and to see the value of having minority texts appear in [End Page 48] multicultural or pluralist anthologies. Because of the understandable concern about white scholars' appropriation of minority primary texts, libraries or historical societies may overcharge for permissions costs, preventing dissemination of important materials and unwittingly reducing the demand for additional minority work. Publishers may have anxieties about white editors' scholarship on minority authors or about readers' responses to it. Fortunately, the vision and energy of some minority scholars who support important white-edited recovery projects, as was true with Amy Doherty's collection of Maria Cristina Men's writing, may counterbalance these forces. Another discouraging force of identity politics occurs when minority scholars, many of whom have no difficulty in acquiring excellent publishers for their collections, discover that their work on minority texts and writers is judged by their colleagues to be "unimportant" or "marginal" to the scholarly enterprise. I know of at least two cases in which bitter tenure battles arose because departments refused to take seriously the recovery work and scholarship of two women who were well known in their respective fields.

The same dismissal of work occurs to "foreign" scholars working in American literature, who are, it is assumed, "behind" "the cutting edge," either because of the inaccessibility of materials or simply because they aren't American. Although such a perspective may strain credibility in the humanistic environment of the academy, I can confirm its accuracy from personal experience, having worked in England for several years, as well as from the experiences of friends and colleagues in Europe and elsewhere. The emergence of the Internet, with the availability of primary resources like the Making of America, has already started to level the playing field between scholars who work at well-funded, larger institutions and those who have traditionally lacked access, including foreign scholars. Too often in the U.S., we fail to consider the complicated position of American literature abroad and of our colleagues who study and teach it. In the U.K., for example, American literature is frequently regarded, when it is seen at all, as marginal, and is sometimes taught in departments of commonwealth and postcolonial literature along with Australian, New Zealand, South African, and Caribbean literature. Our colleagues in the U.K. struggle against the added invisibility of American women's literature. Finally, these colleagues have a sense of urgency about the field--teaching and research--that comes when, as at Cambridge, one is asked to teach all of American literature in a short lecture series; or when, as frequently happens, even Americanist faculty members have to teach a broad range of subjects, including Shakespeare.

Another element of identity politics that works to police the borders of anthologizing (and literary studies more generally) is editors' understandable reluctance to include texts that are reprehensible or even questionable because of their racist, sexist, or classist perspectives. There [End Page 49] are serious and legitimate critical questions about the role of "trivial" and "unimportant" texts, however, acting on that knowledge is not necessarily straightforward. For one thing, the term "working"
Another identity matter emerges in the creation and reception of anthologies. Few men undertake collections of women's writing; few men take credit for women's writing. To be blunt, these scholarly efforts are race and gender specific: women do not often do the path-breaking work that is necessary to include women. We need to foster an environment in which such crossover scholarship—not just by gender but also by race, class, and other social identities—is encouraged and recognized (see Wonham; Powell). We also need to couple a synthetic, pluralist approach with continued particularist efforts at articulating identity-based or minoritized traditions more fully. In addition, region limits our perspectives; in the field of nineteenth-century American women's writing there are still too few considerations of Southern and Western women other than a small group whose work has been recovered by such scholars as Judith Fetterley, Marjorie Pryse, and Melody Graulich.

Criticism and recovery work are two sides of the same scholarly project: anthologies—and rediscovered writers—cannot advance, or be taught, without becoming part of a critical conversation. Here again, [End Page 50] identity matters. One obstacle to the advancement of both practical and theoretical criticism is the intense pressure on beginning scholars, some of our most innovative and challenging critics, to produce, to publish quickly. This pressure often leads to publications focusing on a single writer or small group of writers, most of whom must be canonical or neocanonical, or presses will reject their projects. That is, academic institutions themselves collude, however unwittingly, with publishers to ensure the maintenance of the status quo via its economic penalties: denial of tenure and promotion, the possible demise of a career. In concrete terms, while it is possible for a beginning scholar to master the major work of an critic on Emily Dickinson, it can take many years—in spite of important work by David Reynolds on the subject—to understand her in the more complex context of her popular contemporaries such as Longfellow, Whitlitter, Larcom, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, let alone within the vibrant poetic conversation encompassed by Frances Harper, Sarah Piatt, slave songs, and patriotic songs, and the history with which this work is framed. The structures of the academy and the affiliated publishing world make it difficult for this breadth and sophistication extremely difficult, and they tend to reward hasty (and often inaccurate) generalizations—by established as well as beginning scholars—that advance neither recovery work nor criticism.

Future Directions

It is important to move beyond defining challenges. Many solutions are implicit in the analysis above: to conduct more primary research, negotiate with publishers, create more grounded theory, and initiate more self-interrogation. But as I hope I have emphasized, we have to refocus beyond understanding the aesthetics of recovery work to appreciating its politics and economics and to take action based on this [End Page 51] understanding. What are a few steps that we might take to respond to the realities of academic life as I have outlined them in relation to recovery work? First, we need to work in our own departments to urge colleagues not only to acknowledge the economic and political realities of the academy, particularly in the humanities, but also to engage them in actively formulating goals for the future. One of these goals might be to enable release time for scholarship and/or for teaching preparation in expanding fields with new writers. I must admit that I am least sanguine about this step, given the traditional inertia in many departments as well as the chronic lack of resources in some, but change in even a small number of departments, especially prominent ones that are often regarded as models for best practices, would have a large impact on students and faculty alike.

A few more steps can be undertaken with some confident expectation of success. First is the advancement of Internet libraries of materials. As I mentioned above, the availability of such materials is already deconstructing traditional hierarchies in international scholarship, although electronic access to materials will certainly not address all of the problems. Those of us doing recovery work can contribute to online resources that diffuse materials more widely than traditional print media, and we can point friends, colleagues, and students to useful sites. Another positive step we might take is working toward many more collaborations between those with a measure of power and economic security and those in more marginalized circumstances: between senior and junior people, tenured and part-time individuals, faculty and graduate students, U.S. and international scholars. Such collaborations would provide more access to the resources of the academy and the publishing world, at least partially buffer any potentially negative consequences of "controversial" or "marginal" work, and enhance scholarship with a much-enlarged intellectual conversation. Another fundamental step that we need to take is interpreting humanistic work for the general public. Although "community outreach" has become a buzzword for many university administrators in the corporate university culture, I know from many years of personal experience in the Humanities Councils in New England and North Carolina, as well as from community service programming in England, that interpreting for a broader audience what we do and how and why we do it can help create a foundation of support that we will need more and more as public funding for research in the humanities shrinks and continues to be awarded principally to those with elite institutional affiliations. As so many have argued so persuasively in discussions of the academic labor crisis of recent years, we have to look outside the academy for models of community action (Nelson). [End Page 52]

A final (and in my mind, crucial) intervention in the process of recovery scholarship is to involve our students. Although our colleagues represent an important audience for our collections, the work we have done is unlikely to last if it fails to have wide circulation. Undergraduate students at a wide range of institutions can, and should, be involved in the research process and the intellectual work of criticism and canonization. When I rediscovered Lorenza Stevens Berbineau's European travel diaries, I hesitated to share them with my students, concerned that the lack of punctuation and irregular spelling would alienate them from this domestic servant's text and would encourage them to dismiss it as insufficiently literary. However, assignment it now at three very different institutions, I have to acknowledge that I shortened them: students, unlike some of our peers, can be astonishingly open to unconventional texts and innovative perspectives, and they can help us to formulate our ideas more carefully and—if we are concerned with the economic diversity that is so often neglected in academe—more accurately.

Recovery work, one might say, should be its own reward. For me, the most tangible rewards come in conversation with my students. Reading Fanny Fern, Catharine Maria Sedgwick, and Frances Harper, among others, my students this past semester reiterated the astonishment I so often encountered: "We haven't solved any of the problems that this writer raises!"; "Nothing much has changed since 1826!"; "I had no idea these women were so political and so subversive!" They were, as always, furious: "How can a writer like Harper or Wolfenstein just disappear?!"; "Why didn't anyone tell me about Lydia Maria Child before now?!" And they were passionate: "Lazarus speaks directly to my situation as an immigrant;" "Wells-Barnett is a model for me." Students at every level appreciate not only knowing the writers, but also learning about the economics and politics of canon formation, about such matters as the economics of publishing and the academic profession (permissions costs, for example, always shock them), and about the imbrication of these matters with intellectual freedom, access to ideas, and social critiques of American culture. Their energy, engagement, and insight are my best rewards. Perhaps, finally, I have provided readers with more "prose" and less "poetry" than they might have wished. But it's the prose that will continue to make the poetry possible.
Karen L. Kilcup - Anthologizing Matters: The Poetry and Prose of Recover...

http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.ups.edu/journals/symploke/v008/8.1kilcup.html

Notes

1. This remark concerns Rufus Griswold's groundbreaking anthology, *The Female Poets of America.* The "cliques" to which this reviewer refers were the affluent, educated, powerful men in the Northeast who determined what counted as "good." By "recovery work" in the title I mean scholarship that emphasizes restoring the writing of unknown writers, or the unfamiliar writing of more canonical authors, to critical view.

2. As Alan Golding explains in relation to poetry, early anthologists had a variety of aims, ranging from preservation and asserting a political agenda (in the late eighteenth century), to articulating the idea of a national literature and national identity (in the early to mid-nineteenth century), to providing inexpensive compilations that would help unify a diversifying United States. These goals overlapped at times, but each period had its own agenda, with inclusiveness being emphasized more (and sometimes apologetically) in the earlier period and excellence becoming a stronger value later. Nevertheless, merit was a theme in early assessments.

All evaluative and critical terms in my discussion, not just these three standards, should be understood by the reader as enclosed with quotation marks; I have supplied these marks where to omit them might be confusing.

3. See, for example, Herrnstein Smith, Lauter, and Sosnoski and Wiederhold. Timothy Morris provides a very helpful account of the history of literary value (Preface).

4. See also Janet Gray's collection of popular nineteenth-century American women poets.

5. It is important, as Robert K. Martin argues, not to colonialize the writers of American nations adjacent to the United States.

6. Of course, a number of anthologies, including the Heath, have already expanded the definition of the literary, but in my view they don't (and often can't, because of their publishers or because of space restrictions) go far enough.

7. Although my recovery work has concentrated on women writers, it also needs to be reiterated that many interesting nineteenth-century male writers need recovery and criticism. Clearly, not all writers deserve recovery, but we need a much larger conversation about the standards for such work and the economic forces surrounding it.

8. For example, Louis Renza's and Richard Brodhead's work on Jewett responds to these questions in very different ways.

9. "Profit" needs to be construed broadly, to include tenure, promotion, salary raises, internal and external grants, and status mobility.

10. Although I am sympathetic with Jay Fliegelman's list of desiderata for general American literature anthologies (which he establishes in response to the new [at that time, 1993] edition of the Heath), I wonder how or if his list would vary for students in different institutions and with different goals. I should clarify here that over the course of my career I have worked in institutions ranging from elite research universities to small colleges and regional state universities; hence, my observations about both students and institutions are informed by personal experience rather than speculation.

11. Ironically, these novels, as various sources in the last few years have emphasized, have to be short.

12. It may also occur because of the fractured structure of U.S. undergraduate education, where many students transfer from two-year to four-year schools, each of which often have different (and rarely coherent) requirements, either for the major or for general education.

13. Without this graduate student assistance, I could not have completed this project for many more years, and I was and am uncomfortable with the ways in which their labor is relatively unrewarded. One of my responses has been to use the results of the recovery projects to help provide my graduate students with their own research opportunities, as well as to engage in joint publications. The situation of graduate students in the economics of the profession has fortunately enjoyed renewed discussion in recent years (Nelson), and there is hope for amelioration of current exploitive conditions.

14. Prestigious institutions, while they demand originality and innovation, characteristically place boundaries on such originality and innovation, boundaries particularly salient in relation to recovery work. What "counts" for tenure and promotion at an elite institution, for example, will vary from that which counts at many regional state universities and colleges: in elite institutions, an anthology might be thought of as an interesting (and potentially profitable) sideline to the faculty member's "real" work of writing monographs--but if a faculty member "merely" compiled anthologies, what could be tolerated as a quirky side interest would become a failure of scholarship, even though compiling a truly innovative recovery anthology can demand more time and as much real critical thought as writing a monograph. As I note below, however, in the present job market, state universities are increasingly able to apply the same standards for publication.

15. For example: although, as Thomas Dublin, Benita Eisler, and Philip Foner remind us, many of the Lowell mill "girls" were from comfortable farming families and worked in the mills to earn money for a brother's or their own education, to obtain spending money for clothing, or for other reasons than subsistence, some were definitely dependent on the income for their survival. Nevertheless, the pages of *The Lowell Offering* tended to include genteel selections as much as self-consciously or explicitly class-based texts. For many individuals, membership in the middle class is something to aspire to and working class antecedents are to be minimized or erased. With these understandings in mind, we can then ask, is Lucy Larcom a working-class author? Harriet Jacobs? What counts, or should count, in the category?

16. For a discussion of Berbineau and of the difficulties of understanding class in the nineteenth century, see my "The Domestic Abroad."

17. It is worth observing that despite over $10,000 in institutional grants, my two anthologies cost thousands more to complete. Two colleagues paid $3000 for a single story in their recovery anthology, an investment that took many years to recoup.

18. The Heath has adopted this position, for example, with the inclusion of an excerpt from Caroline Lee Hentz' proslavery fiction. More of such problematic work needs to reappear in both pluralist and particularist collections.

19. Lauter has recently observed (Presentation) that to be successful, recovery work requires complementary teaching and criticism. I am abridging my discussion of criticism here substantially but would simply point out a few of the challenges that influence recovery work (and vice versa): the continuing absence of a comprehensive theoretical framework for the field (see Harris) and the inability to construct a "representative" or
even meaningful theory because of an inadequate overview of primary materials; the need for more complex views of sentimentalism and sentimentalism in male writers (see Bennett, *Ironizing Sentimentality* and "The Descent"; Camfield); the circularity of absence, described above, from the critical angle; the economic and professional penalties for recovery criticism; the gender segregation of critical discussions (see Warren and Dickie), and conventional genres. In relation to the last concern, a more specific illustration may be helpful: We need to account for the genre hybridity of much American writing, not just that written in the nineteenth century or by women (Kilcup, "Essays of Invention"; Heath). Although I appreciate Kenneth Warren's concern that anthologies, "even revisionist ones, reinscribe a rather traditional relationship of Literature to audience," requiring "trained cultural priests [who] initiate willing novices into the mysteries of the process of reading and understanding the sacred texts," (341) I believe that a critical perspective that regards, say, Thoreau's *Walden* and Emerson's "Self-Reliance," as well as Fanny Fern's newspaper columns, on a continuum with advice writing will go a long way to demystify the former, to dehierarchize the relationship between the professor/anthologist and the student/reader, and to make literary studies more immediate for students (see Banta).

References


McKay, Nelly. "Guest Column: Naming the Problem That Led to the Question 'Who Shall Teach African American Literature?: Or, Are We Ready to Disband the Wheatley Court?'" *PMLA* 113.3 (1998): 359-69.


