

**MODERN POETRY IN THE MAKING: A CRITICAL AND
PEDAGOGICAL STUDY OF ANTHOLOGIES**

A thesis submitted to the University of Hyderabad for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in the School of Humanities



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April 2004

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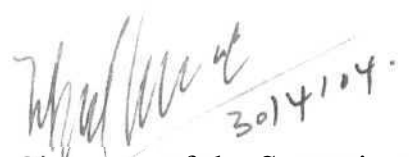
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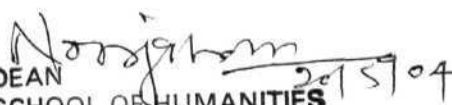
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Acknowledgements

It has been my great good fortune to work under the supervision of Professor K. Narayana Chandran. I can never hope to express adequately my sense of gratitude for the inspiration and kindness I have received from him over the last seven years. I also wish to thank Dr. Veenu Chandran and Hemant Chandran for their generous hospitality.

I wish to thank Professor Sudhakar Marathe and Professor Hoshang D. Merchant for being on my Doctoral Committee and encouraging me in my work.

I have had the privilege of receiving comments and advice on my proposal from Professor S. Viswanathan and Professor Rupin Walter Desai. I am indebted to them for their kindness. Professor Sumanyu Sathpathy read my proposal and some early drafts of a Chapter and made suggestions for which I thank him. Professor Earl Rovit, Professor Craig S. Abbott, Professor Stephen Carl Arch, and Dr. Jim Egan of the United States have also looked at the proposal and made suggestions for which I thank them. Professor D. Venkat Rao helped me by kindly bringing me material from the United States that was not available in India. I wish to express my obligations to Professor A.V. Ashok, Professor Susie Tharu, Professor V. D. Singh, and Professor K. V. Tirumalesh for reading my proposal. I thank Jayanth and Rajiv for their wonderful friendship. Professor Sriraman took a kind interest in my work.

In the Institute, Murali, Sathya and other friends from the Association have showered their generosity on me. And my students in were simply superb. My thanks are also due to Mr. Chandrakanth, Mr. Dayanand, Mr Lingaiah and Mr. Sadguna Rao.

I would also like to thank my colleagues in the Centre for Materials Production, especially Professor S. R. Prahlad and Professsor Paul Gunasekher. Anand has always been a gentle presence and his encouragement has been great. Professor G. Rajagopal, as the Chief Coordinator of the ITP programme has been unstinting in kindness and great as a colleague and friend. Sujatha's friendliness is always a joy. John encouraged me in his lovely voice and kindly read a part of my work and I gratefully and affectionately acknowledge his kindness.

My parents have always been a wonderful support and I thank them gratefully. My brother and sister stood by me as also did Pooja, Priyanka, and Rinku and Devender. I can only think of their patience with amazement and thankfulness. To Dr. T. V. Narayana, my gratitude for being a guiding figure.

There are many friends whose love and encouragement have helped sustain me. Theo, Usha, Shashi, Jai, and Sushi 1 prodded me on. Geeta was there through the "ups" and "downs." From Idola Fori I would like to thank Elango, Captain Anand, Nagesh, Dinakar Reddy and Siddharth, Maha and Srividya were always dependable to light the path with humour and affection, and were a solace in difficulties. Mr. David Maclean, Fulbright Scholar, brought with him affection, generosity, and material from the United

States. Ms. Tejaswini is always a source of joy. The Tennetis, Hyma, who is quite simply angelic, Malini and Mrs Satyavathi were great support.

To Dr. K. Mallesham, my classmate, and a great friend, I am quite simply indebted for introducing me to Professor K Narayana Chandran, my Supervisor. I also appreciate his kindness in sending me material from the States.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

... [W]hat we have loved,
Others will love; and we may teach them how ...

—William Wordsworth, *The Prelude XIII*

I

Debates in literary history have often questioned the role history ought to play in making literature what it is. That explains our recent discomfiture with literary histories that simply narrate the 'story' of literature in terms of authors, genres, and movements. Chronology is certainly helpful in a sequential narrative, but issues that are hotly debated are explanation and interpretation of literary facts and figures. In other words, almost everything literary historians seem to be doing goes against the representative presentations. "[Literary history] has an indispensable role in our experience of literature[,]" writes David Perkins, "and a broader social or cultural function as well. My own opinion is, then, that we cannot write literary history with intellectual conviction, but we must read it. The irony and paradox of this argument are themselves typical of our present moment in history" (Perkins 1992 17).

There is yet another aspect of literary history that Perkins has not seen adequately. Stories of literature ranged along the period-blocks of major literary events seldom give us a reliable record of reading habits and tastes, of those conditions and contexts of reception. Students of literature are increasingly showing interest in such phenomena because these may help them explain elusive concepts like "literariness" "good" and "bad" literature, and the conventions that govern literary discursivity. While a chronological account of books and authors is certainly valuable for a quick overview, the evolution of taste in a specific genre or popular narrative mode may in itself be a respectable subject for study.

It is pretty easy to give up on literary history by saying that if it is *literary* it is not history, and if it is *historical* it is not literary. For, we cannot deny that serious readers of literature find the exercise of organizing literary knowledge in historical terms immensely useful. This realization has prompted some recent theorists to reject a one-man approach to either history or literature. Theorists of literary history now seem to be ranged along two opposing blocks—the monologists like David Perkins, and the dialogists like the editors of the *Cambridge History of American Literature*. What interests us here, apart from the debates that illumine the notions of "literary" and "historical," is the new form literary history itself has been assuming beside its textual supplement, the anthology. For a long time, before Anglo-American anthologies became dime a dozen, serious students of literature consulted standard literary histories like Legouis and Cazamian, George Saintsbury, George Sampson, David Perkins and Leonard Compton-Rickett. These volumes not only chronicled the literary past, but also served a heavy repast of purple passages from the classics they chronicled. The point is that "standard" literary histories in some ways served as anthologies in miniature. Now, when the *Cambridge History of American Literature* and the *Literary History of the United States* adopt the anthological form for their essays, we are a little intrigued. Has the rise of the anthology signalled the fall of literary history? Is there no scope in future for a literary historical monologue? Or more germane to our discussion, will future accounts of literature be mediated through anthologies? This, indeed, is crucial to our understanding of the anthology as a subject of study. We are led to this question through a labyrinth of issues concerning the appropriate and justifiable methods of professing literature in an historical continuum. A recent and

memorable example of loud thinking on literary history's capitulation to anthologies goes like this:

To be sure, the heteroglossia produced by such juxtapositions raises all the more insistently the question of what, if anything, literary history is apart from criticism. The question is exacerbated by the degree to which codified or standard literary histories intersperse various kinds of summary: précis, biography, and recitation of public events. At worse, one experiences a collage of disparate strata, none of which seemingly gets at the reading experience itself, seemingly occluded by layers of schematic impressionism. Hybridization, that is, in the bad sense (Buell 218).

Two things that strike us about this candid description of the collaborative literary historical effort are: (1) Buell's refusal to name the anthology whose formal features have now begun to infect his new brand of literary history, which is no longer monologic, one-dimensional, or unilinear; and (2) his longing for a form that perfects the experience of reading, which is not reading *about* literature, but reading literature itself. Undoubtedly, the ideal vehicle that can render hybridization "good" by Buell's criterion is the anthology.

II

It is a curious fact of English historical thinking that neither criticism nor literary history has taken note of the anthology continuing the work of both criticism and literary history by other means. The history of the English anthology is yet to be written and its fortunes faithfully documented by literary historians. One likely reason for this anomaly is our neglect of the ontological status of the anthology itself. We may yet be undecided as to whether the anthology is a genre or an epistemological unit. In other words, we are free to view the anthology in terms of its form *or* type.

Another reason for our insufficient historical knowledge of the anthology is its virtual timelessness. For example, the first books of nationalist literatures are compendia or miscellanea. In the western tradition, folk narratives, epigrams, and other short verses make up the first books—*The Greek Anthology* and the Norselandic saga, the *Bible*, etc. The earliest texts in the eastern tradition are mostly folk-sayings, stories and poems, tales of adventure and romance, religious hymns, and verses collected in *Kośas* or *Bhandarams*, both meaning roughly, "collection" or materials to be preserved for future use or applications. It is not surprising that the ancient cultures of the east and west were in perfect agreement regarding the great value they attached to their heritage, for *The Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and Lyrics in the English Language* (1861) of Francis Turner Palgrave attests to this basic and valuable wisdom in what the anthology collected. The proud and tender office of collecting and preserving what otherwise might go unattended is reflected in the word "anthology" itself, derived from Greek *anthos*

(flower) and *logein* (to gather, pick up), "a collection of flowers in verse," choice poems, especially epigrams. The *2OED* cites 1856 as the first occurrence of "anthology" in the English sense of any literary collection.

There is a respectable tradition in western scholarship that considers the anthology as arguably the oldest literary genre. This is on the assumption that the Pentateuch, the first five books of the *Old Testament* (the first five Moses books), is a collection of different literary sources. It is a commonplace of biblical scholarship that most books of *The Bible* are essentially anthologies; the *Psalms* and the *Proverbs* are obvious cases. Other books, within and between themselves, betray anthological traits such as bringing together discrete, sometimes conflicting, retellings of stories or traditions. The stories/traditions are put side by side as if to show that they do not contradict, or are in conflict with one another.

Although the form of the anthology has been changing from age to age, generation to generation, the basic idea of the assemblage for public consumption has not quite changed. As a matter of fact, anthologies like the *Arabian Nights*, the *Kathasaritsagara* and the *Greek Anthology* continue to inspire our writers who return to them in search of frames and models with which to work. The point is that the anthology has been feasible, both as a genre and as an epistemological unit, allowing for a large variety of uses and applications. Furthermore, it is the spirit that infuses the anthological enterprise that guarantees its success, an idea so enviably encapsulated in Wordsworth's *Prelude*, ". . . what we have loved, /Others will love; and we may teach them how . . ."

(Wordsworth 446-47). This, indeed, recently has inspired the new Wordsworth Trust to put together an exhibition called English Poetry 850-1850, The First Thousand Years (June 22-October 11, 2000). The *Times Literary Supplement* report on this unique event only goes to show that an anthology is not necessarily a book, not even a collection of books, ordered and collected by a single person or a group, but may yet be the whole spirit of the age looking backward and drawing sustenance. For, as the *TLS* reporter observes, the exhibition "presents the major poets as read and reinterpreted by the Romantics" (Cherniak 34). The Wordsworth Trust exhibition of the Romantic poets' collections of personal copies, rare books, manuscripts, first editions, etc, ought to make us think of the anthological set theory. "It's astonishing," remarks the reporter, "to have this wealth of English poetry gathered in one room, in collections which changed the course of literary history" (Cherniak 34). It is much the same love's labour that has engendered a large family of anthological kinds in English such as the "miscellany," "garland," "collection/selection," (poetic/narrative sequences, cycles, "complete poems") "treasury," "extracts," "compilations," "choice," "Reader," (for classroom use) "album," etc.

III

The New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature, edited by George Watson et al., is by far the best bibliographical source we have for the study of anthologies. Regrettably, this multi-volume work has not undergone any revision in the

last twenty-five years. While its thoroughness regarding the collections of poetry from the sixteenth-century through the nineteenth is irreproachable, it offers just a "selective list" in its fourth volume devoted to twentieth-century poetry. The list, nevertheless, is serviceable in guiding the reader to anthologies otherwise unmentioned in specialist literary histories. Ezra Pound's *Profile: an anthology collected in MCMXXXI*, published in Milan, listed in the *New Cambridge Bibliography*, now a collector's item, is hardly ever remembered in standard literary histories of the Modernist period. The convenience of a period-wise listing of anthologies in the *New Cambridge Bibliography*, again, has not invited scholarly or historical work on specific anthologies of a given period, of the anthology as a literary artifact.

For the record, we shall quickly survey some landmark anthologies in the history of English poetry, drawing upon the basic details from Laura Riding and Robert Graves's *A Pamphlet Against Anthologies* (1927), the first work of its kind in problematizing anthological motives and methods. For supplementary details, however, one must consult the *New Cambridge Bibliography*. *A Pamphlet Against Anthologies* is not, however, and was not meant to be, a thoroughgoing historical work of literary scholarship. Riding and Graves were neither quite methodical nor meticulous in their survey.

The standard histories of literature, as distinct from the two works referred to above, mention Richard Tottel's *Miscellany* (1557) as the first of its kind. We are told that it carried 271 poems, all printed for the first time, "to honour the English tongue and for the profit of the studious of English eloquence." Tottel's popularity is reflected in

Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor* where Slender values his book more than forty shillings (*MWW* I. ii. 11. 179-180), and possibly yet another allusion to the anthology in the Gravedigger's song in *Hamlet* V. i. 11. 61-64). Tottel's *Miscellany* is still considered the standard treasury of the English lyric tradition, especially the works of Wyatt and Surrey. The other collections that followed Tottel's example include *The Mirrour for Magistrates* (1559); Richard Edwards's *The Paradise of Daynty Devises* (1576). Thomas Proctor's *A gorgeous Gallery of gallant Inventions . . . First Framed and fashioned in sundrie formes by divers worthy Workmen of late dayes, and now joyned together and builded up by T. P.* (1578); *England's Helicon* (1600); Francis and William Davison's *A Poetical Rhapsody* (1608) ; Robert Allot's *England's Parnassus* (1600); and Joshua Poole's *English Parnassus* (1657). Another curiosity is *Female poems on several occasions* (1682) which may well be the first exclusively women's anthology. Literally hundreds of anthologies, mostly of lyric, narrative, and epistolary poetry appeared throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a virtual mine for the students of socio-historical themes and practices of the period. Not only do these collections evidence a continuing preoccupation with set themes (courtship, chivalry, politics, wit) and practices (medicine, travel, pilgrimage, giving and taking of gifts, honouring the dead, and valiant), but also they seem to court, occasionally the most extraordinary or the oddest of human affairs. There are, for example, such titles as *Joyful cuckoldom: a collection of new songs* (1695) *A new year's gift for bachelors: containing two satyrs against women* (1707); *The je-ne-scai-qouy: containing poems on various subjects* (1734); *Post-Office intelligence, or universal gallantry: being a collection of love letters* (1736); any of which one would have longed to sample out of sheer curiosity, were they

readily available in some library. There are indications that the practice of annually harvesting the best of its genre began in the eighteenth century with William Collins's *The British Lyre: or the Muses' repository for the year 1793*. Women never seem to have lacked special attention since 1682. Nearly every third anthology devoted considerable space to the poetry by or on women, or on subjects that engaged a female readership. The success of eighteenth-century women-centred anthologies can be gauged by their sheer number. Among the obsequious anthologists is Oliver Goldsmith himself whose *Poems for young ladies* (1766) begot still more pandering collections such as G. Wright's *The Lady's miscellany or pleasing essays, poems, stories and examples*. Admittedly, many of these were ephemeral or they collected the ephemera. Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) in two volumes, however, was the first well-thumbed anthology in English, for its marked influence on the English Romantic lyric is well-known. Yet another significant collection of the same period was Oliver Goldsmith's *Beauties of English Poetry* in two volumes (1767). The reception of this anthology includes the censure it elicited on account of its inclusion of Matthew Prior's "indelicate" verses. We have little information about Goldsmith's 1766 collection entitled *Poems for Young Ladies*, probably a proto-feminist anthology which incidentally finds no mention under the entry "Anthologies" in *The Feminist Companion to Literature in English: Women Writers from the Middle Ages to the Present* (1990).

The latter half of the eighteenth century is noticeable for its brisk production of "melancholia" anthologies besides those of the usual Christmas carols and songs. Another striking detail of this period is the almost regular and annual appearance of

Freemasonry anthologies of anthems, odes, and songs. "Flowers" "wreaths" and "garlands" now seem to be replaced by the more general "beauties" of English poetry, a trend noticeable in Goldsmith's title of 1767, and in full flush in T. Janes's *Beauties of the English Poets* appearing serially in the years 1773, 1779, 1788, 1790, 1792, 1799, and 1800. Few among the scholars of Indian English/postcolonial literatures seem to have realised that the imperial arm that stretched to gather material resources was as busily engaged in gathering India's cultural resources. In 1785, 1786, and 1787 appeared the first ever anthology of the Indian subcontinent under the British aegis: *The Asiatick miscellany: consisting of original productions, translations, fugitive pieces* in three successive volumes from Calcutta.

Riding and Graves alert us to the first rumblings of a debate on the canon the English anthologies seemed to have generated in the 1790s. Booksellers from Edinburgh and London inadvertently started the debate culminating in Dr. Johnson's *The Works of the English Poets*, an anthology in 68 volumes (1779-81) which distended to 75 volumes by 1790. The point of the debate was simple: whether English poetry began with Geoffrey Chaucer or Abraham Cowley. As Riding and Graves point out, the problem of the canonical works of English poetry seemed to have settled for then with Chalmers's *The Works of the English Poets* (1810). "English literature was at last provided with a *Library* or *Corpus* of Poets," observe Riding and Graves, adding that despite its apparent flab, "it was a *Corpus*, the best that the booksellers could command" (Riding and Graves 1928 32).

The Chalmers anthology was not only the first to foresee the compulsions of making an anthology remake literary history. For, Chalmers not only engorged Johnson's seventy-odd volumes in his twenty-one, but added several earlier poets ignored by Johnson. Further to Chalmers is attributed the great public interest of collecting and preserving the English lyric tradition. Not unrelated to this interest, as Riding and Graves remark, is the practice of keeping private albums of poems as a hobby. Chalmers at least was the forerunner of Francis James Child whose pioneering anthology *English and Scottish Ballads* (1857-59) and *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1882-89) remain, by far, the richest resources of English folk poetry.

IV

The "golden" moment of the English anthology, however, arrived with Francis Turner Palgrave (1824-1897). A friend of Tennyson's, a man of considerable enterprise well known for his art criticism, and an educator, Palgrave fancied what he called "a true national anthology" of English poetry spanning three centuries. Large, and sometimes justified, claims have been made of the influence of *The Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and Lyrical Poems in the English Language* (1861) on poetry in general and on Modernist poetics in particular. Granting that the latter is at best arguable, and at worst provocative, Palgrave is either fondly remembered, or remembered and forgiven by the English poets of twentieth century. *The Golden Treasury's* record in terms of copies and editions and of the reaches of its reputation, however, has not yet been beaten by any

comparable British or American anthology or scores of others it spawned for well over a hundred years since its first appearance. Of the many ideas *The Golden Treasury* marshalled alongside what it anthologised were those of the lyric, genius, beauty, poetic thought, feeling, situation, form, the English countryside, home, love, region, country and nation. The ideological imperatives of *The Golden Treasury* are much too familiar to merit another account here, but we shall not forget that until the Oxford Books or Michael Roberts's *The Faber Book of Modern Verse* (1936) reached India, English poetry was virtually synonymous with Palgrave for most of our readers. The pride of mid-Victorian sensibility and world-view which dots the pages of *The Golden Treasury* was meant to be relayed far and wide. "[W]herever the Poets of England are honoured, wherever the dominant language of the world is spoken," concludes Palgrave's Preface, "it is hoped that they will find a fit audience" (Palgrave xii). Palgrave's "they" is cleverly ambiguous; it is both Poetry's "true accents" and "the Poets of England" (Palgrave xii). And they indeed were heard even in far away India. Sir Alexander Grant, for example, wrote to Palgrave from Bombay how "immense[ly] comfort[ing]" the anthology had been for him personally, and about his proposal to use it as a textbook for Indian students (quoted in Clausen 276). Grant was thinking essentially within a colonialist Enlightenment paradigm: "English poetry is to these people what Homer is to us" (quoted in Clausen 276). Grant's was not after all a vain thought; poetry in Indian languages became "modern" only in the 50's or early 60's thanks to the monopoly of Palgrave and his ideas of poetry which our regional poets seemed to like and translate despite their genuine and strong nationalist feelings. The name and nature of poetry in Palgrave's definition was, therefore a grand "national" gesture with no less a person than Alfred

Lord Tennyson, the Poet-Laureate of England, overseeing and endorsing the project at every stage.

Not everyone practising poetry, even those who cared for "tradition," conceded Palgrave's authority. Ezra Pound, for example, was not particularly objecting to Palgrave's definition of the "nation" when he said, "It is time to replace the doddard Palgrave" (Pound 1924 18). As a matter of fact, Pound himself, albeit an uprooted American who found himself in transit through the twenties and thirties in England and other places, thought of the "nation." His point of reference was the National Gallery. If, argued Pound, one went to the National Gallery in London for the history of painting, one might safely gather enough history of literature from a "twelve volume anthology in which each poem was chosen not merely because it was a nice poem or a poem Aunt Hepsy liked, but because it contained a definite contribution to the art of verbal expression" (Pound 1924 17). The politics and economics of this dream-anthology have been engagingly detailed in Frank Lentricchia's "Lyric in the Culture of Capital." The point is that even the then energetic and diehard Ezra Pound found it impossible to desecrate Palgrave's national monument. Not only did the Macmillan Company not commission Pound's anthology, but went on making profit from its judicious investment in Palgrave. It is an open question whether Palgrave's "Collection proves a storehouse of delight to Labour and to Poverty," (Palgrave vii) as stated in the anthologist's dedication. For, anyone familiar with Henry Mayhew's *London Labour and London Poor* (4 vols., 1851-62) will be surprised by Palgrave's solemn hope that his selection will be accessible to the victims of an arrant capitalist system. "The major

economic enemy of Palgrave's anthology," as Lentricchia observes shrewdly, ". . . is therefore change, not economic change but change of the cultural sort," for which poets like Pound and Eliot had been working overtime. The poetry of "high Modernism" as we have come to call it in retrospect, was not yet born when Palgrave held sway. From 1912 onwards, marking the founding of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* by Harriet Monroe as the official beginning of Modernist verse, Eliot, Pound and their writer-friends had been vigorously at work trying to rewrite nearly every word or phrase Palgrave treasured in his collection. This they did by reviewing contemporary anthologies by fellow poets, by inveighing against the Georgians and the Edwardians, and by joining hands with editors of, and writers for, little magazines. In his widely quoted "A Retrospect, 1918," Ezra Pound cites an instance of a Turkish war correspondent filching from some anthology like Palgrave's in his official despatches. He seemed to believe that Palgrave was responsible for retailing the frills and filigree of English poetry. Pound's, of course, was not simply a disgruntled reaction to the personal success of a man called Palgrave. "[W]ith all respect to its achievements, I think we shall look back upon [the nineteenth-century] as a rather blurry, messy, sort of a period, a rather sentimentalistic, mannerish sort of period. I say this without any self-righteousness, with no self-satisfaction" (Pound 1924 18).

We ought to trust Pound's words considering his untiring efforts through the first three decades of the twentieth century "to resuscitate the dead art/Of poetry" (*Hugh Selwyn Mauberly* E.P. Ode Pour L'Election de son Sepulchre). Crucial to these efforts was the anthology's galvanizing force which brought together radical voices and styles,

attitudes and animadversions within the pages of a single volume, be it an official anthology, the number of a periodical, series, or a pamphlet.

V

We began by referring to the debates on literary history, especially the role history ought to play *in making literature what it is*. Serious writers and a theoretically informed public have often questioned the notion that a whole age could be characterized in terms of a *Zeitgeist*, and then, one could look for the "spirit" in the literature of that period. In other words, it is rather naive to suppose that historical events can be accurately described in order to project a particular *zeitgeist* or "period-consciousness" on to literary texts that we read. Could it not be, we wonder, the other way too? In which case, we might ask what history of the texts that we read, the ways we read them, the circumstances of their production and distribution, and the whole gamut of circumtextualities that attend our reading, could be written? "Reading has a history. It was not always and everywhere the same," observes Robert Darnton in his influential "First Steps Towards a History of Reading" (Darnton in Bennet Ed. 7). Darnton's steps, however, are not easy to climb, especially because the evidence he asks us to collect and produce is not available. Readers do not leave much by way of evidence of their having read all the books they have read. "I no more remember the books I have read than the meals I have eaten," Emerson admits, although he realizes that "they have made me." Library records and registers are ill kept, and ideals and assumptions that govern

literacy vanish with the passing of every generation. Readers and the practice of reading texts make for a very interesting topic, but as many objections to their sampling, and the available recorded evidence on which to base it, may be raised as the synchronic and diachronic criteria we adopt, the historical period and the overall verifiability of all facts and figures we present. In any case, *how* people read, to what end or benefit, cannot be easily engaged at a speculative level. Reviews, book-notices, discussions of books in popular columns, and the learned articles and essays in academic journals disqualify themselves chiefly because of their value as meagre, exclusively selected samples. If literary history has not become, at least notionally, a history of reading, it is primarily because literary theory and historical scholarship have not worked on an agreement on such a crucial subject as the "interpretive community," the large constituencies of readers they have been looking at respectively and differently.

This study, however, assumes that the anthology, since the advent of Anglo-American Modernism, has been a site quite hospitable to the pursuit of literary history *and* a somewhat ambitious history of reading. The anthological enterprise of early Modernists, however, had seldom been overtly literary-historical or particularly attentive to personal or collective reading histories. In "making it new," an editor like Ezra Pound assumed that the break he was making with the tradition would be evident by his "exhibits" and the readers of his anthology would contribute to the new history of reading if the poems were well received by them. But the anthologist must help. "The proportion between discussion and the exhibits the discussor dares show his reader is possibly a good and probably a necessary, test of his purpose. In a matter of degree I am for say 80

per cent exhibit and 20 per cent yatter," says Ezra Pound in his Introduction to his *Active Anthology* of 1933 (Cookson 396). The Modernist anthologist, in any case, was never in doubt regarding the interpretive community he/she either addressed or helped form over successive decades. The Modernist sense of literary history, in other words, assumed that unless readers could see themselves their forbears and successors as forming a reading continuum, as a family of reading relations, there was little point in writing literary history. This sense of literary history, or the absence of it, was of course radically different from the senses of narrative literary historians and historical scholars who are given to treating their readers differently, from the outside, as "interpretive communities" or minor constituencies with limited interests and set tasks. In short, the Modernist anthologies helped bring forth a radical reader, a reader who discovered in the anthology a contested site where a meta-narrative sought to engage its personal ally and assailant in the texts it collected. Literary history and private reading met on even terms for the first time in anthologies that showcased traditions and talents, form and reform, conventions and innovations. The Modernist poetic liberalized reading relations to such an extent that the poet and the reader of poetry were at least assumed to show much the same concern for the condition of poetry, its writing and reading. Ezra Pound's "Serious Artist" and *ABC of Reading* were written as much for poets as for a growing number of educated readers interested in contemporary arts like music, poetry, and painting.

That the emergence of poetry anthologies and manifestos is a major event in the history of Anglo-American Modernism goes to show how that part of literary history has been shaped by small, but significant, episodes of private reading and public reception of

Modernist texts and controversies. No matter what historical events helped shape a *zeitgeist*, these anthologies seemed to report a *Zeitgeist* of their own, determined and demonstrated by the reading relations they so fostered. It is, again, no small historical detail that the progenitors of Anglo-American Modernism (W. B. Yeats, Ezra Pound, Richard Aldington, Wyndham Lewis, T. S. Eliot, Amy Lowell et al.) were both themselves editors of anthologies, and of little magazines which were virtually anthological in scope and intent. For, it may have seemed so natural to them to compile in a form in which they composed. The Modernist writing, described most aptly by Joseph Frank as "spatial form," preferred the nonlinear, associative, and even the disjunctive methods for writing, referring, reporting, and reading. As Frank tells us in his famous essay, even fiction followed the characteristic form of Modernist poetry which spatially interwove images and phrases "independently of any time sequence of the narrative action" (Frank 16). The point about this style of Modernist composition is that it certainly encouraged a sort of "difficult" reading, often disparaged by critics like Richard Poirier, but it eased the complexity of negotiating a large number disparate texts, often existing in inter-generic or intertextual relationships, in an anthology. Put differently, the Modernist editors found in the anthology an answering form, a form best suited to their pursuit of a chronology-by-the-ear, a chronology-by-affinity; their urge to engage texts directly, or to read serendipitously around a book rather than directly through it. This also reflected their distrust of history and the truth-telling novel in which everything cohered because one thing necessarily led to the other. It would seem that in linear sequences things happen because someone asks, "What happened next?" The Modernist project was to put in question all certainties of historical time, events, and their relationships because such

certainities, they believed, seemed false to the epistemology of their own work and others' work they valued. They collected, therefore, texts that neglected linearity or specific locations, texts that reflected or represented themselves as "process" or "procession" neither of which moved quietly towards an anticipated climax or completion. The Modernist anthology, in sum, was a method and a manifesto, both exemplified, mirror-wise, in such unanthologizable sequences as *Hugh Selwyn Mauberly* (1921), *The Waste Land* (1922), and *Spring and All* (1923). All these "collections" are no doubt informed by respective authorial visions and therefore resist the force of a gathering hand. But all these, or their parts/segments thereof, have been regularly anthologized with varying degrees of success. In short, both Modernist poets and the poets of a later period can hardly be historicized apart from their respective histories of publishing anthologies and manifestos. While the main focus of this study will rest on the preeminent role of the anthology as the maker and marker of taste and style, it will, in stages, trace the relevant histories of Anglo-American poetry anthologies generally, their impact on readership, and more particularly, their impact on cultural literacy, the classroom, and the canon.

A comprehensive history of reading, however, is rather too ambitious a task for anyone scrutinizing only a set of anthologies, but such a selected set alone may nevertheless carry a goodly mix of evidence suggesting current tastes; levels of appreciation; assumptions regarding the class and the canon; desirable suggestions for, and guidance in, appreciating the texts collected therein, etc. Classroom anthologies of poetry, as different from trade-/movement-anthologies that carry little or no annotations, yield richer evidence of theoretical and historical scholarship that has guided their

selection and deployment of the materials so collected. This study, therefore, has shown a bias towards professedly pedagogical anthologies.

There is yet another reason for privileging the teaching anthologies here. In his *Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) Michel de Certeau observes how the book, during the Enlightenment, was viewed as an elite instrument for reformation and edification, and how the user of a book was a passive consumer and beneficiary. Needless to say, the Enlightenment book was *the* text; its user, presumably, was a single person; and the use, for all intents and purposes, passive. De Certeau asks us to question these assumptions. The text, he says, is now *all society*, and unless the users find the text as theirs also, and unless they are creative in harnessing it in revolutionary ways, they play no useful role as readers in history, or can write their own texts. The anthology is a great advance in post-Enlightenment thinking, given the potentially large and diverse readers it addresses and the radical and dialogical reading it affords them. Authorless, and not necessarily and uniformly marked with dates on all items, the anthology, unlike the single author book, is not a typical pedagogical tool of the Enlightenment ideology. If anything, it is a "public" book. It presupposes a collectivity, its own, and its readers'. The anthology militates against the notion of a *private* reader or reading. Collected and shared, it invites further collection and sharing. Both by its form and address, the anthology is plurivocal and dialogic in the texts that it presents, further exemplified by many Modernist anthologies of the twenties and the thirties. As a matter of fact, the Modernist anthology first signalled the "death of the author" and released the "author-function" long before the essays of Roland Barthes, and Michel Foucault. The revolutionary uses to which we

might put the anthology form a part of later chapters where I discuss, among other things, the classroom *in* the anthology and the anthology *in* the classroom. We may be the poorer for not recognizing the irony of such a revolutionary instrument being transformed by pedagogic exigencies of New Criticism into set and prescribed textbooks for classes and tests in our universities.

The anthology of the twenties and the thirties in a way marked the end of innocence for the serious student of poetry. If it was impossible for anyone to believe that an anthology "treasured" the best poems of an era, it became increasingly difficult to conceive of an anthology that did not grind its ideological axe noisily. Allan Golding's "A History of Poetry Anthologies" (Golding 3-40) noticed the canon-forming tendencies of American anthologies. That, however, is part of the story. What Golding neglects to tell us is the group-forming tendencies of the poets who anthologized themselves, their friends and enemies. For, most Modernist anthologies somehow leave the impression that the *raison d'etre* of the anthology was the promulgation of an artistic idea, or the call to arms for a new poetic revolt. Raymond Williams does not specifically mention the anthology in his "Modernism and the Metropolis" (*The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists* (1989) but he observes that photography, cinema, radio, television, and reprographic processes pushed the artist initially to "defensive cultural groupings" which in turn paved the way for "competitive . . . self promoting" gambits. The 1890s were the earliest moment of the movements, the moment at which the manifesto (in the new magazine) became the badge of self-conscious and self-advertising schools. Futurists, Imagists, Surrealists, Cubists, Vorticists, Formalists, and Constructivists all

variously announced their arrival with a passionate and scornful vision of the new, and as quickly became fissiparous, friendships breaking across the heresies required in order to prevent innovations becoming fixed as orthodoxies" (Williams in Walder 168-169). Sadly, the innovators do end up becoming "masters," their innovations labelled and branded by successive anthologies as "elitist" and "reactionary" depending on the currently fashionable ideology of reform and reception. To which, again, Williams was not impervious when he remarked rather wryly, later in the same essay: "Modernism being the terminus, everything afterwards is counted out of development. It is *after*; stuck in the post" (Williams in Walder, 170). And long before the struggles for *posting* Modernism began in earnest, and at a time when no one quite knew where to stand and wait for the Road Not Taken, Robert Lowell fancied that at least two rival camps, with no recognizable names attached to them, existed:

Two poetries are now competing, a cooked and a raw. The cooked, marvellously expert, often seems laboriously concocted to be tasted and digested by a graduate seminar. The raw, huge, blood-dripping gobbets of unseasoned experience are dished up for midnight listeners. There is poetry that can be declaimed, a poetry of pedantry and a poetry of scandal.
(Quoted in Rasula 233)

Lowell's may not have been an accurate description either of the neat divisions of poetry or the many schools born of them in the United States. One may even suspect that the author of *Life Studies* was demurring at the naiveté of anthologizing his "Skunk

Hour" unimaginatively, riven from the autobiographical poems of that collection. As Golding has observed, there were indeed two anthologies serving "raw" and "cooked" poetry at that time—*New American Poetry* edited by Donald Allen (1960), and *New Poets of England and America* edited by Donald Hall, Robert Pack, and Louis Simpson (1957) respectively. "Raw" or "cooked," however, is not as interesting to us as the respective manifestos and the camp-rebellions that informed them. Through the last decades of the twentieth century, the "Postmodern," a catchall adjective and an elitist description applied to practically all poets and practices that emerged after the Second World War, has been composing its self-reflexive histories of progress through anthologies. We shall consider just two of them here, briefly, if only to comment on their different perceptions of the very ground they claim to share, viz. "Postmodernism." *The Postmoderns: The New American Poetry Revised*, edited by Donald Allen and George F. Butterick and the Norton *Postmodern American Poetry* edited by Paul Hoover appearing a dozen years within each other, and collecting mostly the same leading American poets of the post Eliot/Pound generation, agree that "Postmodernism" is neither definitive nor necessarily post-Eliot/post-Pound. If that does not help readers who want to know what exactly "Postmodern" means when applied to the poetry collected in these two anthologies, there can be little doubt that the poetic programmes, or promulgations of their poetic so stridently canvassed in their respective introductions, align them so unmistakably with the classic Modernist anthologies of the first decades of the twentieth century. In marking their anxiety of influence, the Postmodernist anthologies seem to betray their anxiety *to* influence readers, brought up, much like their editors, on Modernist anthologies of prose and verse. For, given that Hoover collects twenty-eight of

the thirty-eight poets in Allen and Butterick, in addition to seventy-nine mostly hitherto unrepresented poets, what earth-shaking claim for Postmodern poetry could Hoover make? None, apparently, apart from his authorization of an oppositional Postmodernist poetic decrying "the centrist values of unity, significance, linearity, expressiveness, and a heightened, even heroic portrayal of the bourgeois self and its concerns" (Hoover xxvii). But, we may be justified in wondering, wasn't that exactly what Yeats, Eliot, Pound, Williams and Auden seemed to be justified in doing from 1917 through the 1950s? The radicalism of early Modernist manifestos is remembered and forgotten, rather perfunctorily, by Paul Hoover whose Norton Anthology Introduction cannot but respect its customary clientele, the English majors the world over. Such Modernist continuities and connections become more visible and pronounced when we examine sets of anthologies in their historical and pedagogical contexts.

VI

The sustained efforts of literary historians to label and classify the poetry of the twentieth century under such rubrics as "modern" and "postmodern" invites us to reexamine the work of the time to confirm or deny the validity of these claims. At a time when the authenticity or reliability or even the possibility of literary history is under question, it is inevitable that we turn to the original texts and documents to know what really happened. This is where the anthology and the little magazine, itself an anthological form, offer an alternative and comprehensive account of the events. The anthology and the magazine, this thesis claims, give readers an inside view of modern

poetry in the making; that they allow the makers of this poetry to speak for themselves, facilitating a new, unique and a more authentic version of the story. The interface between authors on the one hand, and readers, publishers, editors and critics on the other, as evidenced in letters, for example, tends to be mediated through these anthologies and magazines which are veritable storehouses of history.

Chapter II examines the role of little magazines which were the first to arrive on the literary scene and were the natural allies of the new poets in their war against ingrained taste and entrenched interests. Free from the commercial compulsions of publishers and editors of trade anthologies, they afforded these poets the chance to print what they chose. But before they could do so, they felt a need to hone their work with the help of fellow-writers, and this was made possible through a series of initiatives and enterprises that included reviews, rewards and honours, prizes, and letters. In this Chapter I study the conception and launching of these initiatives, and describe their impact on the writers and their work. Its main premise is that the endeavour to collect the "best" has inevitably led to the magazine, which is an anthology by other means. The Chapter attempts, therefore, to describe the pivotal role the little magazine played in the making of Modernism. Some significant little magazines studied here are *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, *The Little Review*, and *The Exile*. A few initiatives like the letters and reviews that poets sometimes wrote to and for each other are examined closely along with manifestos published at various times, as also the role of literary prizes in inspiring and supporting writers.

The magazine was sometimes simultaneously published with the anthology, which was, however, more usually to be found in the wake of the former, completing its work by further selection of the "best" often selected from the magazines themselves. But given the fugitive nature of these magazines, it was the anthology which had a longer life. Chapter III has, therefore, focused on the role of the anthology as an expression and culmination of the group-forming tendencies some Modernist writers often displayed. The polemics and the planning that these initiatives involved are explored. The anthologists again, were committed to their own audiences, beliefs and poetics that influenced their selections, making the anthology the rallying point for such diverse and contentious issues as nationalism and the academic curriculum.

The establishment and acceptance of Modernism a few decades after it began was marked by two anthologies, W.B. Yeats's *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, and Michael Roberts's *The Faber Book of Modern Verse*, both published in 1936. These anthologies anticipated the "anthology wars" of the late fifties that raged until the early seventies of the last century. The two anthologies have been at the centre of debates involving the making of the canon, as the exclusion of the War poets from Yeats's anthology shows. Chapter IV compares and contrasts them by examining their poetics and selections. These collections have continued to influence literary historians and readers in the classroom, and their long Introductions and selections reveal their anxiety to influence the classroom, and herein lies their significance.

Chapter V is dedicated to the pedagogical anthologies beginning with Cleanth

Brooks and Robert Penn Warren's *Understanding Poetry*, an anthology that had a considerable influence on not only students, but also on some poets themselves who felt compelled to write for the clientele, the students it was supposed to serve. The response *Understanding Poetry* drew from the academy and the poets and rival anthologists is the subject of this Chapter. This pioneer of pedagogical anthologies has inspired a large number of other collections that continued its work, such as the *New Poets of England and America* (1957 and 1962) and *Contemporary American Poets* (1962 and 1972). An examination of these and their rival, the *New American Poetry* (1960), in their contrastive styles helps us understand the struggle for the classroom between different poetics. There will also be a close examination of an attempt to revise the canon by the inclusion of poets hitherto neglected or forgotten. This is Cary Nelson's *Repression and Recovery: Modern American Poetry and the Politics of Cultural Memory 1910-1940*.

Nelson's book attempts nothing less than the resuscitation of a literary history of the forgotten and the politically committed whose literary achievement was buried under a leftist propaganda or struggle for rights as in the case of women and minorities, which relegated their poetry to a secondary, not to say incidental, role in their struggle to achieve their aims. The self-promoting agendas that the near monopolization of the press facilitated for the mainstream writers did not help matters. Put differently, Nelson is as much an expansionist of the canon as a revisionist. Finding in the forgotten poets the very programmes, literary techniques, and strategies that the Modernists deployed, Nelson draws into sharp focus the injustice these writers suffer in a canon that seems very hard to revise.

In the Conclusion, I have briefly surveyed my findings in my modest attempt, and have tried to indicate the possible directions that future studies may take in exploring the anthology and its growing importance as preserver and transmitter, and within and outside the classroom.

CHAPTER II

LOADING THE MAGAZINE: THE FIRST SALVOS OF MODERNISM

Poetry magazines were breaking out everywhere. Prizes were blossoming in every bush; anthologies were thicker than office-seekers in Washington or Webster's Unabridged Dictionary. It was the time of manifestos, movements, departures, schools. The Cubists, Futurists, Imagists, Impressionists, Vorticists had all taken a hand in rejuvenating the sad and perplexed Muse.

—Louis Untermeyer, *New Era*

I

Retrospective histories sometimes make us believe that Anglo-American Modernist poetry was a uniform, homegrown, homogenous movement, organized along set principles and methods. The single fact of its history is that it was a *series* of efforts, divergent initiatives, trials and negotiations involving a large number of artists, races, aesthetic beliefs, political ideologies and cultural assumptions converging from time to time in locales so widely apart as Paris, New York, London and Boston, and a large variety of English anthologies and little magazines. As a matter of fact, when we look at the anthologies and the little magazines themselves of the early years of what came to be called "Modernism," it is pretty difficult to distinguish the two. The anthology and the magazine often looked and read alike. The two together present "Modernism" before us showcasing important aspects of the movement through their "exhibits."

The narrative literary history, by its very nature, is committed to the limited range and perspective that its author chooses before hand, and can thus give but a partial and subjective view of the age. For example, explaining the scope of his *Crisis in English Poetry 1880-1940* (1951), Vivian de Sola Pinto remarks that the book is not "a general history of English poetry in the period specified on the title page. It is designed solely as a study of the crisis in English poetry during those years and of modern England" (de Sola Pinto 7). The efforts of the writers of the twenties, for instance, to internationalize literature, to canvass each other's works, to avoid all that was associated with what they

perceived as the more degenerate forms of Victorianism, efforts without which the "Modernist" movement cannot be understood, are often ignored. Instead, the narrative shows the history of the period as fitting certain preconceived rubrics drawn along politico-social lines such as the Edwardian and Georgian ages. Such prefabricated structures compel the literary historian to present a piecemeal view of history in which D. H. Lawrence, who may be regarded as a Georgian as well as an Imagist poet because he appeared in the anthologies of the two groups, is considered apart from both. The point is that the two anthologies, each sharply different and even somewhat antithetical, together show the variety, complexity, and contradictions within "Modernism" more clearly than any chronological account of literature can. What is more, the consideration of psycho-sociological changes, such as the dissociation of sensibility, that are believed to have occurred in English history in the post-Dryden years, constrains literary history to digress into the areas that properly belong to history and sociology.

If an arbitrarily limited range is not very helpful, the need of the literary historian to tell a story constrains him/her to force or flatten heterogeneous movements into one monolithic block, a violence that is bound to distort them. Authors, whose only common character is an uncompromising individuality, are thrust into a faceless group. Often wary of schools and groups, they came together more often to slay the dragons they hated rather than to write poetry to a programme. Harriet Monroe, the founder-editor of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, for example, had to use all her persuasive skills to get Louis Zukofsky to form a group. In her view, this was the only way he could draw public notice to himself, and to ensure his survival as an author, which he did reluctantly, and with

much misgiving. Therefore, when Stephen Spender, in his *The Struggle of the Modern* (1963), categorizes the authors of the twentieth century as "contemporaries" and "moderns," "recognizers" and "non-recognizers," (Spender x) depending on the writers' responses to science as expressed in their work, it is at a very real and grave risk of ignoring significant individual differences among them. Often the writers themselves changed their views, making the situation even more complicated. Some poets, like Richard Aldington, to take one instance, who subscribed to Imagism for a while, might leave the movement to strike out on their own and, the author of what is arguably the most important document of the "Modernist" movement, *The Waste Land*, might put the poem down to a merely personal grouse against the world (Valerie Eliot 1971 : 1), which in effect is a *reductio ad absurdum* of Spender's categorization.

Again, the very closeness of the "Modernist" movement to our time presents peculiar problems relating to the canon or scant is attention paid to the authors, and this constrains most writers to record the history of literature rather non-committally and tentatively, weakening, if not undercutting, their own *raison d'etre*. Boris Ford, in his "General Introduction" to *A Guide To English Literature: The Modern Age* (1961), notes that earlier ages could be recorded in their relevance to the present, but a literary historian who writes a guide to the literature of the twentieth century is embarking on something like an adventure, and would have to plan it "in an unusually critical and exploratory spirit" (Ford 7). He continues, "... the major writers are still very much a part of our time and yet they are sufficiently in the past for it to have become fashionable to find some of them unfashionable; and at the same time, the profusion of lesser writers have a

certain inescapable currency that makes it very hard ... to disregard them altogether" (Ford 7-8). Over such accounts, the little magazines and anthologies that collected these writers help us to step back a little further for a more complete view. G. S. Fraser, in *The Modern Writer and His World* (1961), is conscious of the same problems as Ford is: "This book expresses my own personal judgments, but they are all judgments I think still open to discussion and reversal" (Fraser 1). The only escape from this revolving-door-view of history is to read for ourselves some contemporary documents such as letters, reviews, pamphlets, broadsides, little magazines, manifestos and, preëminently the anthologies, in which the poems most groups initially published found their place, and sometimes permanent stay.

While the anthology was certainly the most conscious and determined initiative of this phase of literary history, we shall now look at other significant initiatives as well, beginning with the little magazine. Often the little magazine and the anthology were at the heart of the collaborations, competitions and conflicts among poets. Almost exclusively, the magazines and the anthologies were the only means by which the writers could reach their readers. This explains the centrality of the two modes of publication in the making of 'Modernism', and the attempts of the writers to gain or retain control of these organs. In other words, the anthology and the magazine were two sources of literary history in real time, and sometimes they were so important as to even mark it for them. Ezra Pound, for example, recognises the dawn of the "new" poetry in 1908, which for him was an "early distinguished date" (Pound 4 1928 104) because *The English Review*, edited by Ford Madox Hueffer, carried at this time some of the best contemporary writers

such as Anatole France, Henry James, Thomas Hardy and himself among others (Pound 1928 b 104), and also discovered D. H. Lawrence. Again, writing to Michael Roberts in July 1937, Pound advised him to read the editions of this little magazine in its first two years. "Until you have done that, you will be prey to superstition. You won't know what *was*, and you will consider that Hulme or *any* of the chaps of my generation invented the moon and preceded Galileo's use of the telescope" (Paige 296; Pound's emphases). This confession-like statement is a revelation of the power play and personal involvement of the writers themselves with literary history, and their anxiety to influence and cast it in their own image. It also establishes the little magazine as one of the important sites on which a Modernist literary history might find a source that is comprehensive, and also confers on it an authenticity that is unique. Moreover, the better sort of little magazines were usually impartial in the face of some of the most noisy polemics and propaganda of self-promoting groups. Most of the canonical texts of the movement that came to be called "Modernist" first made their appearance in journals similar to the *English Review* and later, in collections and anthologies that may be later gathered by a host of professional editors. This Chapter will study select initiatives from their conception to launching, and trace how the "new" poetry came to be written and published. These include, apart from little magazines such as *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, *The Little Review*, and *The Exile*, letters and prizes which were offered by a variety of sources like individuals and foundations. I shall argue that an examination of these documents can afford us a better understanding of the dynamics of Modernism in the making. I shall also attempt a close study of the letters of a few poets like Ezra Pound primarily for their role in editing poems and advising fellow poets towards developing a new poetic. The

magazines and anthologies were usually the products, some of a permanent nature, of carefully elaborated manifestos, and were the records of plans and proposals that were very often outlined and even detailed for the first time in these epistolary campaigns. The little magazine, especially, was an inventory of sorts by which the writers could take stock of those works that would go into the anthologies and literary history while exploring public responses to their work. Often little magazines aimed to gather the "best" flowers of the age, though a poet like Pound would be more into "harvesting" (Paige 126). It is worth emphasizing again that most of these initiatives were initially conceived and developed through correspondence between poets themselves, or between poets and editors of some little magazines.

The circumstantial or contingent nature of the letter should not blind us to its urgent literary concerns and qualities, for, even as it embodies the personality of the writer, it is sometimes informed with considerable artistic merit. For example, quoting a letter from William Vaughn Moody, Margaret Anderson places it in the American tradition for its style and raciness (Anderson I. 1 Mar. 1914 : 24-25). She admires in it "Moody's remarkable gift of metaphor, his constant striving to 'win for language some new swiftness, some rare compression,' his belief in the positive acceptance of life, his paganism, 'deeply spiritual, and as far as possible removed from the sensualism the thoughtless have found in it'" (Anderson Mar. 1914 : 25). In other words, the Moody letter is an anticipation of some of the most important qualities we associate with "Modernism," such as the sincerity in expression and commitment to language that distinguished the writers. Anderson justifiably concludes, "Certainly with two such

authentic voices to boast of as [Walt] Whitman's and Moody's, this young country of ours has reason to be proud" (Anderson Mar. I. 1 1914 : 25). Clearly, the letter lies at the heart of the American identity, the assertion of which is a governing, not say obsessive, theme in Anglo-American literature of the twentieth century. Further, in its anticipation of the "Modernists" and their ideas, this letter deserves some attention.

It is not Anderson's purpose to analyse Moody's letter closely, but we may discover in it the signs of a typically American language taking sustenance from the soil almost literally when, for example, the poet tells a correspondent, Daniel Gregory Mason, to "keep your sand." He is anticipating Pound's own epistolary efforts to keep his correspondents rooted in their commitment to literature. To such typically American idioms and language, Moody attributes his poetic themes and rhymes. "I could say other things not utterly pharisaical. I could say what I have often said to myself, with a reedy tremolo perhaps, but swelling into a rising diapason, 'The dark cellar ripens the wine,'" an aphoristic idea into which, in the style of the "Modernists," he puts so much of himself. The simple diction of the line and the perfectly controlled rhythm presage the Imagists and their contemporaries, and vindicate their claim that true literature is timeless and universal. Again we realise that Moody too, like the writers of the twentieth century renaissance, had experienced the thrills and travails of dedicating himself to the difficult art of poetry, when, continuing the cellar metaphor, he writes, "And meanwhile after one's eyes get used to the dirty light, and one's feet to the mildew, a cellar has its compensations" (quoted in Anderson Mar. 1914 24). In the context, the words, "a cellar has its compensations" is worthy of Robert Frost as an understated and wry observation.

When he says a little later, "I have seen what I have seen," we remember Robert Lowell's "my eye has seen what my hand has done" (quoted in Heaney 1980), a reference to the sacrifices and suffering poetry entails for the poets, and their dear ones. Anderson's observations on Moody are, once again, a witness to her amazing critical insight and ability to anticipate the future trends of poetry.

A more prolific correspondent is Ezra Pound whose letters are often full of exhortations to their recipients aimed at instilling in them a sense of urgency, goading them to produce their "best," and to publish it as soon as possible. These letters are remarkable for the effacement of the personal, and reflect a whole-hearted dedication to the arts. Their writer might, for instance, regret Eliot's "Portrait of a Lady" going to Alfred Kreyemborg's *Others* anthology, but he wanted the poem printed without any delay, even before his own *Catholic Anthology* (1915), in which he would have naturally preferred to print it, was out. In a sense, Pound was permanently engaged in editing proto-anthologies, mock-anthologies, trial-anthologies . . . somehow making and unmaking anthologies all the time, although the items he discovered, recommended or finally decided against, would later be preserved in some more regular anthology or the other, even if the real collectors might be others. This obsessive anthologist, unsurprisingly, became the author of *The Cantos*, arguably the single-author anthology of "the longest poem in the English language" as he was proud of claiming. Often his letters were invitations to his poet-friends to criticize his work ruthlessly, and sometimes he wrote such ruthless criticism himself. But the humane aspect was always present—he did not criticize the work when a writer was hopelessly bad, or at least, warned the

recipient, William Carlos Williams in one instance, to destroy the letter, dated May 1909, for, the contents were surely unpalatable: "I hope to God you have no feelings. If you have, burn this *before* reading it" (Paige 7; Pound's emphasis). Having said that, we must also note the impatience and despair with which Pound addressed some of his correspondents, or even bullied them, when they would not do what he thought was appropriate, or put off work that demanded immediate action. Thus, after a six-month wait, he implored Harriet Monroe to print "Prufrock" immediately, and angrily refused to let her insult Eliot by asking him to change what, in the editor's view, was a "pessimistic" ending, and "write down to the public" (Paige 44). It might be noticed in passing that Louis Untermeyer, an influential American anthologist, and Hart Crane (Hammer and Weber 119), in their correspondence, while recognizing Eliot's genius, could isolate his ideas and quarrel with them, an indication of the immense variety of "Modernism" and its protagonists who came from all sections of the literary world. Doubtless, the unexpected similarity of ideas significantly confirmed each other in the opinions of editors and poets. For Pound and Eliot, however, no editor could tamper with the programme and agenda of "Modernism" to please the reading public, an idea echoed by Yeats in his poem "The Grey Rock" which appeared first in *Poetry* of April 1913 (21-25). Pound's anthological instincts working again, sought for Yeats the best poem award of the year. After the reprimand quoted above, he (Pound) goes on to provide Monroe with valuable insights into the work as he explains, in a manner that is indistinguishable from an anthologist's introduction: "'Mr. Prufrock' does not 'go off at the end.' It is a portrait of failure, or a character which fails, and it would be false art to make it end on a note of triumph . . . For the rest: a portrait satire on futility can't end by turning that quintessence of futility, Mr.

P. into a reformed character by breathing out fire and ozone" (Paige 50). The theme Pound expounds here establishes, incidentally, the idea that "Modernism" is not merely an ivory tower "art for art's sake" ideology, but is rooted in its commitment to truth, not to say social issues. His elaboration implicitly assumes a deadwood of taste and expectation of old themes and forms carried over from an earlier age. The initiatives the poets launched were, in considerable measure, intended to clear away these cobwebs so the new poetry could get underway, a task many anthologies, pedagogic or otherwise, would themselves address along many different and even conflicting ideas. At the heart of the letter was the idea of a "true" art that marks the renaissance poets and some readers saw. Letters such as this about "Prufrock" were, on Harriet Monroe's own admission, landmarks in her "modernization" (Monroe 1938 268), and advancement to newer themes. As we shall see below, W. C. Williams and D. H. Lawrence too were to write such "educative" letters to her. In a remarkably generous and frank reminiscence she says, "During the first year or two, Ezra's pungent and provocative letters were falling thick as snow flakes . . . Thus began the rather violent, but on the whole salutary, discipline under the lash of which the editor of the new magazine felt herself rapidly educated, while incrustations of habit and prejudice were ruthlessly swept away" and adds the grateful remark which would be echoed by many later writers: "Ezra Pound was born to be a great teacher" (Harriet Monroe 1938 268). We may note, for the record, that Eliot's "Prufrock," however, was tucked away in the middle pages of *Poetry* in June 1917—in fact it was the very last work in the poetry section (130-135), and immediately after it began the prose articles. But occupying prime space at the beginning of the issue were two homesick and lovesick poems by an Ajan Syrian, an elegy by Arthur Davison

Ficke addressed to Rupert Brooke, two poems on nature by Bliss Carman and some rather conventional Petrarchan sonnets by one Georgia Wood Pangborn. These were, of course, extremely old, time-tested and safe themes that Pound, as we shall see, warned William Carlos Williams to steer clear of, and were written in verse forms that were sure to encourage just the kind of tastes that the "Modernists" were struggling to make the readers outgrow. The editor herself, in spite of the ruthless "lash," was often a reluctant learner, to say nothing of the ordinary contemporary reader.

The letter was not, however, limited to explanations and urgings; it became a literary history in miniature, simultaneously elucidating and explaining the writer's poetic principles and was, in important ways, an extension of the anthology's work of "educating" the readers, be they editors, critics, or students in the classroom. D. H. Lawrence, writing to Edward Marsh, editor of *Georgian Poetry*, sums up the "Modernist" efforts against the inertia and some of the antagonistic forces arrayed against it such as what he called the "habituated ear" of the reading public: "It is the lapse of the feeling, something as indefinite as expression in the voice carrying emotion. It doesn't depend on the ear, particularly, but on the sensitive soul. And the ear gets a habit, and becomes waste, when the ebbing and lifting emotion should be the master, and the ear the transmitter. If your ear has got stiff and a bit mechanical, *don't* blame my poetry . . . Well, I don't write for your ear. This is the constant war, I reckon, between the new expression and the habituated and mechanical transmitters and receivers of the human constitution" (Harry Moore 243-244; Lawrence's emphasis). The fact that Lawrence contributed to little magazines and anthologies as varied as *Poetry* and *The Little Review*

and the Georgian and the Imagist collections is an affirmation of his faith in the pivotal role of these as the preservers, makers and markers of taste. Here, in the letter to Marsh, is a confluence of ideas between the Imagist writers, Robert Frost, and Lawrence himself. The Imagists with their acceptance that a "new cadence means a new idea" (*Some Imagist Poets* 1915 vii) as a cardinal principle of their poetry, would be much closer to Lawrence.

Sometimes Pound would use the letter to edit the work of a poet like Iris Barry, commenting at length on the strengths and weaknesses of her poems with an astonishing meticulousness, richly illustrating in the process, some of his several poetic theories. He urged her to be less descriptive and put in more verbs into her poems, just as the primitives, and good writers of later ages did (Paige 82). Pound's letters, indeed, were the closest that he came to formulating a manifesto, apart from his contribution to *Blast* and a few other occasional publications. "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste" (Quoted in Harriet Monroe 1938 298-301), it is worth noting, is more of a prohibitory list than a manifesto which it is sometimes taken to be. Writing to Harriet Monroe, whom he had served as an adjunct editor from England, Pound was given to formulating something of a theory of poetry. In her autobiography, *A Poet's Life* (1938), she quotes one such letter, which she declares to be his "artistic creed" in so many words. Written as early as January 1915, it asserts:

There are two ways of existing in *la vie littéraire*; as DeGourmont said some while since: "A man is valued by the abundance or the scarcity of his copy."

The problem is *how*, how in hell to exist without overproduction. In the

Imagist book I made it possible for a few poets who were not over-producing, to reach an audience. That delicate operation was achieved by the most rigorous suppression of what I considered faults . . . Obviously such a method and movement are incompatible with effusion, with flooding magazines with all sorts of wish-wash and imitation and the near good. If I had acceded to A. L.'s (Amy Lowell) proposal to turn "Imagism" into a democratic beer garden, I should have undone what little good I managed to do by setting up a critical standard . . . My dissociation with (sic) the forthcoming *Some Imagist Poets* book, and my displeasure, arises again from the same cause, which A. C. H. (Alice Corbin Henderson) aptly calls "the futility of trying to impose a selective taste on the naturally unselective." . . . My problem is to keep alive a certain group of advancing poets, to set the arts in their rightful place as the acknowledged guide and lamp of civilization. The arts must be supported in preference to the church and scholarship. Artists first, then if necessary, professors and parsons. Scholarship is but a handmaid to the arts. My propaganda for what some may consider "novelty in excess" is a necessity. There are plenty to defend the familiar kind of thing . . . (Quoted in Harriet Monroe 1938 367).

Writing to Scofield Thayer, editor of *The Dial*, Pound returned to the views he expressed to Harriet Monroe: "The Scylla and Carybdis (sic) of magazing, are A. to get the barrels too full, and NOT to be able to use feature stuff the instant it arrives, and B. au contraire NOT to have enough A.I. stuff on hand" (Thompson 90). In brief, the attempt of

the writers was to collect the "best" and present it to the reader who had a sense of literature. The letters also draw our attention to the elitist inclinations of Pound and his friends. Repeatedly there is, as we have seen in the letter about "Prufrock" addressed to Harriet Monroe, a disdain for the lazy, conventional reader. It is perhaps noteworthy that Pound wanted to present "*advancing* poets" to readers, by which expression he presumably means poets suffused with the new ideas, such as Eliot, and who were also fired by a desire to learn the art called poetry.

The best poetry published naturally demanded the best criticism possible. It is worth noting that many major poets themselves were influential critics such as Yeats, Eliot and Pound, for example. Their efforts in this direction may be said to represent their "exhibits" in criticism. However, most poet-critics considered criticism inferior to poetry. Pound, for example, complained once "Not so much crit. as creat" "sic" (Paige 240). Yet, he presented the critic with a short but explicit and full-fledged manifesto, and the site chosen to expound it on was again the letter:

"Substance of manifesto:

1. The critic most worthy of respect is the one who actually causes an improvement in the art he criticizes.
2. The best critic is the one who most focuses attention on the best work.
3. The pestilence masking itself as a critic distracts attention *from* the best work, to either secondary work that is more or less "good" or to tosh, to detrimental work,

dead or living snobisms, (sic) or to infinite essays on criticism" (Paige 241; Pound's emphasis).

The intensity of the language, among other things in the letters shows as few other sources can, how comprehensive, anxious and uncompromising Pound was in his attempts to popularise and promote literature. The picture of "Modernism" that emerges from these letters where the writers are contemptuous and solicitous in turns about the common reader, is complex and far from neat, but it is certainly more representative of the facts. The varied recipients of the letters—fellow-poets, editors, and patrons, to mention a few—illustrate the immense range of people involved in "making it new," and the numerous efforts and strategies the enterprise demanded. Pound's own attempts to focus attention on the "best" work appeared in such anthologies as the *ABC of Reading* (1934) and *From Confucius to Cummings* (1964), co-edited with Marcella Spann.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that Pound's letters are a faithful reflection of literary history. They do, however, record the growth of his poetic ideas in their formative phases in real time. He writes to Amy Lowell, for example, seeking her permission to use her poem "Garden" for an anthology he was "cogitating" (Paige 24). Later on, he puts the Imagist phase and its anthology, *Des Imagistes* (1914), in perspective by declaring that the Imagist principles were good "for a time" (Paige 55). Again he notes that the contributors to the Imagist collection have not "gone on; have [not] invented much since the first *Des Imagistes* anthology. H. D. has done work as good. She has also (under I suppose the flow-contamination of Amy and Fletcher) let

loose dilutions and repetitions, so that she has spoiled the 'few but perfect' position she might have held on to" (Paige 114). He was, in other words, frequently giving contemporary artists, publishers, patrons and readers the chance to go forth and "be really modern" (Paige 24) and to stay that way without exhausting the patience or sympathy of readers by forcing inferior work on them. The letters, therefore, functioned as notes towards miniature anthologies, mental literary histories, guides and bibliographies for himself and his fellow-writers among other things. They were meant to "educate" the recipients about *what* to write and *how*, but nevertheless reflected Pound's own compulsive writing and reading habits. He meticulously listed out to W. C. Williams, for example, in October 1908, a list of the subjects already dealt with by poets of yore, and were now dead issues. The blasé tone in which he recounted these subjects is unmistakable, and was intended to shame the addressee into abandoning them. Going solely by this evidence, Pound should be credited for painstakingly assembling poetic clichés and for warning fellow-poets of their continuing menace:

"Here are a list (sic) of facts which 1 and 9,000,000 other poets have spieled endlessly:

1. Spring is a pleasant season. The flowers, etc, etc, sprout, bloom etc. etc.
2. Young man's fancy. Lightly, heavily, gaily, etc. etc.
3. Love, a delightsome tickling. Indefinable etc.
A) By day etc. etc. etc. B) By night etc. etc. etc.
4. Trees, hills etc. are by provident nature arranged diversely, in diverse places.
5. Winds, clouds, rains, etc. flop thru and over 'em.

6. Men love women. (More poetic in the singular, but the verb retains the same form.)

(In Greece and Pagan countries men loved men, but the fact is no longer mentioned in polite society except in an expurgated sense.) I am not attracted by the Pagan custom but my own prejudices are not *materia poetica*. Besides T didn't get particularly lascivious in *A.L.S.* However, in the above six groups I think you find the bulk of the poetic matter of the ages. Wait—

7. Men fight battles, etc. etc.
8. Men go on voyages.

Beyond this, men think and feel certain things and see certain things not with the bodily vision. About this time I begin to get interested and the general too ruthlessly go to sleep? To, however, quit this wrangle" (Paige 4-5).

It is interesting to speculate briefly on "Spring," the first item on this list. Pound and his correspondent understood each other pretty well. In 1922 and 1923 respectively appeared two long poems, or rather, two poetic sequences: T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and William Carlos Williams's *Spring and All*. Neither poet, sensibly enough, avoided Spring at Pound's instance. Both, as a matter of fact, reworked the seasonal cliché in their respective "anthologies"—both *The Waste Land* and *Spring and All* are arguably anthologies. While Eliot's poem is more of an annotated edition of dead poems complete with line numbers, notes and references, *Spring and All* only appears less so, but it is a

book of twenty-seven lyrics dispersed among passages of prose, notes and fragments of discursive prose and the poet's commentary. Another way to read Pound's list of poetic clichés is to go through these two sequences to see how not only Spring, but all the other items appear and disappear as though in the pages of a new *Golden Treasury*. That the poets themselves were subliminally working on the principles of an anthology is evident by the following remark. Here is William Carlos Williams on Marianne Moore:

Unlike the painters the poet has not resorted to distortions or the abstract in form. Ms. Moore accomplishes a like result by rapidity of movement. A poem such as "Marriage" is an anthology of transit. It is a pleasure that can be held firm only by moving rapidly from one thing to the next. It gives the impression of a passage through (Williams 313).

The new poetry, with its new requirements, was developing its own forms of composition which retained the anthology at the core.

In fact, the idea of "Spring" appeared as early as 1918, in *Kora in Hell*, a book and title that Williams discussed with Pound himself. "I am indebted to Pound for the title. We had talked about Kora, the Greek parallel of Persephone, the legend of Springtime captured and taken to Hades. I thought of myself as Springtime and I felt I was on my way to Hell (but I didn't go very far)" (Williams 3-4). The poet had symbolically rescued "Spring" from the hell of being clichéd and misused. This episode emphasizes again that the poets in search for subjects, never exclude a possibility for ever. The poets were also remarkable for their insistence on the use of these subjects in

an original way (as the self-identification of the poet with spring illustrates) as an important characteristic of good verse. As late as 1928, Pound found Spring still fresh and blossoming in the works of young poets like R. C. Dunning whose "Threnody in Sapphics" he printed in the second edition of his *Exile* (Pound 2 1927 31).

Many "Modernists" were loath to reveal to the general reader anything but the finished product, be it a manifesto or a poem itself. More often than not, the making of these nevertheless required collaboration, and the letter was perhaps the only place where this could be realized at length without any feelings of inhibition. Thus, Pound advised Iris Barry, in a letter dated July 1916, in the same painstaking and itemized manner as he did to Williams, what modern poetry should be in its essential features, one of the few times he came closest to formulating a manifesto:

"The whole art is divided into:

- a. concision, or style, or say what you mean in the fewest and clearest words.
- b. The actual necessity for creating or constructing something; of presenting an image, or enough images of concrete things arranged to stir the reader" (Paige 90).

Neither idea is new to poetry, but such repetitions served to keep some of the aims of the movement to "modernise" constantly before the poets. Continuing with the handiness that the letters provided, it may be said that a poet could indicate to an editor the best way the poems should be presented to the public. D. H. Lawrence wrote to the Harriet Monroe

how he would like a poem of his published in the little magazine, a letter that, incidentally, illustrates the poet's own selective instincts, at least as far as his own poetry is concerned: "No, you mustn't cut it ("Ballad of Another Ophelia") in two. It is a good poem. I couldn't do it again to save my life. Use it whole or not at all" (Harry Moore 288). Pound, too, similarly staved off tragedy from befalling some of his favourite poems, again, through letters: "You might also concede the constructive value of my kicking about mutilations. *Propertius* and *Maubertley* were cut, but on the strength of my howling to high heaven that this was an outrage, Eliot's *Waste Land* was printed whole. In which I also participated. Dragging my own corpse by the heels to arouse the blasted spectators" (Paige 230). The problem of "mutilations" was particularly pernicious in the usual anthologies because the editors often gave no indication to the reader that the poem was an excerpt, and that it could mean something else in its original context. The menace sometimes appeared in the form of altered punctuation which diluted the meaning of the poem in such a way as to pander to the lazy or incompetent readers who may otherwise be confused or irritated by the new demands that literature was making. Lawrence, again, complained to Harriet Monroe that a poem, "Unster Goth," in *Poetry* was "unbeautifully ugly" (Harry Moore 295). The effort against the conventional poet, and the general reader's obsession with beauty, it might be mentioned, was one of the few ideas that united the "Modernists" in the early decades of the twentieth century leading to the group-forming tendencies among poets who had little else in common. If we remember that the poet-editors of this time rarely felt the need for, or took the trouble to provide introductions or prefaces, the collation of such occasional pronouncements the letters provide can be invaluable for the reader, facilitating a better appreciation of the themes,

and the new directions poetry was taking. The publication of anthologies or manifestos by schools of poets would naturally lead to competition with editors of anthologies brought out by other schools, and the letter was the place where we can see the rival poet-editors elaborating their predilections, and frankly venting their frustrations and animosities. They might also discuss the reception of their work. We find Pound, the editor of the *Catholic Anthology* and *Des Imagistes*, telling Lewis in a letter that some important people did not approve of *Blast*: "The P.M. (Asquith) don't (sic) for one. Though attempts have been made with some success to convert him to milder faces (or persona)" (Materer 46). This comment assumes a new significance when we remember that Edward Marsh had boasted that the Prime Minister's car was seen at the bookshop that was stocking *The Georgian Anthology* on the day it was released. And sure enough, a little later, we get an insight into "the dark and backward abyss" of Pound's mind, revealing the rivalries and differences of opinion with the editor of the *Georgian Poetry* when he (Pound) writes to Lewis a few days later, in August 1916, "The Eddie-Marsh-Asquith-Berbohm-Trees section of society does not favor an advance in thought" (Materer 55). The point is that the letters were literary criticism, literary histories *and* histories of reading at the same time, all contributory to the spirit of the anthology.

The sharing of experiences and expertise in getting work published, especially in the face of a conservative establishment, was inevitable if literature was to make any progress. Plans to get around such forces had to be made continuously and innovatively and, to communicate these, the letters were probably the easiest and fastest way available at the time. Pound, again, aiming to get the "best" material for the *Dial*, wrote to Scofield

Thayer that they might invite a writer like Gauthier Villars "to write something that will pass the U. S. postal authorities" (Thompson 51). This, again, is an attempt at the anthology, deploying an acclaimed name as a kind of a Trojan horse to storm the conservative camp. The letters of these poets had become a crucial part of the strategy for literary survival that had to be continued from issue to issue, from poem to poem, and also, somehow earn a living for themselves in the process. Sometimes, magazines and institutions made efforts, desultory and sporadic perhaps, to help the artist make ends meet or relive him/her from the need to earn a living through other means. One of these was the awarding of prizes for the "best" poem. It was an initiative to inspire good poetry, and was at least fairly successful, and here too, the letter played some part in drawing the attention of the correspondent to their existence.

Finding that their appeal was limited to the elite few, writers needed all the assurance, help and camaraderie they could get, and the letters were the best means available in the short run to garner these. These letters also played a crucial role in informing, educating, canvassing support and encouraging each other in their attempts to produce the "best." They sometimes also served to insulate them against public criticism when, for example, praise from a respected author would please a writer more than the accolades of the masses. Yeats, for example, was flattered when Robert Louis Stevenson praised his "Lake Isle of Innisfree" as his (Stevenson's) encouragement was, for him, worth more than popular applause (Kelly 404). On other occasions, the letter would carry a plaintive report even as it informed a fellow writer about a new publication. Eliot, in one instance, writing to Conrad Aiken, perhaps with some envy at the success of the

Georgian anthologies, enquires, "As for literature, have you seen our Katholik (sic) Anthology? (Elk[in] Matthews). It has not done very well, in spite of the name of Yeats" (Valerie Eliot 125). Such incidental remarks sometimes shed light on the poets' perceptions of the canon, and the writers' concern with "interpretive communities." In other words, the poets themselves were making and unmaking mental anthologies of sorts, some details of which the letters give away. In a more important sense, the letter was a trans-Atlantic literary newspaper and provider of the most recent information about the arts, saving the writers time which they would have otherwise spent in reinventing the wheel. Pound, for example, told William Carlos Williams that his work, though good, would be unacceptable in London because it was already passé. "As proof that W.C.W. has poetic instincts the book is invaluable. Au contraire, if you were in London and saw the stream of current poetry, I wonder how much you would have printed?" (Paige 7). This is precisely the point that Williams himself makes in his letter dated October 26, 1916 to Harriet Monroe, protesting against her tendency to select and edit poems in a way that pleased her readers: "... I hereby object to your old-fashioned and therefore vicious methods" (Thirlwall 39). Williams seems to have learned such lessons from the "divine Ezra" (Thirlwall 65). The point is that the letters were a useful redaction in a fairly detailed manner, of the ideas, hitherto implied or implicit, about producing the "best" and presenting them in the most effective manner and helped position the magazine as the maker and marker of literary taste. Helpful to the reader as notes, introductions and elaborations of poetics, individual poems and books, the letter played a pivotal role for the correspondent when it was written, and continues now to make crucial contributions to the understanding of literature. Demanding no strict adherence to any genre or diction,

the letter brought forth the talents of the writers incidentally, but in an illuminating manner. Personal by nature, it was also a rallying point for a nationalistic tradition and a language of its own, as mentioned above. While it cannot replace literary history per se, it can function as a valuable guide in verifying and correcting it.

II

In their letters quoted above, we have seen D. H. Lawrence and Robert Frost privilege the ear over the eye as the more important faculty in the appreciation of poetry. The fact that these poets came from either side of the Atlantic attests to the universality of this preference. It would be interesting to trace the origin of this penchant for the ear as the receptive mode for poetry in the years immediately preceding the age we call "Modernism." We remember that the *Golden Treasury* (1861) of F. T. Palgrave was compiled entirely on the single criterion of the lyrical quality of its poems. Palgrave's anthology would not have been out of place in a country where formal training in public speaking was being imparted to young men from the upper middle classes who intended to take up careers that required it (Morrisson 27). The emphasis in the early twentieth century was, however, entirely different. While Palgrave hoped that even the poor and the labouring classes would find some solace in his anthology, the elocutionary skills that were on offer in the universities, legitimised further by the recommendations of the Newbolt Report, were honed on the dialects of the middle and upper classes. Indeed, they were designed to perpetuate and accentuate the ~~very~~ differences between these classes and the poor (Morrisson 27). The emphasis of these courses was on the "pure voice"

which by definition was uncontaminated by any accretions from the lower classes. The "elocutionary communities" (35) that Morrisson mentions, participated in the recitation of poetry as well. The young Modernist poets saw in these communities a ready audience to educate and experiment on. In 1909, the Poetry Recital Society or the Poetry Society for short, was formed which "attempted to institutionalize and professionalize the discourses of elocution and recitation, to attain the power of consecrating taste and 'culture', and to influence the London school system's efforts at verse recitation" (Morrisson 32). In spite of its hostility to Modernist poetry, the Society consented to host it (Morrisson 32). The preference was for a depersonalised voice where the speaker was not seen, a characteristic feature of such important Modernist texts as Eliot's *Waste Land* and Pound's *Cantos*.

Both these texts were based on a formidable amount of erudition and were, therefore, exclusivist. The ventriloquism of the speeches of the lower classes was often patronizing and degrading. Eliot placed the "demotic" along with the "glut and tar" of industrial societies in the *Waste Land*. This poem was, we remember, to be called "He Do the Police in Many Voices." Nor did the similarity end there. When Ezra Pound lectured on the troubadours, the fee he charged was equally discouraging at "£ 1 1s, slightly less than the weekly wage of the average male industrial worker" (Rainey 36). The point is that the elitism of the institutions training people in speaking or elocutionary skills had a counterpart in the lectures and the written works of the new poets at every level.

On examination, the letters, little magazines, and other publications of the Modernists betray an ambiguity towards the reading public that is not often noticed. This may complicate literary history, but is surely closer to facts. This explains why they devoted considerable efforts towards gaining ever wider audiences and readers by demanding, for example, lower taxes on their publications, as Pound and some others did. At the heart of these efforts was an optimism, however sporadic, about the public's ability to enjoy poetry. Elitist as these societies were, "Monro and the contributors to his magazines appropriated contemporary discourse about verse recitation in order to put it to use for the popularization of new experimental poetry" (Morrisson 38). For him, the panacea to the unpopularity of poetry was skillful recital of verses. He then turned the conventional idea of reading poetry in books on its head:

We make a regular practice of reading poetry aloud, and any one who wishes to stroll in and listen may do so ... we are absolutely certain that the proper values of poetry can only be conveyed through its vocal interpretation by a sympathetic and qualified reader. Indeed so obvious does this appear that we regard the books on sale in the shop merely as printed scores for the convenience of refreshing the memory in hours of study or indolence (Quoted in Morrisson 37).

Later, Monro would change his demand for a "sympathetic and qualified reader" to the poet's own voice. He also made the poetry reading sessions more accessible by charging only nominal fees or offering free tickets to those who bought the *Poetry and Drama* (Morrisson 43). Monro won the support of a wide spectrum of writers and critics who

praised him for their own reasons. For Francis Macnamara, a poet, public reading of their poetry "is the only way for poets to learn" (Quoted in Morrisson 43). Pound's own reading at the society was not pleasurable, largely due to the tastes of the audience, but was sure of its usefulness in helping him achieve his dearest aim of concision in expression (Morrisson 43). By bringing poets and readers face to face, the Poetry Society played a unique role in the popularisation of the new poetry. The anthological nature of the Society is unmistakable.

III

In a remarkably short time, the renaissance in poetry had led to a kind of proliferation of works that troubled most editors, for this massive output was bound to be inferior in parts. To highlight the "good" poem, they needed to mark it off in some way, and publication in anthologies offered a solution. This anthological function of inviting the "best" (even Thomas Hardy hoped for a place in a good anthology like the *Golden Treasury*), and planting it in the public memory, fell in part, to prizes instituted by little magazines, among others. This section attempts to explore the role of such prizes in the production of poetry, and poets' own responses to them.

At a time when few magazines actually paid their contributors, the institution of such literary prizes was a significant and revolutionary event. These prizes continued, by other means, the idea of the magazine as an anthology since they were directly intended to highlight and canonize some of the "best" works and draw attention to them. The

response of the general reading public to such awards was often hostile when it was not amused, and not surprisingly, the patrons and little magazines were invariably forced to justify their very existence. Harriet Monroe, for example, was constrained to write:

“*Poetry*—its policy and prizes—are (sic) a detail of preparation, an effort to give the poet his chance at a hearing, his right to a response. It is an effort to gather "great audiences"—whether few or many—for whom and through whose aid alone he can sing with his utmost power" (Monroe 1938 396). In her view, the prize would be one possible way in which the poet could be sustained for sometime, and the magazine itself could attract better work. This was, according to her, redressing the balance in the case of the poets, since painters tended to monopolise all the patronage available, while the former were left to fend for themselves. Acknowledging that the prizes might go to the wrong people sometimes, she nevertheless insisted that the idea itself was right: "Poets are the worst paid of all the artists, and we cannot see that we would lessen their chance of immortality by lessening their chance of starvation . . . We know more than one poet who would be benefited by a traveling scholarship more than that of the numerous painters who enjoy this now" (Harriet Monroe 1938 397). Margaret Anderson, editor of the *Little Review*, a little more cautiously perhaps, echoed similar ideas: "Now the first thing we shall do as soon as we can pay our printing bills without paroxysms of terror, is to pay for contributions; it is disgusting that writers who do real work don't make enough out of it to live on at least" (Anderson Feb. 1915 3). It was a part of the effort to broaden and internationalise poetry by enriching the experience of the poet whose work would later go into her magazine and anthology. Indeed, prizes may have a significant effect on the reputation of a little magazine and worse still, they may honour bad poems and inflict

unspeakable damage on the cause of good poetry. Pound, for example, wanted the 1915 *Poetry* award to go to Eliot "to atone for the war-poem scandal" (Paige 63). The point is that the prize was an occasion for writers to exercise their productive and for editors their selective skills. In a similar way, he was to take issue with Stephen Vincent Benet, refusing him permission to print one of his poems in a forthcoming anthology as the former had, in Pound's opinion, damaged the cause of poetry by editing a popular magazine that pandered to the masses (Paige 243).

Harriet Monroe's justification for trying to liberate the poet from penury could not escape criticism, since the idea was, according to one writer at least, inherently flawed. William Carlos Williams, in a letter written in July 1917, rubbishes her claim about the significance of these prizes as an irrelevancy. "No poet expects to earn money by his verse. If he does he is a fool and had better be disillusioned from the start" (Thirlwall 41). The comparison of the poet to the painter was invalid, according to Williams, because the poet produced intangibles, while the painter's work could be the subject of speculation. As we shall see, this was not completely correct. Pound and Wyndham Lewis, with considerable business acumen, could foresee great commercial value for rare manuscripts, collections of limited editions, and journals. Williams himself was willing to work without "the encouragement of recognition" (Thirlwall 27), and in the process, implicitly rejected *Poetry's* Whitmanian motto. The consequences of Monroe's proposal to pay for poetry were, in his view, disastrous: "What you are doing by paying what you do for poems is this: you are jeopardizing the existence of your magazine in the mistaken notion that what poets want is money, when in reality—though money is needed also—

they need space, an opportunity to print often and at will. This lack of opportunity to appear is the hell. And you will add to this by going bankrupt" (Thirlwall 27). He believed that it was the business of the little magazine to cut "the rope between the ox and his dung" (Thirlwall 28), suggesting that its primary obligation was to encourage a poet to grow by moving away from his or her old and outdated work. The magazine, by its mere existence, was a haven, and its job was done. For Williams, it was preëminently an essential, preliminary ground towards perfection and preservation, as he suggested in a March 1913 letter (Thirlwall 24). He too, like many contemporary poets like Pound, came close to identifying the magazine with the anthology. Writing to Marianne Moore urging her to send her work to *Others* which he was guest-editing, he says, "Jam the various units together and forget the 'ensemble'—that will take care of itself" (Thirlwall 34-35). In these words, we may recognize the framework of *Spring and All*, which was anthological in conception, and was composed for fun. "The prose is a mixture of philosophy and nonsense. It made sense to me, at least to my disturbed mind—because it *was* disturbed at that time—but I doubt if it made any sense to anyone else" (Williams 85). Poetry was occasionally something of an intellectual emollient, and he needed no other rewards whatsoever, least of all the financial ones that came from a little magazine which was itself fighting for survival.

The invitation to poets to compete for a prize and raise poetic standards had implications far beyond the ordinary subscribers and dilettantes. If we remember that a part of the most important readership of a little magazine was constituted by students, then some of the strategies used by the editors to select the winners would appear

strangely familiar; in fact they were anticipations of some of the methods used by many subsequent pedagogic anthologies. Margaret Anderson, for example, would give her judges (Eunice Tietjens, Helen Hoyt and W. C. Williams in one instance) anonymous poems, without the writers' names appearing after them. This is exactly what I. A. Richards did with his *Practical Criticism* (1924), as we shall see. Yet another pedagogical device anticipated by Anderson is the idea of printing bad poems along with the prize-winning works for the sake of contrast, a device that would be made uniquely their own by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren in their *Understanding Poetry* (1938, 1950, 1970 and 1976). The anthological enterprise of discovering the "best" also yielded for her a revealing if disappointing picture of poetry of the time. Anderson lamented this condition:

I know little about prize contests, but I imagine that there has never been one in the history of poetry which could boast so many really bad poems. Personally I think there are not more than four or five with any suggestions of poetry in them: the rest are either involuntarily humorous . . . or pompously anachronistic . . . (Anderson III. 10 April 1917 11).

It is to such incidental but important events that the little magazines owe a part of their claim to be literary histories of contemporary poetry.

The mere fact that an endowment, payment, or prize for poetry existed, or was available for the taking, did not draw forth applicants in droves. It had to be worthy, and reflective of the ideas of contemporary poets. About the John Simon Guggenheim

Memorial Fellowship of \$ 2500, Pound has this to say in a letter to Wyndham Lewis, though a sense of caution is undoubtedly present: "It is a very decent scheme, as intelligently planned as any such endowment can be, with no strings that I can see attached . . . I wrote to them in Feb. that the only way they cd. do any good to the arts was to subsidize the men who cd. produce the stuff . . . They replied that I was puffikly right" (Materer 156; Pound's emphases). The individualism and the commitment of the poet could not be compromised for anything. Pound sent the Foundation a ten-page write up on Lewis, and suggested Eliot and George Antheil as the second and third prospective candidates in that order, which is another of his mental anthologies.

It is now well known, thanks to Laurence Rainey's commendable research acumen, that what we now call English literary Modernism was as much "a configuration of agents and practices that converge in the production, marketing, and publication of an idiom" (Rainey 34) as what has been commonly recognized as a selfless devotion to the purification of the dialect of the tribe. To take one single example from the many Rainey offers, we have the instance of Pound turning a hard-nosed literary agent for T. S. Eliot in the early 1920s. The text in question was not even so much of a book as a 400-odd line poem called *The Waste Land*. Pound, as a matter of fact, was one better than a literary agent. He spoke with so much authority that he could persuade Horace Liveright to publish *The Waste Land* in book form in January 1922 only on Pound's judgment that "Eliot's *Waste Land* is, I think, the justification of the 'movement,' of our modern experiment, since 1900" (quoted in Rainey 53). Again, it was chiefly Pound's authority and doggedness that secured for a relatively unknown bank clerk called T. S. Eliot a handsome \$2000. As

Rainey reminds us, it was just Pound's word that settled it. Neither of the *Dial* editors had read the poem. That was the virtual beginning of the institution of literary prizes in the twentieth century. As Pound saw it, the substantial *Dial* award went to a needy and exiled poet, and recognition, such as it was, to a 'movement' that had to be helped. Important as all these initiatives were, of primary significance for most poets was a place where a regular appearance, or a chance to appear, was assured.

IV

The American anthologist Louis Untermeyer remarked that 1916 was a boom time for poetry. He noted that poets often joined together to publish their works and that they were inclined to form schools, many of them working in isolation and sometimes even at cross-purposes (Untermeyer 1919 320). Some poets wrote in *vers libre*, and others followed the orthodox rhymes and rhythms. All these writers were independently revolting against Victorianisms and Edwardianisms and were moving towards the rhythms of ordinary speech. The best of them at least claimed to be doing so. The struggle required prodigious amounts of effort, time, acumen and some financial support. In the circumstances, the writers could only turn to the little magazine, the place where, as Pound put it, one "selected the next generation" for "it seems the only knot hole for new writers to get through" (Paige 250). All new writers, of course, need not have convergent ideas, and this is what made the little magazine an admirably broad platform to accommodate diverse opinions.

The little magazine was an anthology in disguise—an anthology by other means. It offered the young poets an alternative space away from that occupied by the established writers in the regular trade anthologies, or from what Laura Riding and Robert Graves called the "trade anthology" of the commercial publishers. This space was necessary at least on two counts: the popular anthologists and magazines were inhospitable to the new writers, and the public was against any overt and substantial financial support for the art. As Harriet Monroe put it, "Poetry has been left to herself and blamed for inefficiency, a process as unreasonable as blaming the desert for barrenness. This art, like every other, is not a miracle of direct creation, but a reciprocal relation between the artist and his public" (Harriet Monroe I 1 1912 26). Adopting a Lincolnian tone, she declares, "In a huge democracy of our age no interest is too slight to have an organ . . . The arts especially have need of each an entrenched place, a voice of power, if they are to do their work and be heard. For as the world grows greater day by day, as every member of it, through something he buys or knows or loves, reaches out to the ends of the earth, things precious to the race, things rare and delicate, may be overpowered, lost in the criss-cross of modern currents, the confusion of modern immensities" (Harriet Monroe I. 1 1912 26). The gist of all this is the principle of collection and preservation of the best poems in anthologies. While other arts like painting have the patronage of the public, poetry gets a "scant courtesy—a Cinderella corner in the ashes . . ." (Harriet Monroe I 1 1912 26). Reminiscing nineteen years later, in 1931, she claimed with evident pride that her magazine had become "the most liberal endowment ever devoted, at least in the English speaking nations, to the art of poetry" (Harriet Monroe 86). *Poetry* was

started because she believed that there existed a public for the art, and indeed, the people needed it. In any case, poetry was destined for a great future if it could be helped along a little. She was quite clear about her credo for the magazine, which was the Open Door: "The Open Door will be the policy of this magazine—may the great poet we are looking for never find it shut, or half-shut against his ample genius! To this end the editors hope to keep free of entangling alliances with any class or school. They desire to print the *best* English verse which is being written today, regardless of where, by whom, or under what theory of art it is being written. Without muzzles and braces this is manifestly impossible unless all the critical articles are by one person" (Harriet Monroe I. 2 64; emphasis added).

Monroe was not neglectful of the reader either. A survey of the American scene from the perspective of poetry made clear to her what the nature and purpose of her magazine needed to be. If it was to provide a valued space for the writer in every sense, the reader too needed avenues to grow intellectually:

It [*Poetry*] will endeavor . . . to keep its readers informed of the progress of the art throughout the English-speaking world and continental Europe. The American metropolitan newspaper prints cable despatches about post-impressionists, futurists, secessionists, and other radicals in painting, sculpture and music, but so far as its editors are concerned, French poetry might have died with Victor Hugo, and English poetry with Tennyson, or at most with Swinburne (Monroe I. 1 1912 32).

Her magazine was thus to cover the vacuum left by the popular newspaper, an idea that reinforces the contempt, not to say jealousy, that most Modernists have felt for it. *Poetry* was to carry only the most recent work from all over the world, but the editor was not, however, immune to some American parochialism and had definite if somewhat inflexible opinions about the subject of poetry, as Pound and Eliot would later discover. There was, further, to be an emphasis on criticism and a critical attitude, beginning with the poets themselves. Alice Corbin Henderson, Monroe's assistant, writes, "If the American poet can be less parochial, to apply the intellectual whip, to visualize his art, to separate it and see it apart from himself; we may learn appreciate the great poet 'in our midst,' and not want the approval of English or French critics" (Henderson I. 2 1912 91).

Harriet Monroe's *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, first published in 1912, was one of the earliest of the little magazines to care exclusively for "the Cinderella of the arts" as she put it in her autobiography published in 1938, as mentioned above. Poetry had found a godmother, more or less. The magazine had its provenance in a very personal and moving experience which Monroe recounts in her autobiography, *A Poet's Life: Seventy Years in a Changing World* (1938). Her relatively modest income was barely augmented by her poetic publications. For example, in 1906, which she calls a typical year, she offered no less than twenty-five poems for publication, but only three were accepted—two of these by an English magazine, *The Fortnightly Review*. The payment and the publication were realized two full years later. Her most quoted poem, "I Love My Life," which was to appear in many anthologies subsequently, was routinely rejected by editors

of all the contemporary little magazines. It was to make its appearance, finally, in *Poetry* of February 1914. "A review of the lists of poems submitted to magazines, which I find at the end of my small diaries makes me realize again what a desperate fight for recognition poets had to make, and make mostly in vain, through the score of years before 1912. A correspondence with *Hampton 's Magazine* may be cited to illustrate this point. The editor commented on the 'distinction of the verse which you have been publishing in other magazines,' and asked me to submit some to *Hampton 's*, adding, 'We prefer lyric stanzas of a rather informal type'" (Monroe 1938 188). Clearly, it was a vulgarized and commercialized version of a Palgravian view of poetry that the *Hampton* editor subscribed to, and we may remember that the *Golden Treasury* was a best seller in the United States as well. She adds later, "This niggardly attitude of publishers was emphasized by so many rejections that by 1910 I had well-nigh ceased sending poems to periodicals" (Harriet Monroe 1938 189). Another editor regretted that the public were "in a state of inattention to anything in the verse form and it would, we fear, be out of question for us to undertake a volume of your poems on any other basis than the commission one. It is with very great reluctance that we are forced to make this reply, but it is a condition, not a theory, that confronts us" (Harriet Monroe 1938 188). It was to save poetry from such cynicism, commercialism, and parochial values that Harriet Monroe started her *Poetry* magazine in 1912. With Pound for Foreign Correspondent, the magazine could get work from major and up coming poets of all nationalities. It would become truly international in scope, though Pound had to struggle quite a little against Monroe's own Chicagoan parochialism.

The indefinite article in the name of the magazine, perhaps, looks at other sister magazines already extant, or to come. In her autobiography, Monroe acknowledges the relationship between *Poetry* and *Others* (1917) as one of a predecessor and inspirer, respectively. E. A. Robinson, in a letter, at once polite and ironic, welcomed the new journal, but was piqued by what he called Monroe's "deadly emphasis" on verse in her subtitle (Harriet Monroe 1938 254). With her Whitmanian motto that great poetry needed great audiences, Monroe would educate the public to be the lovers and patrons of poetry. This was to become the center of a bitter dispute between Pound and herself, with both parties appearing in print in *Poetry*. Pound vehemently attacked the motto, and Monroe's riposte soon followed in the next issue. Pound had a different conception of the role of the masses from Monroe's. "The artist is not dependent upon the multitude of his listeners," he said. "Humanity is the rich effluvium, it is the waste and the manure and the soil, and from it grows the tree of the arts. As the plant seizes upon the noble particles of the earth, upon the light-seeking and the intrepid, so does the artist upon those souls which do not fear transfusion and transmutation, which dare become the body of the god" (Pound in Harriet Monroe I. 4 1914 29). Wyndham Lewis expressed the same idea in *Blast*: "WE NEED THE UNCONSCIOUSNESS OF HUMANITY—their stupidity, animalism and dreams" (Faulkner 42; Lewis's emphasis). Monroe assigned a more active role for the common reader while Pound argued that without the artist, the "rabble" was adrift. "They dare not inspect their own souls . . ." and the great audiences of the artist are the "spirits of irony and of destiny and of humor, sitting within him" (Pound in Harriet Monroe I. 4 1913 30), an idea that the many important anthologies like the *Faber Book of Modern Verse* were to echo later. The poet was bound to make the "voyage within," and

the reward was the indulgence of these "spirits." Monroe immediately followed up with an answer in the next issue, and continued the battle whenever the chance arose with barely veiled allusions to Pound. However, even the most casual reader cannot help noticing the convergence of their views on such issues as the aims of the artist. Pound too, in projects like *Bel Esprit*, attempted to free the artist from indigence and Monroe herself would have agreed:

. . . any community which has a group of poets writing and printing their efforts has a little centre of intellectuals and emotional excitement which will contend against the drying-up process—the hardening and standardizing of individual and communal life—which is the greatest danger, save war, our civilization faces (Harriet Monroe 1938 34).

Again, the resemblance of the "centre" to Lewis's and Pound's "Vortex" needs no elaboration. Monroe's observation is also reminiscent of Pound's often-repeated statement, "Poets are the antennae of the race." In an obvious answer to Pound's "effluvium" passage quoted above, she goes on, "[Public patronage] is a democratic doctrine, to be opposed by the aristocrats of art who feel that genius springs, like a gorgeous child, out of the decomposing refuse of the worst of all possible worlds" (Harriet Monroe 36). These issues were to be at the heart of Modernist poetics for at least the next three decades, and were writ large never more than in anthologies.

Poetry was only one of the earliest and most important of the little magazines that enabled Pound, Eliot, Wyndham Lewis, and others like him to reach out to an audience. It came at a time when Pound himself was planning to publish his own magazine with his meagre resources, and Harriet Monroe's periodical was truly a windfall. He eagerly anticipated a Risorgimento in America that would make "the Italian Renaissance look like a tempest in a tea pot!" (Paige 10) and implicitly assigned to the magazine the role of a midwife. Here, Pound addressed readers and fellow-poets alike, and attempted to "educate" them about "true" poetry and its production. Typically, for example, he gave poets a list of what they should *not* do, rather than preach to them about what they should. This took the form of a pamphlet titled "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste" that appeared in *Poetry* I. 6 1913 200-206. Harriet Monroe's magazine was open to poets of all nations, and Pound only wanted that the work should be new. In other words, he was attempting to retrieve the individuality of his addressees from a morass of extraneous influences and dead habits. The intrusion of the idea of nationality into literature in such classifications as American literature, was bitterly frustrating since the art was to be the saviour of civilization as a whole. For him, foreign influences, especially French ones, were welcome and he wrote to Harriet Monroe that their magazine would present these influences on a regular basis, since their continuous appearance would have the desired effects in the long run:

I think we might print one French poem a month. *My idea of our policy is this: We support American poets—preferably the young ones who have a serious determination to produce master-work. We import only*

such work as is better than that produced at home. The best foreign stuff, the stuff well above mediocrity, or the experiments that seem serious, and seriously and sanely directed toward the development of The Art of Poetry (Paige 10-11; Pound's emphasis).

Poetry, by collecting such works in an anthological spirit, would be the American writers' window to European influences, and a school for the new poets. While enriching the renaissance, these European imports, along with American influences, would form the two main pillars of poetry in the United States—and contribute to the Anthology Wars waged through the 1950s to the 1970s.

The understanding of poetry was possible only after an exposure to select great writers, and Pound often presented, whenever the opportunity arose, lists of works in a form unmistakably like that of an anthology, “Without the foregoing MINIMUM of poetry in other languages you simply will not know 'where English poetry comes'” (Pound 1927 57). He continued this idea with Harriet Monroe's magazine in which he published H. D., Rabindranath Tagore, Frost and Eliot, to name a few, frequently against Monroe's own judgment, sometimes jeopardizing even their relationship. The editor's great reluctance to print *Prufrock*, taking six long months to publish the poem after receiving it, is a case in point. Pound, in a letter to his teacher, Dr Felix Schelling, once referred to the little magazine as “distressful” acknowledging at the same time that it did print some good poetry. His own works too went into the magazine, and through some of them he offered *Poetry* the “chance to be modern, to go blindfoldedly to be modern, to

produce as many green bilious attacks throughout the length and breadth of the U. S. A. as there are fungoid members of the American academy" (Paige 24). Letters such as this draw our notice to the primacy of the academic agenda of contemporary writers, a commitment that Harriet Monroe continued with her anthology, *The New Poetry* (1917). However, it was only competition from the anthology, *Others*, published annually beginning in 1917, and Margaret C. Anderson's *The Little Review*, that she dumped a poetry that focused on nature and other such ideas which were passé, and turned to subjects that the new poets approved. In an implicit tribute to the magazine when he planned *Des Imagistes*, Pound took about half (thirty one of the sixty four poems) of the anthology's contents from *Poetry*. The respect that the magazine commanded can be gauged from the fact that a poet like T. S. Eliot, too, who was moved to indignation, albeit a helpless one, to see his poems in Louis Untermeyer's anthology, *Modern American Poetry* (1921), was most willing to have his poems published in Monroe's magazine, and was very apologetic when he could not allow the publication of "Prufrock" in her anthology, *The New Poetry* in 1917. Instead, he offered her any other work she cared to choose (Valerie Eliot 141). It might also be mentioned here in passing that, admittedly for Eliot, *Poetry*, along with the *International Journal of Ethics*, was the main source of income in the early days (Valerie Eliot 126).

Perhaps the single most important fact about the little magazine such as *Poetry* was that it was conceived of in an anthological role. Anyway, that was how many poets viewed it. For example, George Sterling was awed and embarrassed to find himself beside Yeats in the magazine's third issue. "When I saw my work next to Yeats," he

wrote to the editor, Harriet Monroe, "I regretted more than ever that they (Sterling's poems) were not my best work. Don't you think you were a bit cruel? Well, next time I hope to do better—and please put me in with someone my size" (Monroe 1938 255). And Ezra Pound, albeit in a different way, was also disturbed to find himself and Yeats along with "that awful rabble" that often appeared there (Paige 50). The anthology, as well as the little magazine, was a forum that somehow gave the reader the impression that a poet was known by the company he kept. W. C. Williams was right in assigning the little magazine the exclusive function of a space where the poet looked for perfection. He wrote to Harriet Monroe in March 1913, "*Poetry* I saw accepting verse of this kind: that is verse with perhaps nothing else in it but life—this alone, regardless of possible imperfections, for no new thing comes through perfect. In the same way the Impressionists had to be accepted for the sake of art's very life—in spite of bad drawing" (Thirlwall 24). The "bad" writing may not be identified as such immediately, but time would tell if it was preserved in the little magazines and anthologies. These were alembics that distilled the good from the bad, often at the risk of stirring up a considerable controversy and enmity in various quarters. The publication of some of the early poems and the Imagists is a good example. The group split up on grounds of poetics and disputes over what should be included or left out from the anthology.

In her autobiography, Harriet Monroe reminisces about the year 1912 which was ushered in with the publication of Vachel Lindsay's "General William Booth Enters into Heaven," a poem that was at once, for a Louisville reader, "as deeply reverent as it was daring, shocking and upsetting" (Harriet Monroe 1938, 295). But the same

correspondent, significantly, had no word on H. D.'s Greek-inspired poems. One might speculate that though the reader was surprised, or simply did not understand the Imagist's poems, his silence was due to their appearance in a magazine that was, in his words, "certain to play a great part in the development of American poetry" (Harriet Monroe 1938 295). The magazine was probably successful at least in deflecting criticism if it did not actually win over the correspondent to the Imagists. Amy Lowell's biographer, Foster Damon saw three causes for *Poetry*'s success: Monroe's timely appearance on the scene when there was a need of a magazine for a few new talents who had already arrived; her international outlook; and her insistence on paying the poets who thus discovered, literally, a new value for their work (Harriet Monroe 1938 295). The Imagist poets, for their part, left nobody indifferent, arousing either the most hostile responses or an unstinting praise from Amy Lowell, for example, who saw in Pound's "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste" "the soundest comments on technique since Leigh Hunt's *Imagination and Fancy*" (Harriet Monroe 1938 296). There followed a steady stream of contributors to the magazine, many of them poets who subscribed to the Imagist ideology: William Carlos Williams, F. S. Flint, Skipwith Cannell and Allen Upward. The *Poetry* issue of March 1913 printed Flint's article on Imagism, and Pound's "A Few Don'ts" that were to have the profoundest influence on the history of modern poetry as well as the magazine itself. Of direct significance for the Imagists themselves was the editorial that elaborated and explained the true range of their work. "It will be seen," wrote the editor, "that Imagism is not necessarily associated with Hellenic subjects, or with vers libre as a prescribed form" (quoted in Harriet Monroe 1938 296). Her magazine was instrumental in correcting the ossified view of Imagism among the readers. Right from the beginning,

eclecticism and individuality were to be the characteristic features of some of its contributors.

Similar to *Poetry* in aims, but wholly different in attitude towards the public, was Margaret C. Anderson's *The Little Review* which was first published in 1914, and claimed inspiration from Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Pre-Raphaelite magazine, *The Germ*. The new magazine learned from the mistakes of the earlier publication even as it expressed its sympathy for it (Anderson I. 1 1914 1). The magazine emphatically purported to be elitist: "We shall brook no compromise with the public taste," an idea that could not be more at variance with *Poetry*'s. The editor declared her intention to go against the general public even at the risk of being called "insane" (Anderson I.1 1914 20). She perhaps regarded insanity, as she conceived it, to be an honour because, quoting Oscar Wilde, she said that the worship of beauty was "too splendid to be sane)" (Anderson I. 1 1914 2). But the magazine had quite a few higher aims that coincided wonderfully with those of the new poets. Anderson wanted that her magazine should reflect "not merely beauty, not merely happiness, but a quality which proceeds from the *intensity* with which both beauty and ugliness, pleasure and pain, are present" (Anderson I. 1 1914 2; Anderson's emphasis). With this aim, the editor did not bother about anything else, not even about running into debts, winning a deserving, if grudging tribute from Harriet Monroe (Harriet Monroe 1938 240).

The aims, and the heavy emphasis that Harriet Monroe puts on the poetic aspect of her magazine that borders on the redundant, are a study in contrast with Andersen's. For

the *Little Review*, criticism was as important and as creative as art itself. In her very first issue, (Anderson I. 1 1914 1), she unequivocally declares the former to be the other half of the latter. It is the "ambitious aim" of the magazine to encourage criticism in a country that is living "too swiftly" (Anderson I. 1 1914 1) to indulge in it. This is not to be an amateurish and lazy interpretation, but something "that shall be fresh and constructive from the artist's point of view. Criticism is never merely an interpretive function; it *is* creation: it gives birth!" (Anderson I. 1 1914 1; her emphasis). In the wake of such ideas followed A. C. Henderson's "Don'ts for Critics" (Henderson in Anderson III. 4. 1914), which was in the critical counterpart of Pound's "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste" meant for the poet. It can be creative by blending "philosophy and poetry" (Anderson I. 1 1914 2). Intriguingly, publication of work by artists is mentioned almost as an afterthought:

Also, we mean to print articles, poems, stories that seem definitely interesting, or—to use the much-abused adjective—vital. Our point of view shall not be restrictive; we may present the several judgements of our various enthusiastic contributors on one subject in the same issue. The net effect we hope will be stimulating and what we like to call releasing (Anderson I. 1 1914 2).

Anderson's carefully defined demands from artists and critics strike us again here. Her progress from "interesting" to "vital" establishes a connection with the idea of "birth" that she also mentions in this passage. Immensely suggestive is the word "releasing" which, in the context of the radical role art is supposed to play, rises beyond the

Aristotelian catharsis, and hints at the release of energies for revolution which she claims art is, as we shall see. The privileging of criticism warranted special attention and in this context, we can place Alice Henderson's balancing of "Some Don'ts by an Imagiste," meant for poets by "Don'ts for Critics" meant for the addresses in the title, but as the note following the title makes it clear, the article has a much wider scope than Imagist poetry: "Apropos of recent criticisms of Imagism, vers libre, and modern poetry generally" (Henderson in Anderson III. 1 1916 12-14).

Unlike *Poetry* again, which was the product of various contributors who gave money and labour, Anderson's magazine is a single person's show, as she proudly proclaimed: ". . . since THE LITTLE REVIEW, which is neither directly nor indirectly connected in any way with any organization, society, company, cult or any movement, is the personal enterprise of the editor, it shall enjoy that untrammelled liberty which is the life of Art" (Anderson 1914 2; author's emphasis). An illustration of this liberalism is an article by George Soule titled "Tagore as a Dynamic" (Soule 1. 1 1914 : 32-33) which is printed with the note, "We do not agree that Tagore is a dynamic; we find him a poet whose music is more interesting than his thinking. But we are glad to print this interesting analysis" (Anderson 1.1 1914 : 32). For her, good poetry could come from anywhere, and she printed the poems of Arthur Davison Ficke modelled on the hokku. *The Little Review* welcomed the ancient influences that writers brought to their work:

In all the world there is no such thing as an old sunrise, an old wind
upon the cheeks, or an old kiss from the lips of your beloved; and in the craft

of writing there can be no such thing as age in the souls of young poets and novelists who demand for themselves the right to stand up and be counted among the soldiers of the new. That there are such youths is brother to the fact that there are young cubists, and futurists, anarchists and socialists, and feminists; it is the promise of a perpetual sweetness (Sherwood Anderson I. 1 1914 : 23).

Often disappointed with *Poetry*, (Paige 107), Pound was glad to be Foreign Correspondent for the *Little Review* for he was desperate to find a place where he could appear regularly along with T. S. Eliot and Wyndham Lewis if the latter came back from the War. It was the defiant boast of this magazine that it was "the most unique journal in existence," as it proclaimed on its first pages from very early on, and its readers conveyed their consent with great alacrity, in the sixth issue itself. One correspondent, signing only as S. H. G., writes, "The thing (the *Little Review*) has assumed a nervous importance to me of an emotional experience foreseen and inevitable. And now that I have finished the June issue I can truthfully say there isn't a line in it I wouldn't have been poorer without. That couldn't be said about any magazine ever published" (S. H. G., letter, Anderson 1914 54). Anderson put the *fin de siècle* on its head in an article called "A Real Magazine" by subscribing to the credo of "Life for Art's sake" (Anderson 1916 1). It believed in the "Individual rather than in Incomplete people, in an Age of Imagination rather than of Reasonableness; a magazine interested in Past, Present, and Future, but particularly in the New Hellenism; a magazine written for Intelligent People who can Feel, whose philosophy is Applied Anarchism, whose policy is a Will to Splendour of

Life, and whose function is—to express itself (Anderson 1916 1). There was another important justification for the magazine's existence. This was its focus on the academy, an interest that Anderson elaborated in response to a correspondent's letter which enquired if *The Little Review* would "stir the hearts of college men and women—those who have not yet been completely philistinized by their 'vocational guides'; college men and women who in other countries have always been the torch-bearers, the advance-guard and martyrs in the fight for truth and ideals" ("Gaudeamus" 56). Her reply clearly perceived the problem the reader touched upon, and, indeed went deeper, emphasizing the primacy of the academy in the view of the editor: "It was a definite impulse in this direction (i.e. towards influencing the academy) which gave birth to THE LITTLE REVIEW" (Anderson 1914 36). She goes on to add, ". . . we believe in colleges on the same general basis that we believe in many other disciplines: it is impossible ever to learn too much about a subject. But we know there is something seriously wrong with colleges; and far graver danger than philistinization seems to us to lie in that hysterical confusion of values which causes our college students to see small things as big ones and let the big ones slip by" (Anderson 1914 36-37). The renaissance or revolution was to happen primarily in the classroom.

Anderson's methods of cajoling the true work of art from writers were certainly unique, and unparalleled in the history of any little magazine. She was constantly defining and elaborating such ideas as Art, Criticism, and Philosophy, never letting the reading public be content with vague impressions about them. Not satisfied with the merely good, she wanted "Art" and when she did not get it, she left the first few pages in

one issue of her magazine blank as a protest against the indifferent work she was being sent. The uniqueness of her editorial agenda makes it worth quoting in full:

I am afraid to write anything; I am ashamed.

I have been realizing the ridiculous tragedy of *The Little Review*. It has been published over two years without coming near its ideal.

The ultimate reason for life is art. I don't know what they mean when they talk about art for life's sake. You don't make art so that you may live; you do just the reverse of that. Life takes care of itself, rolls on from the first push, and then falls over the edge. Art uses up all the life it can get—and remains forever. Art for art's sake is merely a sensible statement of the most self-evident fact in the world. It has always been the easy creed of charlatans; but what does that matter? It has always been the faith of the strongest.

Well—I wanted art in *The Little Review*, There has been a little of it, just a very little ... It is tragic, I tell you.

And Revolution? Revolution *is* Art. You want free people just as you want the Venus that was modeled by the sea ... All my inadequate stammerings about Emma Goldman have been to show

her as the artist she is: a great artist, working in her own material as Michael Angelo worked in his.

Now we shall have art in this magazine or we shall stop publishing it. I don't care where it comes from—America or the South Sea Islands. I don't care whether it is brought by youth or age. I only want the miracle!

Where are the artists? Where is some new Pater, and how will his "She is older than the rocks among which she sits" sound to us? Where is some new Arthur Symonds with his version of "Peter Weyland"? Where is a Henry James and a Hardy and Bjornson and an Andreyev for us? Where is a Jean-Christophe who will let us publish his songs?

Helen Hoyt, you have a poem in this issue called *The Tree*. It is not Art; it is merely a rather good poem. You could have made it Art. Do it every time, for the love of the gods! "Sue Golden" has one about Jim and Arabella. It has an interesting idea that many people need to understand, why not make Art of it? I know one of hers which begins, "My body is too frail for these great moods"—and miracle in it.

I loathe compromise, and yet I have been compromising in every issue by putting in things that were "almost good" or "interesting enough" "important." There will be no more of it. If there is only one really beautiful thing for the September number it shall go in and the other pages will be left blank.

Come on all of you!

In the next issue (*The Little Review* III 6 1916), the magazine lived up to, and illustrated its claim of uniqueness, by not printing any poems, and leaving pages 2 to 13 blank. It was, the editor explains on the title page, the *Little Review's* hope "to become a magazine of Art. The September issue is offered as a Want Ad" (Anderson III. 7 1916 1). The editor, in a display of literary machismo, had called the *Little Review* in the first article "A Real Magazine" in her August edition of the same year. Quite consistent with this attitude was the conversational and exhortatory tone of the article. In daring and innovativeness in spurring artistic activity, this issue was unique, and the only one that could come close to it might be Wyndham Lewis's *Blast* with its explosive title and typographical planning. Almost immediately, the "want ad" found Pound who responded to it with an article, "Das Schone Papier Vegeudet" (Pound in Anderson III. 7 1916: 1617) and made the Anderson's magazine a primary place to publish his work for sometime.

Anderson's little article, which is in some ways a reaffirmation of the magazine's manifesto, throws interesting light on the significance and definition of art. In her view, art was a supreme achievement that was not merely good, and could be reached only after a great effort. The reference to Pater's passage is remarkable as an identification of a poetic patch in the middle of a prose piece. For the "Modernists" prose was not very different from poetry. The Imagists, for example, quoting Paul Fort insist, "Prose and poetry are but one instrument, graduated" (Jones 149). Yeats, we shall see, was to use the Pater passage, rewritten in *vers libre*, as the first poem in his anthology, *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, some twenty years later in 1936. The more advanced of the magazine editors had already arrived at the poetic principles of "Modernism" and while we cannot say that Yeats got the idea from Anderson, he certainly confirmed her poetic instincts, and, incidentally, the magazine's ability to anticipate the future.

The *Little Review*'s vision of the future was also the reason behind Anderson's willingness to encourage new poets by publishing them. In almost every issue in the first few years, she gave generous space to aspiring poets such as Arthur Davison Ficke and Charles Ashleigh with the latter making a name for himself as a poet of the left. What is more, long before Pound and T. S. Eliot noticed the decadence in the *vers libre* movement, the *Little Review* published articles by Eunice Tietjens and others debating its efficacy for poetry in such articles as "The Spiritual Dangers of Vers Libre" (*The Little Review* I. 8 Nov 1914 pp. 25-29), and in Ficke's "Defence of Vers Libre" (*The Little Review* I. 9 Dec 1914 pp 19-23) The *Little Review* was also to be host to such radical experimenters as Baroness Elsie von Freytag-Loringhoven whose work in the visual arts

would be as astonishing as her poetry. Anderson's publication of James Joyce's *Ulysses* is itself an epic in courage and fortitude with few parallels.

The odds against which the protagonists of the new poetry and the arts, like Anderson, had to fight can be gauged from the fact that financial help, which was one of the most important considerations of publication, was hard to come by. "The most difficult business in life is to get advertisements for an 'artistic' magazine—particularly for one that has the added stigmata of being a free lance . . . On the following pages you will find the 'ads' we might have had in this issue, but haven't (Anderson III. 5 56-63). Anderson wanted her journal to be "educative" to the readers, and hence the (unpaid for) "ads" that appear at the end. These "ads" were intended to draw the attention of the readers to those books that the editor thought were a part of the necessary reading for her subscribers, much like the book alerts of later times.

The survival of the *Little Review*, especially in its earlier days, is shrouded in mystery, more so when we see its later travails as evidenced by Anderson's appeals for financial support through advertisements and requests to readers themselves to get more subscribers. It was finally suppressed for printing some "objectionable" scenes from Joyce's *Ulysses*, and it ceased publication. The magazine had taken many classics of Modernism to all kinds of readers, from Virginia Woolf to the ordinary subscriber who awaited it impatiently every month. Its role in shaping Modernism has few parallels.

The multiplicity of the magazines like *Poetry* and the *Little Review* can be explained by the differences in their aims, and the problems they chose to address. For example, Harriet Monroe focused on providing space for the poet; Anderson desired to inspire criticism as well as invite other artists from different fields such as painting and music in a symbiotic relationship to encourage each other. But few magazines of the time were as overtly and consistently hostile to a menace to the art, namely, the attitude of the governments in various countries, as Ezra Pound's *Exile*. His quarrels with the authorities focused mainly on copyright laws that made good books hard for the public to obtain. It is symbolic of his disgust with the English-speaking nations that he prints a part of the copyright claims of the magazine in French: "TOUS DROITS RESERVES. COPYRIGHTS FULLY PROTECTED IN ALL COUNTRIES *INCLUDING* THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA . . ." (Pound 1927 copyright page; Pound's emphasis). America is singled out for special criticism, for, it is a "distressed country" (Pound 1. 1927 89). The hope of the *Exile* was to awaken people into addressing these problems, for what was involved was nothing less than the survival of civilization itself, since only poetry could cleanse language of its vagueness and make it a fit vehicle for laws on which culture depended.

The Exile was a continuation of Pound's other editorial enterprise, *The Catholic Anthology* (1917), about which he says that he "presented a certain program of authors" and continues "in starting a new review I intend to present, or at least to examine the possibility of presenting an equally interesting line-up" (Pound 1927 88). In the earlier collection, the editorial hand drew back from a preface or an introduction, and the choice

of the word "present" here goes to explain why. Not indulging in a rhetorical device which Pound considered an introduction to be (his term for it is "yatter"), was consistent with literary composition at its best, for, a good writer does not describe but "presents," as Shakespeare was doing when he wrote "dawn in russet mantle clad" (Ellmann and Feidelson Ed. 144). The editor was similarly "presenting" writers to the audiences and letting their poetry talk for itself. Even for the first edition of the *Exile* itself, the editorial was printed last, as if to emphasise its relatively insignificant nature.

Pound, as a matter of fact, never really forgot his twelve-volume dream anthology which repeatedly haunted him, and the *Exile* is one more attempt in that direction with the hope that the blueprint, a list of authors, given in the little magazine would inspire and guide other editors to construct that "National Gallery" for poetry.

The *Exile* was specifically aimed at providing a place for a "special sort of writing" (Pound 1. 1927 88), presumably because no other magazine or publication would be hospitable to it. It claimed to be performing a mediatory role by bringing together the government and the "revolutionary elements" over the issues that divided them. Unlike Margaret Anderson, however, Pound bluntly disclaimed any intention to deviate from the strictly literary: "As for our 'joining revolutions' etc. It is unlikely" because revolutions were temporary, and out of the line of the literary artist who "is concerned with producing something that will be enjoyable even after a successful revolution" (Pound 1. 1927 90).

The *Exile* encouraged intertextual readings, creating a tradition through works created by individuals. John Rodker's *Adolphe 1920* can thus be seen in continuation of its "18th century homonym" (Pound 1927a 88), suggesting in the process, "a persistence of type" (Pound 1.1927 89). The anthological effort of bringing together various works either by printing them together or suggesting further reading, or by juxtaposing and comparing them, is central to the project of reviving letters and saving civilisation. Pound seems to have thought of the forces involved in art and civilisation in triads. The elements constituting these triads range from the evil to the bearable and finally to the good. These are "the starters of crazes," people who commercialise art and are at the basement of the triad. The next are the second-rate artists who produce good work, but are inferior to the real artists who produce the classics. The untiring pursuit of the "best" and collecting it in anthologies and collections resembling them is to be situated in this context.

Works of art are the results of the Confucian principle of first creating "order within oneself and "[t]his order or harmony spreads by a sort of contagion without specific efforts" (Pound 2. 1927 35). All that one has to do is to set it going in some such form as the anthology. The editorial intervention is between the reader and the text through introductions, for example, is an unmitigated evil because it is messing with other people's affairs" (Pound 2.1927 35).

The editing of a magazine was never easy for the people involved in it, since it demanded immense amounts of time, money and energy. Sometimes it was even worse because it meant compromising some of their most dearly held principles. The starting of

the *Exile*, for example, was attributed to the only half-humorously to the "perversity" of "Don Ezra" by Richard Aldington who greeted the magazine more with a lament than with a celebration, albeit ironically, glancing darkly at the travails the editor had ahead (Aldington **1.1927 86-87**):

Now, in the eighth lustre of his career
 When the libidinous itch for publicity
 Should long ago have subsided into a placid indifference
 Madly casts away the only true felicity
 For the ignominious servitude
 And distracting toil
 Of Editorship!
 Light fall the blows upon his head—
 For he will need all its thickness—
 And let us regret the fall of this man
 For he once had the courage
 To be silent for several years.

The price the editor had to pay for publishing a magazine such as the *Exile* was the neglect of one's own work and possibly inviting the hostility of the reading public. The *Exile* made its last bow in 1928 with a fairly detailed anthology-like list of what a good reader had to be familiar with, mostly his Pound's own, but also of others' like William Carlos Williams and Robert McAlmon. Even in its final phases, Pound was anthologizing, selecting the best from a list of magazines in which "contemporary

americo-english (sic) non-commercial literature struggled into being" (Pound 4.1928 104).

Pound's friend and collaborator, Percy Wyndham Lewis, appeared with his own *Blast. The Review of the Great English Vortex* (1914), which, living up to its title, not only attempted to destroy the forces of evil as the two men saw them, but also listed out and blessed their protagonists and favorites. The magazine was intended to be a quarterly, but the War forced its closure only after two issues. Its carefully planned typography as well as the title was designed to shock people, and Lewis was extremely successful in achieving this aim.

The renaissance in poetry in the early twentieth-century brought in its wake a surfeit of agendas, manifestos and theories. Their sheer variety was sure to arouse the liveliest controversies and disputes. *Blast's* primary target, as seen in one of its first targets of attack, was abstraction in every form. These abstractions were isolated by having their first letters capitalized, like "Man" or Nature" or "Man in the Street" or "Gentlemen" (Faulkner 42-43). Again, the themes were also the ones which were exhausted by poets over the millennia, as Pound had listed them in his letter to W. C. Williams.

The little magazines and the anthologies edited by the champions of the new poetry were often engaged in a two pronged struggle, the first against an ossified tradition, and the second to exorcize the fetish that surrounded it (the new poetry) in the

minds of the ordinary reader that it was "difficult" or unpoetic due to its resemblance to prose, as also because the ideas were new. The poets had to be "the antennae of the race". The little magazine, along with the anthology, was to take these poets to each other so that one could learn from the others, and also reach out to the general readers. The poets could thus avoid the repetitions of the mistakes in the past. For this reason, Pound and as well as his contemporaries valued any criticism from any quarter, and gave it in turn unflinchingly. The anthology and the magazine were to be the harbingers of the new, and, what was equally important, perform the Herculean task of the cleaning the Augean stables of contemporary language and poetry of their accretions of dead traditions.

Pound and others wrote many articles and reviews in the magazines that reveal an age starved of poetry, and betray their anxiety to "educate" the public and the poets of their times. Finding no suitable models to learn from the poets among their immediate predecessors, they were bound to turn to earlier writers and to non-English poets, mainly to the French. It is very significant that Pound does not recommend either William Butler Yeats or Ford Madox Hueffer as models for the young poets. As he explained later in an article, Yeats with his Symbolist ideas glamorized words, and tended to lapse into sentiment, while Hueffer, with his preference for prose, inevitably lapsed into description (Pound in Harriet Monroe 1912 125). Yet, Pound acknowledges that English letters owe a debt to Yeats because through his "negative" contributions he "stripped English art of many of its faults" (Pound in Harriet Monroe 1912 125). The point is that the periodical took over the task of formally "educating" the reader through the elaboration of poetic principles, by printing the "best" verse, and by spelling out poetic desiderata such as the

rules underlying good poetry. An anthology like *Des Imagistes* followed a little after, and borrowed a lot from, a periodical such as *Poetry*, and could be read in conjunction with it. The anthology itself had specific and carefully defined functions assigned to it, especially in the hands of Pound. It was to measure the improvements made by readers and fellow poets. For, the writers regarded the progress of poetry to be the most important aim, and were not afraid of forging ahead, rejecting or outgrowing their former ideas, if needed. *Poetry* also was to play a vital role in the "education" and financial support of artists.

The little magazine was often in many ways a mine of subtle ideas and suggestions that revealed themselves only to the initiated, as Margaret Anderson, editor of the *Little Review* understood too well when she declared her contempt for the ordinary masses. There were other more subtle uses to which poets could put the magazine. A clever editor could make it a sort of literary history, as Pound said while advising Zukofsky on how to edit *Poetry*, by relegating bad writers "to the historic section in small print. Ten or a dozen poems cover that" (Ahearn 49). A poet like Robert Frost could manipulate the magazine in what Frank Lentricchia called a "cunning" search for fame and popularity. Writing to John Bartlett, Frost said, ". . . you must get me a notice in the most literary of the Vancouver dailies and weeklies. Make it personal if you like, a sort of news item" (Thompson 72). Frost was surely aware that the "most literary of the . . . dailies and weeklies" would probably have the smallest number of readers, and this reduced the impact of the "cunning" that Lentricchia sees in Frost. The point simply is that the little magazine was the best place from which to launch a poetic career, even a most ambitious one that wanted to appeal to "readers of all sorts." Frost wanted success,

if possible, among the connoisseurs, at least to begin with. The little magazine was also a storehouse from which anthologists could later draw. Alfred Kreyemborg gives a list of the sister magazines that so generously lent their poems for his *Others* anthology. It was the first site that offered hospitality to poets who rejected the comforts that accrued from conformity to the tastes of the masses. Johanna E. Vondeling, in an article titled "The Manifest Professional: Manifestos and Modernist Legitimation" (*College Literature* 27:2, Spring 2000), declares that the magazine was not intended for mass consumption. While this might be true, the masses were implicitly defined as people who were not interested in literature. These would, of course, include a lot of rich people and aristocrats, and we remember that in *The ABC of Reading*, Pound mentions with satisfaction that the best critic in Gongora's Spain was a cobbler (Pound 1934 54). In fact the magazines reflect an ambiguous and complex attitude that the writers had towards the reading public. "I am the kind of fool who believes in the public," writes Pound, the most patrician of poets, to Harriet Monroe (Paige 24). The magazine is a confluence of history, manifesto, poetics and publicity.

V

The little magazine itself, when finally published, was a synergy of many initiatives to promote the cause, and very high in significance would be the review. It is remarkable that many magazines should claim to be reviews in their very names, and it would be impossible to find any of them which did not carry some in every issue. As for the writers themselves, everyone resorted to the review in its various forms, either

publicly, mostly in the little magazines or privately in letters, for example. The popularity of the reviews in the magazines among writers, readers and magazine editors can surely be attributed to its brevity, apart from its acknowledged usefulness. It could range from a few pages in length to what Margaret Anderson called "sentence reviews," though the name was not literally applicable as these often ran into more than one sentence. Busy writers could take time off to pitch in for a friend or a favorite writer, as Pound did for Robert Frost in *Poetry* to publicize *A Boy's Will*, and readers could get a preview of the book they were going to read. It was certainly more objective than the blurb, and often a part of it was used for one at least in part. The contribution of this initiative would be hard to exaggerate in an age without the "book alerts" of modern times. In this sense it can be said to be literally in the vanguard of literature, and in the efforts to popularise it. As Frost would do about the same time with the help of a student, Rupert Brooke confided in Marsh that he would get Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch or A. C. Benson to review *Georgian Poetry* in the *Review* (Keynes ed. 1968 406). The similarities in strategies among the various schools witness not only the limited range of options for publicity available, but also the confluence of ideas among poets and editors.

In fact, even the critics around the publication of the Georgian anthologies seemed to have understood and appreciated the potential of the review. For them, it was a measure of the poet's claim to fame and acceptance among the reading public. An anonymous reviewer in the *Nation* expresses a sympathy, for some of the Georgian poets: "It is the fate of poets not yet famous to be inadequately reviewed" and took it as sign of what many "Modernist" writers would be faced with, that poetry is "difficult"

(Rogers ed. 85). But then, the review itself was no substitute for the anthology itself and Marsh's publication were the best proof of the new dawn for poetry.

The shortness of the review in no way hampered its ability to "educate" readers, even the sophisticated ones. Its focus on selected issues offered a kind of practical criticism. As an example, we can consider Anderson's review of Rupert Brooke's poetry in the *Little Review*. "Mr. Brooke," she writes, stands very happily between a poet like Alfred Noyes, in whom one rarely finds . . . careful selection, and the esthetes in whose agony in that direction becomes monotonous" (Anderson 1914 23). George Soule, himself a poet and reviewer, found the Anderson review "masterly" and useful, and revealing Brooke in a new light. Again, in her review of John Galsworthy's *The Dark Flower*, Anderson quotes and elaborates on its beauties and draws attention to the poetic qualities of its prose, an important issue in Modernism. Equally important to the Modernists was the presentation of life and reality, and Anderson addresses the critics who found fault with Galsworthy for his supposed immorality. Not only was this a defence of a sincere and committed writer, but also was "educative" of the readers in particular about his aims and principles, and Modernism's in general. The role of the review in an age of a surfeit in literary production can become central. In the style of an anthology, the review performed the duty of retrieving the good in the midst of the bad. Surveying the writers in the monthly *Lyric Year*, Harriet Monroe picks out the twenty-year old Edna St. Vincent Millay from among a host of less talented writers who were headed for oblivion (Harriet Monroe 1913 131). The reviewer uses the opportunity to advise the sister magazine on principles of selection for future use. The reader cannot

miss the note of camaraderie implicit in the advice. We may note, in passing, that the reviews of some Modernist writers were not completely devoid of humour. We read for instance, about T. S. Eliot who reviewed a book, and then he himself protesting against it in later issues under various pseudonyms.

The review, because it applied the standards by which a book ought to be judged, was itself a manifesto in disguise. It also made incidental but valuable contributions to literary theory. Eliot, again, developed some of his most widely acclaimed contributions to critical jargon through reviews such as the one of H. J. C. Grierson's anthology, *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems and of the Seventeenth Century* (1921). His terms like "dissociation of sensibility" have become permanent features of literary criticism and were so successful as to embarrass Eliot himself. The review had a life far beyond its intended passing nature. The reviews helped develop touchstones by which a new poetry evolved the terms of its own on which it would be analysed and judged.

More detailed than the notes that any anthology could offer, the review presents, in short and manageable doses, Modernism's operating ideas by putting the new in the context of the old, facilitating a better understanding of both. An Ezra Pound review of Rabindranath Tagore's work will clarify the point. Aiming at a British and an American audience, he puts the Indian writer in the context of the troubadours and other European writers, ancient and modern, who were familiar to the readers. "If you refine the art of the troubadours, combine it with that of the Pleiade, and add to it the sound unit of the most advanced acoustics in *vers libre*, you will get something like the system of Bengali verse"

(Pound in Harriet Monroe ed. 1912 92). Describing Tagore's work as an "event" in European letters, he foresees a fraternity of world writers. The review was intended to prepare the readers for this great event. In sum, the review too tended towards the sifting of the bad from the good, and ultimately aimed at ensuring the survival of the "best," and was thus a definite movement towards anthologizing.

VI

It is axiomatic of Modernism that a movement is either launched by, or celebrated through, a manifesto. The latter's inevitability for the Modernists is underscored by Eunice Tietjens who, reviewing Wyndham Lewis's *Blast* says, "No woman of olden times found without a shift could be more ashamed than a new cult today found without a Manifesto" (Tietjens in Anderson ed. 1914 34). Johanna Vondeling has called our attention to the deeply professional and groupist tendencies of knowledge-groups at the turn of twentieth century manifested in the series of manifestos that flagged off artistic/poetic movements. "More complex than a passing fad, the proliferation of manifestos in the early years of this century suggests the Modernist artist's efforts to forestall marginalization by the corporate economy that predominates America since roughly the 1890s . . . [These] manifestos responded to this perceived threat by articulating uniquely Modernist approaches to the problem of group identity Likewise, Modernist manifestos asserted the artist-critic's authority through the defamiliarization of conventional prestige symbols such as the museum and the university. Perhaps most revealingly, they often encouraged their readers to question both

the fixity of language systems and the validity of the social or cultural institutions those systems produce" (Vondeling 129). It would, therefore, be worthwhile considering at least select manifestos of the period. While some of them, of course, served as blueprints for later anthologies, others suggested lists, as it were, for required reading among poets, critics, or ordinary readers. Ezra Pound's "Retrospect" (1918) is one such example. His use of expressions revealing exasperation such as "My crowing about . . .," when referring to his list of recommended writers, a rudimentary anthology again, he draws our attention to the efforts of poets like himself that were aimed at preparing readers and poets for the renaissance. The point is that he always thought of perfecting and popularising poetry in terms of the anthology.

The sheer variety of the manifestos was bound to arouse criticism and dissent, but at least two eminent writers of the time questioned their very rationale. In *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* (1927) Laura Riding and Robert Graves, examining the Imagist movement, write, "... the issuing of a public manifesto of Imagism, its massed organization as a literary party with a defined political programme, the war it carried on with reviewers, the annual appearance of an Imagist anthology—all this revealed it as a stunt of commercial advertisers to whom poetic results meant a popular demand for their work, not the discovery of new values in poetry with an indifference to the recognition they received" (Riding and Graves 1927 117). The criticism is unexceptionable when it decries the politicization of poetry, and its being written to an agenda which, in effect, can only be a straitjacket. "The Imagists had decided beforehand that they wanted to express 'new moods,' and in free verse (or cadence). They *believed* in free verse; and to

believe in one way of writing poetry as against another is to have the attitude of a quack rather than a scientist towards one's art, to be in a position of constantly selling one's ideas rather than constantly submitting them to new tests. That is, they wanted to be *new* rather than to be poets; to say everything that had been already said before in a slightly different way" (Riding and Graves 1927 117). But we cannot help feeling that the writers of the book are less than fair if only because they accuse the Imagists of not doing things they had no desire to do. For example, it was one of the articles of their faith that the standards of poetry were universal and timeless, which makes the charge of an obsession with newness come unstuck. Further, the Imagists insisted that they were only writing in accordance with the canons of good poetry that were found in the best poets and made clear their contempt for the reader who *misunderstood* their work, not for the reader who *disagreed* with them (*Some Imagist Poets* 1915 vi).

The manifesto was a response to, and in some measure, cause of, the new interest that was perceived to be forming for poetry and constituted a major initiative that the poets undertook. Poetry had given up the ideal of "art for art's sake" and was beginning to reflect social as well as aesthetic concerns. These new ideals were elucidated, as nowhere else, in the manifestos that often appeared in little magazines. Even the mastheads of these publications can be regarded as manifestos, when, for example, they proclaimed their attitude towards the reading public. The most remarkable fact, apart from the sheer number of manifestos, was their range and scope. They reflected continental and local influences and predilections too. They attempted to replace old values and usher in new ones. The manifesto seems to span and mediate between two

aims as expressed by Margaret Anderson: "If we are to prove that we have a real 'function' it will be this: of deprecating values that have ceased to be important and appreciating new ones that have emerged—or, as I should say, values that *are about to become unimportant* and those that *are about to emerge*" (Anderson 1915 3; Anderson's emphases). All of the manifestos were informed by a zeal that had its origins in the belief that language was crucial to the preservation of civilization, and its health consequently, was something that could not be compromised on. As Vondeling notes, ". . . the manifestos stand as perhaps the most aggressive attempts to professionalize modern art" (Vondeling 129). The same author, quoting Richard Aldington, declares that the manifestos were meant for public consumption (Vondeling 130). It was, in other words, a promise that the poet was making to the readers to write a certain kind of poetry that the situation demanded.

Quite often, two or more manifestos would be conflated by other writers who might subscribe to some aspects of these different or even conflicting programmes. Thus the Imagists disliked the Futurists even as they admitted that they were their contemporaries. But a writer like Harriet Monroe might borrow from both groups to make a new manifesto for her own magazine. Thus, responding to Ezra Pound's charge that her magazine was catering to the "great audiences" which he took to be the masses, Monroe says, "Modern inventions forcing international travel, inter-racial thought, upon the world have done away with Dante's little audience, with his contempt for the crowd, a contempt which, however, disregarded the fact that his epic, like all the greatest art, was based on the whole life of his time, the common thought and feeling of all the people . . .

Science is explaining more and more the reactions and relations of matter, of life. It becomes increasingly clear that nothing can stand alone, genius least of all" (Monroe 1938 366). The celebration of science and its creations is distinctly Futuristic.

The polemics over popular support for the artists did not hinder the near unanimity of their opinion over the unity and inter-relatedness of the arts, and none expresses this more clearly than the Vorticist manifesto of Ezra Pound. He begins with the writer's rights against the prejudices of the reading public that there is no reason why emotions cannot be conveyed graphically through an "arrangement of shapes, or planes or colours, than they should receive or convey such emotion by an arrangement of musical notes" (Ellmann and Feidelson Ed. 145). The manifesto was thus also an attempt by Modernist writers to broaden their space and enrich their own area through collaborations across the various arts.

The Vorticist manifesto provided an opportunity to Pound to claim his literary ancestry and denounce the rivals he thought were shallow or irrelevant. In this, his main target was the Futurism of F. T. Marinetti whose unprecedented success with the public was surely a cause of much heartburn for Pound (Rainey 41). It is no accident that he makes implied but unmistakable attacks on the Italian's manifesto. Marinetti had, for example, belittled the *Victory of Samothrace* and Pound pointedly emphasises the fact that in its medium, the work had no substitute and was an important contribution to art. In contrast to Futurism's aim to reduce other arts to desuetude and start anew, Vorticism desired to co-exist with them. And yet it laid claim to a uniqueness and newness of its

own in poetry. If, Pound says, he were a painter, he would have started a new school after he experienced the epiphany-like vision in the Paris metro (Ellmann and Feidelson ed. 149). His carefully written and spaced hokku would become a model for compression and clarity in "Modernism" and start a new school. By dealing with it at length in the Vorticist manifesto, he holds it up as an example of a new development in art, an "exhibit" as in an anthology. In fact, he quotes other hokkus in translation and explains them much like an anthologist. His metro poem marked an improvement, in Pound's opinion, over Symbolism, Impressionism, Futurism, and other such movements by liberating the artist from a limited and debilitating dependence on repetitive ideas that were expressed in equally over used techniques. It was a permanent contribution because it established order in the arts: "The statements of "analytics" are "lords" over fact. They are the thrones and dominations that rule over form and recurrence. And in like manner are great works of art lords over fact, over race-long recurrent moods, and over tomorrow" (152). Vorticism was, on Pound's own admission, impossible to sustain throughout a writer's career, but it is what all artists the world over have tried to achieve.

The desire to address the reading public directly was based on the implicit assumption that they would understand the new poetry if they were familiarized with its poetics elaborated most conveniently through manifestos. This public may be an elitist one, albeit in the intellectual sense. Nor were these addresses limited to the public alone, but as the "Few Don'ts by an Imagiste" shows, they could be aimed at fellow poets too. And elaborations of the manifesto might continue long after the formal declarations had served their purpose. Hermann Hageddorn writing in *Poetry* (1913 143) declares that the

poet is bound to preach, as all expression is preaching, but the difference between a poet and a preacher is that the former adopts the direct method of preaching that involves leading the reader to perceive the truth for himself, while the latter is indirect, "approaching the spirit through the mind." He leaves no doubt as to where his sympathies lie. The manifestos of the poets, published or otherwise, were rooted in a few aims shared in common, but their differences were considerable. However, it can be broadly said that the manifesto did provide some kind of guidelines within which poetry could be written. An anthology, such as *Some Imagist Poets* (1915), and its two subsequent editions (1916 and 1917), are examples of how writers can shape and realize their poetics in the form of a manifesto, even if they do not specifically name it as such.

It was through these various initiatives that the writers of the early decades of the twentieth-century established a synergy that was able to pierce through the "adamantine" that Pound and others saw in the ordinary reader. It helped these writers in their struggle against the vested interests, often commercial ones, and saw the work of the poets in print and, finally, on their way to a place in literary history.

Chapter III

Anthologies in the Making: English Modernism

1912-1936

... [F]or mass of good work fit for the anthologies and produced by many hands I do not see any age since the Elizabethan which can compare with ours.

—J. C. Squire, quoted in Ross 140

I

The second decade of the twentieth century saw the first stirrings, sometimes tentative and diffident, of a poetry that was trying to be new and vigorous. The poets may have been revolutionary in varying degrees, in form or in content or both, or not at all, but they were all unanimous in perceiving a renaissance in poetry and a matching renewal of interest on the part of the readers. The writers themselves were further inspired to respond to this renaissance by a variety of activities and initiatives that included little magazines and anthologies, to mention only two. Sometimes, seeking as much freedom as they could, the poets edited these themselves but usually they contributed to other people's publications. Often the attempt was to keep out commercial and non-literary influences as well as a conservative taste that refused to accept the new. Above all, poetry was for them a serious art that demanded a matching response though enjoyment was an equally important consideration. In all these initiatives, their aim was to both preserve their poems, and reach out to a poetry-loving public that was thought to be growing by the day. What makes the story more interesting is the love-hate relationship between these writers and readers that the little magazines, more than any other initiative mentioned above, reflect. These magazines are significant also because they were hosts to a potential canon that was to be realized in the anthologies of the times.

Beginning in 1912, there appeared over a period of ten years, a series of anthologies, five in all, called *Georgian Poetry*. The editor, Sir Edward Howard Marsh, chose the name "Georgian" because it promised a new beginning in the political sense,

and a further hope was that it would rejuvenate poetry as well. Posterity has judged these efforts to be reasonably successful, though many later critics have often dismissed Georgian poetry *in toto* as trivial and childish. Whatever one may say about their work, the Georgians, with their sheer commercial success and by their achievement as poets, showed that there existed a sizable audience for poetry and inspired others, like Ezra Pound for example, to reach out to the reading public through anthologies of their own. In fact, many critics attribute the later tendencies among anthologists to collect the "best" of a year's verse to the Georgian model. The age of the anthology had dawned. Regular or yearly collections were, of course, not new on both sides of the Atlantic. The *Lyric Year* and William Stanley Braithwaite's *Magazine Verse* are two examples. But the Georgian anthologies scaled new heights in reaching the public even if one went only by the statistics.

But before the advent of the Georgians, English poetry saw a brief and limited efflorescence in the works of such writers as G. K. Chesterton, Walter de la Mare, Lascelles Abercrombie and W. H. Davies all of whom would be Georgians too. John Masefield and Davies had for their theme ships and naval subjects, as pointed out by Yeats in his Introduction to the *Oxford Book of Modern Verse* revealing a poetry still occupied, somewhat anachronistically, by the picturesque and the romantic and the latter contributed some fairly old-fashioned love poetry to the Georgian anthologies. Yet, these poets whose careers commenced in the Edwardian age brought in their own innovations that looked forward to the writers who were later to be called "Modernists." Chesterton went to the masses for diction and inspiration while de la Mare made the "voyage

within." Severally and as a group, the Georgians began a movement towards a new poetry that avoided the excesses of the earlier age such as the artificiality these poets perceived in Victorian verse. Probably because they did not have a concerted movement or a school and, in some of the poets like Masfield, the poetic inspiration died early, they played a relatively minor role in literary history. Rudyard Kipling, when he sang of the "white man's burden," did not always sound convincing. But in his best poetry he combines a wonderful sense of realism with a fresh diction that has its roots in the language of the common people. A bookish, ivory tower poetry now moves into barrack rooms and finds in the steam engine a Calvinist determinism (de Sola Pinto 30), impressing the reader as a fine example of what may be called "an association of sensibility." Poetry was shedding its isolationist tendencies and moving back into a rejuvenating relationship with life. All these writers (Kipling, de la Mare Davies and others) were to find a place later in Yeats's anthology, *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse* (1936), which, coming at the end of the first phase of "Modernism," is in effect, a kind of a survey of the poetic scene. Michael Roberts, Yeats's great rival anthologist, mentions only de la Mare in this list as a writer with some modern features, but did not include him in his *Faber Book of Modern Verse* (1936) because he made no contributions to the future trends in poetry. However, all these poets could gain admittance to the eponymous Georgian anthologies. These Edwardian poets were caught in a period of transition when the social milieu of England, which was based on a hereditary class structure, was being replaced by parvenus created by a society that was open to talents. These newly rich people who knew none of the traditions of the aristocratic culture which produced a courtly poetry, or the simple life of the rustic which produced the ballad literature, were

to see a poetry that was refined but uninspired, as in the works of Sir William Watson (de Sola Pinto 43). The Edwardian age proved to be a literary dead end. It was only in the second decade of the century that a movement began that would be one of the first attempts to usher in a renaissance in poetry. This was first to appear as the Georgian revolt under Marsh, but was soon to make its own contribution rather than merely react to the perceived faults of others.

The Georgian movement which Marsh started can be attributed to his interest in contemporary poetry which was aroused following a chance meeting with Francis Meynell as late as 1911. Meynell's commitment to poetry was contagious enough to affect the civil servant so thoroughly that he conceived and published the first of the Georgian anthologies within two years. But the idea needed the stimulus of a poet, who, significantly, planned to launch a movement to rejuvenate poetry through an anthology which would remain central to it. In his autobiography, *A Number of People: A Book of Reminiscences* (1939) Marsh recalls:

There was a general feeling among the younger poets that modern English poetry was very good, and sadly neglected by readers. Rupert [Brooke] announced one evening, sitting half-undressed on his bed, that he conceived a brilliant scheme. He would write a book of poetry, and publish it as a selection from the works of twelve writers, six men and six women, all with the most convincing pseudonyms. That, he thought *must* make them sit up. It occurred to me that as we both believed there were at least twelve flesh-

and-blood poets whose work, if properly thrust under the public's nose, had a chance of producing the effect he desired, it would be simpler to use the material already to hand. Next day (September 20th it was) we lunched in my rooms with [Wilfrid] Gibson and [John] Drinkwater, and Harold Monro and Arundell del Re (editor and sub-editor of the *Poetry Review*), and the plan of the book which was to be published in December under the name of *Georgian Poetry 1911-1912* (Marsh 1939 320-321).

Marsh's recollection reflects a typical Modernist impatience with the poetically indifferent public, as also the hope that somehow they could be awakened into an interest in it, though the irony of Marsh's own newly aroused fondness for contemporary poetry may strike the reader. Edmund Gosse, to whom the first volume of the anthology was dedicated, predicted for Marsh a "place beside Tottel" (Marsh 1939 114) for his anthological efforts. The editor noted with evident satisfaction that the books were a success, for, according to him, they "went up like a rocket" but he also notes later that they came down "like a stick" (Marsh 1939 321). The first volume of the anthology had sales of fifteen thousand and the second sold nineteen thousand copies. The third and fourth reached sixteen thousand and fifteen thousand respectively, and the fifth tapered off at eight thousand. By and large, the Georgian anthologies were a commercial success, a fact that did not go unnoticed by other poets who too recognized the renaissance that was affecting the art.

Even before *Georgian Poetry* was published, there were disagreements not only over inclusions and aims but also over the dedication of the anthology between the two principal figures behind it. Brooke wanted to "shock" the readers into an awareness of the new poetry, but the civil servant could reconcile the views of poetry with those of society, and achieve this aim by appealing to their "sensibilities" instead (Hassall 360). Brooke acquiesced over the selections, but not without a protest the sharpness of which lingers on in spite of the humour: "I find myself believing I can make a rival better selection from the same poets! Of course, I can't set up to advise you, but I can taunt" (quoted in Hassall 362-363). Like the movement of new poetry that was to follow it, Georgian poetry too had a variety, and was equally vigorous in dissent. Brooke wanted very aspect and part of the anthology should convey something, that the anthology's effects should not be limited only to their selections. He thought that even the dedication would be useful in making a statement about contemporary poetry and poets. He was for example, convinced that Yeats deserved the honour more than Robert Bridges who was Marsh's choice, but yet again, the editor had his way, as will be seen below.

The poets of the Georgian anthologies began in a self-conscious rebellion against what in their opinions were the excesses of the Victorians. Once more, Tennyson was for them, as for the Modernists, the prime target as can be seen from Rupert Brooke's parodies of the Victorian's best known poems, "Ulysses" and *In Memoriam* in "Heaven" (Keane 37) and "A Letter to a Live Poet" (Keane 87). There is possibly yet another parody in "The Wayfarers" (Keane 159) which, while ironically glancing at the traditional love poem, also seems to make fun of the quest for knowledge that "Ulysses"

is commonly thought to depict, in lines such as "Do you think there is a far border town,/somewhere/the desert's edge, the last of the lands we know/ Some gaunt eventual hint of any lights/In which I will find you waiting and we will go/Together hand in hand, again, out there/Into the waste we know not, into the night (Keane 159). The point is that the Georgians anticipate the Modernists, and are their natural and ideological allies in a common war against the Victorians. Thanks to the anthologies, we get a truer if less tidier picture of poetry than what the literary histories say.

On a personal note, apart from the Meynell influence, Marsh's conviction of the arrival of a new age in poetry was started by two books, John Masefield's *Everlasting Mercy*, and Rupert Brooke's *Poems*. The former was never respected much by the new poets, and the latter was only beginning to make a name for himself when he died. Marsh was to see his own anthologies derided by most "Modernist" poets, but was also to have the satisfaction of seeing a revival of interest in poetry that enabled him to claim that "in discussing the books, I was not patting (sic) a dead horse" (Marsh 1939 321). Why these poets and critics did not like him is not hard to see. In spite of all his modernity, Marsh did not cleanly break away from what may be called conventional literary history, but chose to stick to it even in the minutiae. His "proud ambiguous adjective 'Georgian'" he "had maintained against some opposition because it was the only way of marking my belief that a new era had begun—Eras are always christened after Sovereigns" (Marsh 1939 320). Such remarks symbolically emphasise the subliminal nature of the Georgian anthologies which, while moving towards the modern, never quite make it. It is noteworthy that Marsh did not think himself the right person to trace poetry in what

Harold Monro called its emerging "new directions" (Marsh 1939 330). The reasons, again, were very personal. He was "catholic to a fault" but had his "own preferences" which did not go into the "new directions" the following of which would end only in a "moribund salutation" (Marsh 1939 320) to those poets. "After this second quietus," he notes, "*Georgian Poetry* was hushed in grim repose" (Marsh 1939 320), a needlessly modest remark after the earlier triumphant note on the revived interest it evoked. Nevertheless, he could go on to assert with justification "the belief that the books had a great deal to do with the marked growth of interest which there has undoubtedly been within the thirteen years since we began" (Marsh 1939 320). It is also notable that Marsh could claim to have introduced a poet like D. H Lawrence, and have such a sworn enemy of trade anthologies as Robert Graves to contribute to the collections. The Georgian collections were not "trade anthologies" if only because half the profits went to the Poetry Bookshop, the publisher, and the rest was shared by the poets. One is tempted to conclude that Marsh may have also confirmed to Harriet Monroe the feasibility of paying the poets she published.

The poetic principles on which the Georgian anthologies were made, again, reflect very personal standards. Marsh wanted the poems he chose to meet three fundamental requirements "which instinct and training had formed in my mind," (Marsh 1939 322), and in the end, demanded at least one of them: intelligibility, musicality, and raciness (Marsh 1939 322-323), and this was the closest that the editor came towards formulating a manifesto. This needs to be read in conjunction with an epigraph appended to the Preface to the first edition, from Lord Dunsany, the Irish dramatist, poet and

essayist, about poets as "artificers," a view that places the writers firmly in the ivory tower since their gaze is turned inward:

Of all the materials for labour, dreams are the hardest; and the artificer in ideas is the chief of workers, who out of nothing will make a piece of work that may stop a child from crying or lead nations to higher things. For what is it to be a poet? It is to see at a glance the glory of the world, to see beauty in all its forms and manifestations, to feel ugliness like a pain, to resent the wrongs of others as one's own, to know mankind as others know single men, to know nature as botanists know a flower, to be thought a fool, to hear at moments the clear voice of God. (<[www. geocities.com](http://www.geocities.com)>).

This epigraph is an accurate summary of the Georgians who still often dealt in the old poetic themes of nature's beauty, and were quite squeamish about any idea that would offend a genteel taste, usually. But on the rare occasions when they were daring enough, their poetry could be as unconstrained as any. In the "Caves of Auvergne" for example, W. J. Turner speaks of a bull with a "sombre, phallic will" in the 1918 edition. While they avoided poeticisms, especially in language, and were keen to adopt the simple rhythms of ordinary speech, they lacked the commitment that most Modernists had towards stretching the language to its limits in the quest to perfect it.

The Georgians were careful not to make a complete break with the past, if only for practical reasons. An overt linkage between the Edwardians and the Georgians was

provided by the inclusion of the Edwardian Chesterton's "Ballad of the White Horse" in their first anthology. It was meant to give respectability and variety to the collection. But the most valuable poet, by far, was John Masefield without whose works being included, the editor was worried that the book would be a financial failure. Masefield himself, and many of the other poets in the anthologies, like Lascelles Abercrombie, were despised by most of the writers who were to be called the Modernists. The Georgian anthologies were outdated even before they were published, but they performed the valuable task of a bridge between the readers and the "Modernists". They were outdated because, as Marsh's insistence on "intelligibility" shows, there was no attempt at innovation, merely a continuity in form and content of prevailing tendencies. The Modernist desire to be ahead of the times, measured in terms of "difficulty," for the readers was "ungenerous" for the editor (Marsh 1939 322). For him poetry mainly had to communicate, not innovate, with respect to themes; nor did it have to stretch the possibilities of language, as the Modernist writers and their champions contended. Marsh's second criterion, musicality, was different, as we shall see, even from that of some of the poets he himself included, like D. H. Lawrence's, for example. "The ear," Marsh writes "changes with the generations, and what is cacophony to me may well draw iron tears down the cheeks of my nephews and nieces; so I will affirm that poetry that renounces the singing quality plucks its own wings" (Marsh 1939 323). One wonders, after some acquaintance with modern poetry, how the harsh realities of the contemporary industrial world could be dealt with in a poetry that is exclusively and uncompromisingly musical. The third idea, that of raciness was, perhaps, the least objectionable to modern writers. By this, Marsh meant "intensity of thought or feeling" which will "rule out the vapidness which is too

often to be found, alas, in verse that is written with due regard to sense, sound and 'correctness'" (Marsh 1939 323). In the end he stopped where he did, ignoring Harold Monro's suggestion to collect later poets, because he felt he was not competent to collect their verse about which he had "self-conflicting" (Marsh 1939 324) views. Whether the conflict was with his "self or an ambiguous attitude towards the Modernists is not clear. In any case, he betrays a hostility towards them that is easily notable when he described their work as a "fashion" (Marsh 1939 324) with all the ephemerality and shallowness the word suggests. In his view, the very survival of the poets into the future depended on their conforming to a "quintessential but always indefinable modicum of belief and practice" (Marsh 1939 324) which is also called tradition.

The first collection of the Georgian age, *Georgian Poetry 1911-1912*, (1912) includes only the poems of these two years. Consequently, it presents just the inception of the "modern" movement in poetry. The Georgians, like the "Modernists" defined themselves against the excesses, as they understood, of the Victorian age and by turning, significantly, to the dramatic verse form that was neglected by them. They began to move, though not without some misgivings, towards the realism that came to characterize the writers who followed them shortly afterwards. Rupert Brooke, for example had to face quite a few objections from Marsh, his editor, over the publication of his poem on seasickness, though it was eventually included under a different name. The liberality of the Georgian anthologies increased only with time.

The view that Victorian poetry was somehow deficient was shared by W. B. Yeats and Michael Roberts too, as evident in their respective anthologies, and they agree in identifying the revolt against Victorianism to be the turning point that led to Modernism. Roberts emphasized the value of poetry to be in "realizing the possibilities of language." Kipling, with his odd mixtures of the colloquial and the archaic, did not sound convincing especially when he tried to justify the ways of the Imperial powers of his times. Nor was he included in the Georgian anthologies. In this sense, the diction of the Georgians was remarkably modern. They could write verse which had a cadence that was suitable to the occasion, such as de la Mare, whose rhythms invoke the inner world and suggest the supernatural. He could also write, as Ross points out, with an utter simplicity, as in "Full Moon":

One night as Dick lay half asleep,
 Into his drowsy eyes
 A great still light began to creep
 From out the silent skies.
 It was the lovely moon's, for when
 He raised his dreamy head,
 Her surge of silver filled the pane
 And streamed across his bed.
 So for a while, each gazed at each—
 Dick and the solemn moon—
 Till climbing slowly on her way,
 She vanished, and was gone. (Quoted in Ross 145)

The Georgians claimed that they inherited this diction from earlier poets like Wordsworth and Coleridge. They too shared the belief of the "Modernists" that poetry was vigorous in England and that there existed a spiritual euphoria. But more than anything else, the Georgians were realists (Ross 146). Indeed, their obsession with, and depiction of, realism invited a great deal of censure from various critics. The *Times Literary Supplement* for February 27, 1913 remarked that their realism was an "affected and self-conscious brutality." The Georgian anthologies were worthy heralds of the new poetry until their last two anthologies, which collected a verse that was of a lower quality, caused their poetry and age they gave their name to, to be tarred with their brush, and came to be regarded as highly forgettable. Every subsequent critic like T. S. Eliot or John Middleton Murray was eager to dissociate a favorite writer published in the Georgian anthologies from the group. Eliot, for example, regarded Harold Monro as a misfit among the Georgians, and Murray could never take the group as a whole seriously.

Marsh, in his Preface to the anthology, found in contemporary poetry "a new strength and beauty" (reprinted in Ross, opposite p.49). Already contemporary poetry was abundant enough to require efforts to sift the best and publish it in the anthologies. Marsh's first anthology was appreciated even before it saw the light of day by the most popular poet of the times, John Masefield, who told the editor, "I feel that your book may be a useful fillip, as there has been nothing like it for some years" (Ross 123) and he even delayed the publication of his own book to avoid any competition with the anthology. It was, says Ross, "[T]he first successful step towards making modern poetry popular"

(Ross 126). The sheer number of copies the anthology sold amply bear out this statement. While the first volume sold about fifteen thousand copies, the second did even better by selling nineteen thousand as mentioned above. Now, a significant section of the reading public was informed of the new energy in poetry. *Georgian Poetry* came at a time when there existed a threat to poetry from the War, and the lack of any reliable way to preserve the work of the times. The anthologies succeeded in spite of the severe shortage of paper and the demands of the War that made any other effort appear extremely trivial if not wasteful. As Ross puts it, the collections "began the transformation of the Georgian revolt into a Georgian revival" (126). The poets themselves were astounded by the immediate popularity of the anthologies. D. H. Lawrence, for example, wrote from Italy, "That Georgian Poetry book was a veritable Aladdin's lamp. I little thought that my Snapdragon (his poem included in the anthology) would go on blooming and seeding in this prolific fashion. So many thanks for the cheque for four pounds and, long life to G.P." (Harry Moore 261). For Lawrence in particular, while the Georgian anthologies were a measure of his popularity among the reading public, one cannot escape the disturbing feeling that he was indifferent to such concerns as the company he would be placed in the anthologies, or the editor's poetic principles. He was to cynically use Pound for a place in the Imagist anthology a little later (Moore). Lawrence wrote exultantly to Marsh about the unexpected commercial success of the collection, "*Georgian Poetry* is a good goose, her egg is much appreciated, and I hope, she will live for ever" (Harry Moore 576). Indeed, he calls Marsh a "sweet Maecenas" (Harry Moore 220) more notable for his patronage than for any literary ability. Perhaps the comparison of Marsh to the Roman patron may also have been suggested by the latter's association with Virgil's

Georgics, a title that is reminiscent of the anthologies. The success of the Georgian anthologies led to many imitations, and according to one of Pound's biographers, his anthology *Des Imagistes* "appears to be the direct result of the successful launching" (Ross 129) of *Georgian Poetry I*. We remember that the British Governor of Bombay saw a role for *The Golden Treasury* (1861) of Francis Turner Palgrave in educating Indians, and the colonial administrators, this time in the form of the Indian Army Education Office, inquired whether they could get a hundred copies of each of the four volumes of *Georgian Poetry* (Ross 128). The anthologies were gaining an academic significance that would be repeated across the Atlantic.

Marsh had denied that he had any intention to found a new school or to guide poetry into new channels (Marsh 1939 322), for, on his own admission, he was "ill-equipped, in knowledge, in leisure, and in self esteem" (Marsh 1939 322). Instead, the anthologies collected a wide range of poetry that was already available in print, including some very traditional verse, to gain respectability for the collections. Some of the poems they carried were to become regular "anthology pieces," like Sir Walter de la Mare's "The Listeners." Marsh simply wanted to provide a platform for writers he liked, and took them to the public. D. H. Lawrence could hear "a new note of exultation in the vast freedom . . . we have suddenly got" (Ross 139). They realized that the poetry they wrote was peculiarly suited to anthologies. Thus J. C. Squire could declare that "for mass of good work fit for the anthologies and produced by many hands I do not see any age since the Elizabethan which can compare with ours" (Ross 141). The point is that the

anthology was, from the very beginning, a natural and, perhaps, the only way that contemporary poets saw open before them.

The Georgian anthologies were, of course, the products of their time. They were, as Marsh wanted them to be, attempts to popularize poetry at a time when it seemed to have lost its readership. According to James Reeves, for a few years before World War I, "the image of modern poetry in the minds of most educated readers was represented by the Georgian movement" (Quoted in Ross 139). The poets who appeared in these anthologies began to write with an individuality and sincerity that one associates with many of the next generation of poets to come. But no modern reader can escape the feeling that the Georgians were representative more of a break with the past than the beginning of a new, long lasting trend that could adequately mirror the age. J. C. Squire, for example, writes about them, ". . . any belief is better than none, and any passion is better than a languid devotion to absinthe" (Ross 139). They were filling a vacuum. As Arundel del Re saw it, Georgianism was "not created artificially by the deliberate acceptance of narrow technical articles of [poetic] belief." It was "an attitude more spiritual than intellectual" (Ross 139). If we remember that for Pound the image was "an intellectual and emotional complex realized in an instant of time," we can see that Georgian poetry was a half-way measure at best with its partial emphasis. Their awareness of the intellectual element in poetry, when it makes its rare appearances, was, again, a negative one in the sense that they were rebelling against an already existing Paterian kind of poetry as found in the "Conclusion" to *The Renaissance*, rather than any characteristic version of their own. Pater's idea of a life lived in a "pure, gem-like flame,"

had produced the "infirm" (Ross 142) work of the suicidal poets of the eighteen nineties. But coming after the barrenness of the Edwardian age, Georgian poetry marked a step forward. Ross also draws our attention to the importance the Georgians anthologies gave to dramatic verse that was so completely neglected by the Victorians. Prominent among the writers of this kind of verse were Lascelles Abercrombie and Gordon Bottomley. The latter's *King Lear's Wife* aroused some of the bitterest criticism for its realism, and the writer had to draw some consolation from the fact that it was appreciated by some respected fellow-poets and critics. Other poems in the anthologies, like "The Listeners" of Sir Walter de la Mare, too, were dramatic in tone. And the critics were delighted. Harold Monroe expressed this mood tellingly: "Poets of the modern world! Write us plays, simple, direct, dependent for their beauty, not on outward decoration, but on inward force of the spirit that conceives them" (Quoted in Ross 142). The Georgian writers were only too willing to oblige, and poetic drama made a significant reappearance in writers like John Drinkwater whose play, *The Sale of St. Thomas*, was to appear in a Georgian anthology. But the predominant form was the poem that accepted and continued the lyric in a Palgravian version, thanks to Marsh's insistence on the musicality of the poem.

The Georgian anthologies collected, in the view of many notable critics of the time, precious little of truly good poetry. John Middleton Murray, for example, found it hard to take many of the poets seriously and T. S. Eliot too felt the need to "rescue" Harold Monroe from the company of the poets of this group, as mentioned earlier. Eliot's strictures bear quotation because they are typical, in many ways, of the responses the

Georgian poets invited ever since the publication of their anthologies, and also because they are a major poet's efforts to reshape the canon made by the anthologies:

. . . [W]ith Georgian poetry he [Monro] had little in common. Of that poetry I speak with much diffidence. What I remember about it is a small number of poems by two or three men. I supposed, long ago, that Harold Monro's poetry belonged to that category—with the poetry of writers not unfairly representable in anthologies; and in those days I was interested only in the sort of thing I wanted to do myself, and took no interest in what diverged from my own direction. But his poetry differs from Georgian verse proper in important respects. The majority of those writers occupied themselves with subject matter which is—and not in the best sense—impersonal; which belongs to the sensibility of the ordinary sensitive person, not primarily only to that of the sensitive poet; it was not always easy to distinguish the work of one author from the work of another; the result was a considerable number of pleasing anthology pieces. (Quoted in Fraser 179)

Eliot's comment shows that the Georgians lacked individuality which was the hallmark of the Modernist writer. They could hardly rise above the sensibilities of the ordinary person likewise (Fraser 167-168). How completely the anthologies disappointed Eliot becomes clear if we notice that for him, impersonality was a key issue in poetry, and, what is worse, he does not regard them even as important failures as he considered some

poems to be when he reviewed Harriet Monroe's *The New Poetry* (1917), as we shall see below.

Contrary, again, to the international aspirations of some versions of "Modernism," Marsh insisted on keeping the anthology as English as possible. Consequently, he reacted almost with horror to a Rupert Brooke proposal to dedicate the anthologies to Yeats, shrinking from offering "a dedication from English poets. I somehow feel he would take it in the spirit of a lion receiving the homage of a dozen jackals" (Quoted in Sidnell 75), while Rupert Brooke thought Yeats worth a "hundred" Bridges (Hassall 361). The one non-English admission to the anthology was James Stephens, an American, and yet, Marsh insisted on the English character of the anthology, effectively keeping Yeats out. Decades later, Yeats repaid the compliment with a pun on the editor's name in his *Oxford Book of Modern Verse*: "The *Shropshire Lad* was worthy of its fame, but a mile further and all had been marsh" (Quoted in Sidnell 76). It is a summary dismissal of the poets, perhaps, but a tribute to the influence of the anthologies in general and the Georgian anthologies and their anthologist in particular. We may note, incidentally, that the Yeats's play on Marsh's name is not the first, for it occurred as early as 1916, when an unsigned review in *Punch* talked about the "poets of the Lakes and Marsh" (Rogers (ed) 177). Perhaps the allusion to the Lake Poets was prompted by the Georgians' nature-based themes, and their romantic idealization of the common man.

Critics seem to have been indifferent to the growing tendency of the Georgian writers to use a diction that was daring and far from the squeamish language and themes

that they avoided in the early books. Thus, in the latter editions, we find references to sexual themes and even phalluses as mentioned above. Equally astonishing is the assumption that the anthologies were a mere phase in English poetry, limited by time and place. But as late as 1920s, influential anthologists across the Atlantic were harking back to the poetics that the Georgians proposed as a manifesto of sorts. Marguerite Wilkinson, editor of *New Voices* (1924 6), accepts Marsh's epigraph on the function of the poet borrowed from Lord Dunsany, merely adding that poets work with rhyme and rhythm to achieve their purposes. Some of the poems like John Masefield's "Cargoes" that appeared in the Georgian anthologies were to become regular anthology pieces themselves. However, the most remarkable achievement of the Georgians, perhaps, in the direction of Modernist poetry would be the minimization, if not the complete elimination of the use of the adjective, a fact that at least one of the contemporary reviewers remarked on. Attributed by Christopher Hassall to Lascelles Abercrombie, the review is one of the very first to notice the anthologies (Rogers Ed. 52). Even if this point were considered to the exclusion of others, the Georgians would deserve to be called true precursors of the "Modernist" poets.

In the second decade of the twentieth century, there was no poet, with the exception of Yeats, who could be called a major figure, a fact that was noticed by the Georgians as well as by the next generation of poets such as Ezra Pound. The latter, too, found that the notable work of the early twentieth century writers was small and could *find preservation only* in poetry collections. It is this very fact that makes the anthology assume a significant role in tracing the history of early Modernism. As Pound writes in

Poetry: A Magazine of Verse, "As to [Yeats's] English contemporaries, they are food, sometimes very good food, for anthologies. There are a number of men who have written a poem, or several poems, worth knowing and remembering, but they do not much concern the young artist studying the art of poetry" (Pound in Harriet Monroe I. 3 1912 123). The most important writer of the times was John Masefield whom Marsh went to great lengths to include in his anthology, mostly to win over the ordinary reader who regarded this poet as the best of the times. In a review of Lawrence's *Love Poems and Others* (1914) Pound writes, "That Masefield should be having a boom seems, as one takes account of these poems, frankly ridiculous" (Pound in Harriet Monroe II. 4 1914 149). It was an incriminating comment on the readers and the anthologies of the time, but to be fair to the Georgians, they too were engaged in making it new, though not as new as some of their contemporaries would have liked it be. It might be added here that the Georgians marked the end of an era for a critic like Michael Roberts, the editor of *The Faber Book of Modern Verse* which Yeats described as an "ultra-radical anthology." In the early stages of planning his anthology, Roberts had initially, if tentatively, called it the *Anthology of Post-Georgian Poetry* (Smith 726), an illustration of the epochal significance of Marsh's anthologies, as mentioned earlier.

The gulf that existed, however, between the Georgians and the future Modernists became quite clear even during the editing of the first volume of the Georgian collection. Marsh had invited Ezra Pound to appear in his anthology through "The Goodly Fere" and "Portrait de une femme" but Pound declined the invitation. "I am sorry," wrote Pound, "I can't let you have *that* poem as I am bringing it out in a volume of my own. Is there any

thing in the earlier books that you like? (not "The Goodly Fere" as it doesn't illustrate any *modern* tendency). Also I'd like to know what gallery you propose to put me into" (Ross 122; Pound's emphases). With this carte blanche in hand, Marsh scoured about for a poem he liked, but could not find any that suited his taste which was to stay with him for the rest of his life. This little exchange illustrates the aesthetic and ideological distance between the two groups of writers, and reminds one of a similar encounter that Pound had with Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch in 1912 when the latter was editing his *Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*. Sir Q had asked Pound for permission to include two poems of his (the "Goodly Fere" was one) which the latter had marked as "omitted" from the next edition of his work, and "mortally offended" the editor by his refusal. He never heard from Sir Q again, and Pound wryly remarked on such encounters, "This is what happens if you've got a plymouth-rock (sic) conscience landed on a predilection for the arts" (Paige 12). The letter also illustrates Pound's disregard of labels since he considered it an honour to be invited by Sir Q for a Victorian collection, and was not averse to being included in the Georgian anthology either, in spite of his subsequent, sustained hostility to most of Marsh's group.

The criticism that the anthologies encountered prompted Marsh to throw at his detractors the whole weight and power of his anthologies. He was proud that the best of the writers of his times were represented in his collections, and lists out their names with evident pleasure: Gordon Bottomley, W. H. Davies, Walter de la Mare, James Elroy Flecker, Rupert Brooke, Vita Sackville-West, Edmund Blunden, and D. H. Lawrence, to

name a few. With such a group behind him, he could dismiss his critics with some contempt:

When I survey this Catalogue, I have two main feelings; first, thankfulness for being allowed in any degree to ease and hasten the recognition by the world at large of such high and varied powers; and secondly, wonder that anybody can ever have persuaded himself to look upon these writers as a homogeneous congregation of indistinguishable mediocrities, put to shame by the appearance in their midst of a few superior freaks who had somehow got in by mistake (Marsh 1939 326).

One cannot but feel at least a sneaking sympathy for the anthologies after this spirited defence from their editor. The allusion to the efforts of writers like T. S. Eliot and John Middleton Murray to rescue their favourite poets (as "superior freaks") from the company of the Georgians is clearly something that hurt the editor, and his roll-call in defence is something that is echoed by modern critics who believe that the anthologies have been somewhat unfairly criticized. Also notable in his *post-Georgian Poetry* writings is the steady decline of his contempt for the "Modernist" writers whose work he had, in his Preface to the final edition in 1922, dismissed as "gravy trying to flow like lava." He subsequently attributes his reluctance to edit them to his own ignorance, and lack of time, as we have seen. *Georgian Poetry* highlights again, the flexibility of the anthology which can accommodate such "varied" poets, and its handiness that made it arguably the best ally for any editor interested in popularizing or preserving literature.

II

Pound's use of the word "gallery" in his letter to Marsh, noted above, is quite significant from an anthological perspective, and calls for a brief comment. This conception of the anthology as a gallery of sorts was to inform every editorial enterprise of Pound and his followers. In his essay titled "Dateline" Pound says even more explicitly:

Excernment. The general ordering and weeding out of what has actually been performed. The elimination of repetitions. The work analogous to that a good hanging committee or curator would perform in a National Gallery or in a biological museum.

The ordering of knowledge so that the next man (or generation) can most readily find the live part of it, and waste the least possible time among obsolete issues (Pound 1924 75).

The anthology, in other words, was to constitute a record of the progress of poetry, even as it showcased the most recent and representative samples, and by "ordering" the earlier work, presumably according to their literary merit and achievement, Pound echoes Eliot's famous essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent." The anthology was to take the tradition *and* the new to the reader.

Pound was rather firmly convinced that the public were "hindered" from getting at good literature by the non-availability or poor circulation of books, either due to government policies or the vested interests of commercial publishers. So it struck him that if the "best history of painting in London was the National Gallery, and that the best history of literature, more particularly of poetry, would be a twelve-volume anthology in which each poem was chosen not because it was a nice poem or a poem Aunt Hepsy liked, but because it contained an invention, a definite contribution to the art of verbal expression" (Pound 1924 17). Pound would edit an anthology himself. Towards this end, he met a literary agent whom he amazed by a list of three hundred items he proposed as an outline for an anthology. He was referred to M/s Macmillan and Co., who, in turn, were shocked by his reference to F.T. Palgrave as "the doddard" since the company's prosperity rested on the his anthology, *The Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and Lyrics in the English Language* (1861). From that time onwards, Pound says, he "never got a British imprimatur".

Pound's first association with the gallery began, probably, with the private exhibits of the Tennant family who were also his patrons for a while, in 1908. And in this "private gallery," Pound continued his pedagogic activity by delivering lectures on the troubadours. However, he later broadened the idea of the private gallery into the National Gallery and made it more inclusive, both in terms of "exhibits" and audiences. It may be of some significance that T.E. Hulme's writings, too, hint at the idea of the exhibit. In his book, *Further Speculations*, for example, Hulme writes, "Prose a *museum* where all the old weapons of poetry kept" (Quoted in Press 38; emphasis added).

The idea of the gallery takes us to one of the most fundamental beliefs of Pound's and some other poets,' who began their careers in earnest in the second decade of the twentieth century: that poetry is an art. Pound proposed to Harriet Monroe that instilling this idea into the minds of readers and poets should be one of the most important aims of *Poetry*, mentioning it right at the beginning of one of his earliest letters as if it were to be the *raison d'être* of the magazine: "Can you teach the American poet that poetry *is* an *art*, an art with a technique, with media, an art that must be in constant flux, a constant change of manner, if it is to live?" (Paige 9; Pound's emphases).

From Pound's idea of the "gallery" emerged the supreme importance of what he called the "exhibit". The terms were carefully thought out. On October 12, 1914, he wrote in a letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver that he was contemplating "a rather longish article . . . announcing the College of Arts." (Paige 41). This article eventually became the foundation for a prospectus in which he also discussed the importance of an education in London along with the idea of the gallery:

We draw the attention of new students to the fact that no course of study is complete without one or more years in London. Scholarly research is often but wasted time if it has not been first arranged and oriented in the British Museum.

The London collections are if not unrivalled at least unsurpassed. The Louvre has the Venus and the Victory but the general collection of sculpture

in the Museum here is, on the whole the finer collection. *The National Gallery is smaller than the Louvre but it contains no rubbish.*

Without chauvinism we can easily claim that study in London is at least as advantageous as study elsewhere, and that a year's study in London by no means prevents earlier or later study in other capitals (Paige. 41n; Emphasis added.)

This passage is thoroughly suffused with an anthological spirit. Even before giving guidance on *how* to read, Pound advises the student on *where* and *what* to read, where one can find all the required material in one place. The reading was to be carefully graduated, "arranged" in his terms, much as works are arranged in an anthology. There is always the need to ignore the "yatter" and go to the originals if one is to truly understand why they are chosen and what their worth is (Pound 1930 45). One cannot but notice above that Pound praises the National Gallery, both because of what it contains and, what was for him equally important, *or what it does not contain*. For "rubbish" too has its effect, a baneful impact on the best of minds by setting them inferior examples and, by limiting them by excluding the truly great, deters readers. "Every literaryism, every book word, fritters away a scrap of the reader's patience, a scrap of his sense of your sincerity." (Paige 49). He was to constantly fight against his fellow-Imagists and some other contemporary poets on the need to keep out "rubbish" from both anthologies and little magazines. It might be observed in passing that "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste" can be viewed from the perspective of a need to avoid such rubbish.

The gallery lies at the core of Pound's pedagogy also because, in his view, if the student wishes to have a clear mind with the ideas arranged in an order, "he will . . . find it always advantageous to read the oldest poem of a given kind that he can get hold of (Pound 1930 47). Pound was mentally arranging poetry literary historically and according to its genres. The gallery was aimed to establish a "whole core of significance," a "discrimination" (Paige 48), which implies that the works should be preserved *and* accessible. One wonders, with regard to poetry, about where else but in an anthology can these requirements be met. We can now identify the anthology with Pound's poetic "gallery." Reminiscing later, he wrote, "Yeats used to say I was trying to provide a portable substitute for the British Museum" (Paige 297). The gallery was almost exclusively the site on which an artist might grow, learning by comparison with others, and getting across to the public. He told Monroe, "You know what a man's painting is like when he has never been out of, say, Indiana, and has never seen a good gallery" (Paige 37). The gallery/anthology was a "vortex" that would energize and educate the aspiring poet by showing what has already been achieved in the arts and in what directions it can now move. No wonder that it pained Pound to see that the "Amygists" were co-opting the Imagist anthology for their own purposes and depriving him of a valuable platform on which he could bring together the poets who could, in his view, make some contribution to the art.

Pound insisted that the reader of poetry should be introduced to the art only by a poet, just as an expert in horses is trusted when buying horses. In an illuminating proof of

his faith in the anthology, Pound blames dishonest writers whose works are usually published there, and teachers, who rely heavily on it in their classes, as people who do untold harm to society but go scot free, whereas the dishonest people in the medical profession are despised (Pound 1924 58). The parallel of an expert dealing in the works of art cannot be missed. Yet again, Pound returns to the idea of the national "exhibit", if only implicitly:

The mental life of a nation is no man's private property. The function of the teaching profession is to maintain the HEALTH OF THE NATIONAL MIND. As there are great specialists and medical discoverers, so there are 'leading writers'; but once a discovery is made, the local practitioner is just as inexcusable as the discoverer himself if he fails to make use of known remedies and known prophylactics (Pound 1924 59; Pound's emphasis).

Pound explained this idea of the exhibit through the parable of Louis Agassiz and the fish, which held a useful lesson for readers of poetry too. Agassiz had insisted that a student of his simply *look* at the fish being studied instead of reading abstract descriptions and classifications in scientific jargon. The corresponding thing to do in poetry was to closely study the poem. But the importance of poetry, as a rejuvenator of language, is much more than that of any exhibit: "Language is not a mere cabinet curio or museum exhibit", he says unequivocally (Pound 1924 76). Thus, the importance of the anthology is so much the greater.

Pound also insisted that the gallery should be international, including all good poets irrespective of their nationality. The individualism that characterized the new poetry was to be matched by its international character if it had to survive. As he wrote to Harriet Monroe, "Are you for American poetry or for poetry? The latter is more important, but it is important that America should boost the former, provided it don't (sic) mean a blindness to art. The glory of a nation is to produce art that can be exported without disgrace to its origin" (Paige 9). Even later, when what is known as "Modernism" was established, he found that he still had to fight against the waning of commitment on the part of poets to suit personal conveniences. Pound was perhaps the only writer of the early decades of the twentieth century who had a comprehensive picture, a larger, universal view of culture and poetry. On the other hand, Eliot toed a narrower, provincial track developed through *Criterion* and Faber. Bringing home to F. V. Morley of Faber the fact of the existence of other voices, Pound writes, "An how you gwine ter keep deh Possum in his feedbox when I brings in deh Chinas and blackmen? He won't laak for to see no Chinas in a bukk about Kulchur. Dat being jess his Unitarian iggurunce" (Quoted in North 92). These parodies of Afro-American speech have a purpose. As Pound wrote to Harriet Monroe, "The French laugh, but it's not a corrosive or hostile laughter. In fact, good art thrives in an atmosphere of parody. Parody is, I suppose, the best criticism—it sifts the durable from the apparent" (Paige 13). The occasion that called forth this protest was Eliot's request to Pound to write a tribute to Robert Bridges, a protest that may have surprised Eliot because Pound himself expressed pleasure on reading some of Bridges's poetry and could hardly wait to praise him formally and publicly. He wrote to Harriet Monroe in August 1913, "I suppose I shall have to wait till he dies to do an appreciative

character sketch" (Paige 62). We may note here that the **binging** in of a multinational group of artists is inevitably in the spirit of an anthology/gallery.

The *Catholic Anthology* (1915) that Pound edited was also prompted by this same internationalism, and its sole purpose was to introduce new poets to the readers as he had done in *Des Imagistes* in 1914. Even here, with a self-effacement that is so characteristic of him, he let Eliot's "The Portrait of a Lady" be published in Kreyemborg's *Others* though he could not help regretting the loss (Paige 63). Not surprisingly, he faced some problems from the Jesuits over the religious overtones in his later anthology, and he believed that they had prevented the collection from being reviewed, much to the exasperation of the publisher Elkin Matthews. Already the doomsayers were predicting its failure (Paige 73). But the value of the anthology was far beyond the commercial. Whatever Pound's intentions might have been, some critics did interpret the Imagists in a religious symbolism. May Sinclair notes in *The Egoist*, II, 5, 1 June 1915:

For all poets, old and new, the poetic art is a sacramental act with its rubric and its ritual. The Victorian poets are Protestant. For them the bread and wine are symbols of Reality, the body and the blood. They are given 'in remembrance'. The sacrament is incomplete. The Imagists are Catholic; they believe in Trans-substantiation. For them the bread and wine are the body and the blood. They are given. The thing is done. *Ita Missa est*. The formula may lead to some very ugly ritual but that is the fault of the Imagist not of Imagism (Quoted in Press 45.)

The *Catholic Anthology* was Catholic in more than one sense.

Pound's uncompromising insistence on the idea of internationalism was in addition to galvanizing others into action whenever he thought they fell off. His letters are mostly addressed to people who do not work or who do bad work. For example, he told Paige that the latter could find no letters addressed to Jules Romain because the French writer "was *active*" (Paige XX; Pound's emphasis). Through the letters, he canvassed for friends often to get them published and sometimes even to get them an endowment from a wealthy benefactor. One such patron would be Scofield Thayer of the little magazine, *The Dial*, which was to publish Eliot's Nobel prize-winning poem *The Waste Land* in 1922.

In his anthologies, Pound was impatient of what he often called "yatter," (Pound 1930 356), that is, long introductions, and wished to put in the "exhibits," the poems themselves, so that they had their influence on the readers directly. In discussing the ordinary reading public, or trying to reach out to them through his publications, Pound sometimes sounded a little contradictory. He once wrote to Harriet Monroe that he was optimistic about the public (Paige 24), but often he was contemptuous of them. He was very critical of readers' inability to understand a new work and the consequent hostility to it. "A new language is always said be obscure, the dastard Gifford said that Keats was obscure. After a few years the difficult passage appears a simple lucidity" (Pound 1927 114).

The situation, as the poets like Pound saw it, was thus a doubly complicated one: if the readers did not take kindly to the new poetry, the poets too tended to lapse into habit just as well, and this necessitated an eternal vigilance on the part of the writers themselves. Consequently, the Modernist scenario of the of the nineteen tens through the thirties was quite active what with both personal and group projects in composition-and-collaboration; editing and commissioning of anthologies and literary reviews; instituting honors and awards; canvassing public opinion towards subsidizing or underwriting poetic and artistic ventures; publishing from home and abroad, translations, broadsides, and the emergence of a trans-Atlantic epistolary camaraderie among poets, critics, editors and painters.

Such a scenario did not, however, preclude individual efforts and Pound himself published his work in some little magazine as soon as it was available, and then looked for a more permanent place in an anthology. When he did not find a satisfactory place, he edited his magazine, *The Exile*. As James Laughlin says in his book, "*The Exile* was in essence another of Pound's anthologies" (Laughlin 1985 41) An ironic affirmation of this statement is Pound's report that "[t]he Port of New York saw *Exile*, found that it was dated "Spring 1927" instead of "April 1927" and proclaimed that *Exile* was not a magazine but a "book" (Pound 3. 1928 109). The very title of the magazine suggests the alienation of the artist from the society and, perhaps, the exile of the arts themselves from society. The best works printed in magazines were eventually to get into anthologies. For Pound, the anthology provided an occasion o to pause and take stock of the situation, compare and contrast the careers of poets and record their progress by bringing them

together. Pound was to untiringly continue his anthological efforts in other forms such as suggesting reading lists, throughout his career.

The aim to unite and educate artists prompted Pound to propose a College of Arts with two specific ideals:

- A. That the arts, INCLUDING poetry and literature, should be taught by artists, by practicing artists, *not* by sterile professors.
- B. That the arts should be gathered together for the purpose of inter-enlightenment. The "art" school, meaning "paint school," needs literature for backbone, ditto the musical academy, etc (Paige 47).

The proposal is a succinct version of the "Vortex" that Pound and Wyndham Lewis would elaborate later. The idea of all the arts as being engaged in the same task of saving civilization lies behind Pound's efforts to boom and support, sometimes financially, various artists. Beneficiaries include Henri Gaudier-Brezska and a host of others. The key factor in bringing together this community of artists was the city. As he explained to Harriet Monroe, "All countries are equally damned, and all great art is born of the metropolis (or *in* the metropolis). The metropolis is that which accepts all gifts and all heights of excellence, usually the excellence that is *tabu* in its own village. The metropolis is always accused of "being mad after foreign notions." And again "London, deah old Lundo, is the place for poesy" says Pound to W. C. Williams (Paige 7). The city was the geographical counterpart of the anthology which collected the "best" and

preserved it. After their establishment in the city, the next step was to start or appear in a magazine. A surprisingly large number of poems that came to be printed in anthologies appeared in magazines where they were first presented to the public. The functions the poets assigned to the anthologies were required by the special circumstances in which they were made. As Pound wrote to Iris Barry in 1916,

The main thing being to have enmagazined some mass of fine literature which hasn't been mauled over and vulgarized and preached as a virtue by Carlyle, *The Daily Mail*, *The Spectator*, *The New Witness*, or any other proletariat of "current opinion". This mass of fine literature supposedly saves one from getting swamped in contemporaneousness, and from thinking that things naturally or necessarily must or should be as they are, OR should change according to some patent schedule. ALSO should serve as a model of style, or suggest possibilities of various sorts of perfection or maximum attainment." (Paige 86-87).

The little magazine, along with the anthology, was a "Vortex" of sorts, imparting dynamism and purity to literature, where all works were timelessly present, and freed the art from 'contemporaneousness' and determinism, in an attempt at perfection. This being achieved, the anthology was used to either introduce new poets to the reading public as *Des Imagistes* (1914) was meant for, or it was to be an assessment of the progress poets had made over the years, which was the professed aim of *Profile: An Anthology for MCMCCCIII*. Again, Pound could write that the principles of Imagism, and by

implication the Imagist anthology, were themselves meant for a specific purpose and it became a part of literary history once their purpose was served.

The *Exile* contains in a microcosm, all the issues that were to occupy Pound throughout his life. His ideas on government and its responsibilities, and economics are all presented in a clearly defined format. His view that all arts have a common aim of promoting human interests and civilization is again a main theme. As he was to do later with books like *ABC of Reading*, he took the trouble to indicate to the readers the general directions, and left it to them to make their own progress. This demanded a most unusual perceptivity from the reader:

The artist, the maker, is always too far ahead of any revolution, or reaction, or counter-revolution or counter-reaction for his vote to have any immediate result; and no party program ever contains enough of his program to give him the least satisfaction. The party that follows him wins; and the speed with which they set about it, is the measure of their practical capacity and intelligence. Blessed are they who pick the right artists and makers
(Pound 1. 1927 91).

Pound's view of the artist expressed here matches his belief that "artists are the antennae of the race," and a society can ignore them only at its own peril. To be an antenna, the artists have to warn in advance, and this entails that they publish their work as soon as it is produced, and here the little magazine played a crucial role. In effect, it was an anthology in real time. But Pound soon found out that it could cut both ways, and the

publication of bad work was a retardant of civilization if it did not actually harm it. This explains why he was so unsparing in his own efforts and in his criticism of others in the pursuit of perfection. The quote above also shows the responsibilities he thrust upon the general readers: they too were charged with picking the "right artists and makers." Every reader was therefore, in a way, an anthologist choosing works for himself or herself. For this reason, he was very reluctant to append introductions and prefaces, either in magazines or anthologies, and wanted the matter, not the introductions to do the talking. Even in *The Exile* the editorials were to give way to articles and were printed in latter editions only when space was available.

Pound regarded all artists as belonging to a fraternity that formed a *de facto*, if not a *de jure*, governing class, a kind of Platonic philosopher kings, a status they achieved with specially acquired skills. In an interesting example in the *ABC of Reading*, another of his anthological works, he compares the poet to a shaman who has somehow trained and tuned his body to catch the changes in nature and forecast rain. The point is that Pound was propounding a new role for the poet, and illustrated it through the anthology. The example demonstrates the single-minded dedication that the job requires and, more importantly, its attainability if only the commitment existed. It also illustrates the timeless character of the poet. The artist does not join revolutions, but "is concerned with producing something that will be enjoyable even after a successful revolution" (Pound 1927 90). The artist is not only beyond time, but she/he is also beyond nationality, as he repeatedly emphasizes. The situation in America depressed him, striking him as "*the* most colossal monkey-house and prize exhibit the astonished world has yet seen" (Pound

1927 92; Pound's emphasis.) Even more depressing, the Americans had no desire to change the situation. The artist now is the chevalier to rescue this nation even from itself: "Never having met an angel I am unable to define their fear-states or to say where they wd. rush" (Pound 1.1927 92). The need is for immediate action by the true artist and readers/audiences in a time of crisis as now: "Lovers of art and letters do not appoint a committee of professors, or create an institution to do something after their death, they *act* at once and on things and men in being; they have more regard for contemporary activity than even for archaeological research" (Pound 3. 1928 105). At regular intervals, Pound acted and used the anthology to introduce and measure the progress of his contemporaries as well as his own. Thus *Des Imagistes* "was designed to get printed and published the work of a few poets whose aim was to write a few excellent poems perhaps not enough for even the slenderest volume, rather than the usual magazine thousands of E—B—, the futurist diarrhoea (sic), rhetorical slush, etc" (Paige 78). Later, *Profile: An Anthology MCMXXXIII* was printed in limited copies to see how much his contemporaries had progressed. These collections were printed to counter the usual trade anthology. Pound trusted only the group-anthology which was a kind of a manifesto of the poets who appeared in it. He was suspicious of other kinds of anthologies since they usually hijacked the poets' opinion to support their own (Paige 182).

In privileging the role of the anthology as the best place to preserve the poems published in ephemeral magazines and reach out to the public, Pound was not alone. Many other writers who came to be called Modernist too were anthologists themselves and were active as reviewers and publishers of articles. One of the earliest of these were

the Imagists of whom Pound himself was one for sometime. The Imagists, like their contemporaries found that the atmosphere in the second decade of the twentieth century, as far as poetry was concerned, was gloomy. Pound, in an early poem mourns the state of affairs:

Great God, if men are grown but pale sick phantoms
That must live only in these mists and tempered lights
 . . . if these thy sons are grown such thin ephemera,
I bid the grapple chaos . . . (King Ed. 24).

The rebellion was a part of a war waged even by the Georgians against a Parnassian poetry that was the bane of the times. Thus Ford Madox Hueffer wrote in 1913, “. . . the song of birds, moonlight—these the poet playing for safety and the critic trying to find something to praise, will deem sure cards of the pack. They seem the safe things to sentimentalise over and it is taken for granted that sentimentality is the business of poetry" (Quoted in Peter Jones 14). Even the Georgians fulminated in a similar vein. J. C. Squire, writing in the *New Statesman* says

What is wrong with most of these patriotic versifiers is that they start with a ready-made set of conceptions, of phrases, of words, and of rhymes, and turn out their works on a formula. Put England down as 'knightly', state her honour to be 'inviolable' and her spirit 'invulnerable', call her enemies 'perjured' and branded with the 'mark of Cain', refer to 'Trafalgar' (which

has done good service as a rhyme to 'war'), summon the spirits of Drake and Grenville from the deep, introduce a 'thou' or two and conclude with the assumption that God will defend the right—and there's the formula for a poem (Quoted in Ross 163).

Poetry, it seemed, had abdicated its duty as criticism of life and was engaged in pandering to populist tastes and pressures. It was to rescue poetry from such a fate that the writers of the time formed groups and participated in various activities such as reviewing, writing articles, editing little magazines, manifestos, collaborating and publishing anthologies.

The germ of the Imagist anthology, one of the truly Modernist documents, was to be found in booklet called *For Christmas MDCCCCVIII*, published by the Poet's Club even before the term "Imagist" was first used. French influences were to come in soon, as did other foreign ones such as Japanese and other Oriental literatures. The starting of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* in 1912 gave a fillip to the art, and many Imagist poems (about three quarters) that were to appear in the group's anthology, *Des Imagists*, were first printed in this little magazine. The timing and the plan of the anthology were designed to arouse the curiosity of the public, and in this the Imagists were eminently successful. The group was defining itself against the Impressionists, the Futurists and some other groups in London of the time. For Ezra Pound, the Image was not a new concept and was the reason why Dante and the ancient Chinese poets were classics. The

lack of the idea of the Image made Milton a bad poet. In the face of Yeats, whose Symbolist ideas were well known, he praised the Imagist aim of liberating poetry:

The Symbolists dealt in 'association', that is in a sort of allusion, almost of allegory. They degraded the symbol to the status of a word, they made it a form of metronomy. One can be grossly 'symbolic' for example, by using the term 'cross' to mean 'trial'. The symbolist's *symbols* have a fixed value, in arithmetic, like 1, 2 and 7. The imagist's images have a variable significance like signs a, b, and x in algebra ... the author must use his *image* because he sees it *not* because he thinks he can back up some creed or some system of ethics or economics (Quoted Ellmann and Feidelson 147).

The Imagist anthologies published subsequently became the focal points of debates between the original contributors, and while the group split up, we can at least see the individuality of the poets that Eliot noticed was missing in the Georgians. But they had learnt their lessons from their Imagist experience, either about what they should do as well as what they ought to avoid. Many of the poets were moving towards *vers libre* in a loose form. Pound was, later on, to quote Eliot approvingly that "No verse is *libre*" to the genuine poet. But Lowell brought in innovations of her own in the form of Polyphonic Prose, a term coined by John Gould Fletcher in an article in *Poetry* on *vers libre*. He found in the article that the Imagists had not succeeded completely in their aims because they lacked what he called "the beautiful and subtle orchestral qualities of assonance, alliteration, rhyme and return" (Quoted in Jones 24). He discovered them in Amy Lowell.

Inevitably the group disintegrated with Pound withdrawing in protest, calling the break-away members "Amygists." These latter published three anthologies beginning 1915 to 1917 and then broke up for good themselves. There was one final, strange episode in which the Imagists combined once more to deal riposte to a sarcastic remark. The result was the *Imagist Anthology 1930*. In the foreword to the book, Glenn Hughes declares, "None of them (the poets) was interested in a movement for its own sake; each of them was interested in being a poet. Having certain common beliefs, and being faced in common with certain prejudices, they joined forces for a time and marched against the common enemy, waving a single banner. That they won the fight is contestable. And having won it they threw the banner away, broke ranks, and became frankly what they had been all the time: individual artists" (Quoted in Jones 27-28).

In the anthologies, the Imagists rejected formal poetic themes and purported to write only about what interested them. Their Prefaces to their anthologies, when they wrote them, sound like declarations of independence of all that the past imposed on them which they did not agree with. Sometimes, they went to extremes. Professor William Ellery Leonard, in a series of articles in the *Chicago Evening Post* (1915), wrote that some Imagists "were so terrified at Cosmicism that they ran into a kind of microcosmicism, and found their greatest emotional excitement in everything that seemed intensely small" (quoted in Jones 34.) In spite of its detractors and internal squabbles, the reviewer in the *Times Literary Supplement* had probably the best assessment:

Imagist poetry fills us with hope; even when it is not very good in itself, it seems to promise a form in which very good poetry could be written . . . The worst of the old of verse now is that so often they seem to impose their own moods on those who use them. . . [The Imagist] can let the form follow the mood instead of imposing on it . . . The value of his form is in its power of acceptance, not of rejection; and so, if it is to justify itself, it must be rich, not empty. He cannot supersede the pretty things of the past with ugly nothings If Imagist poetry can open our literature to all things that a poet would think and say naturally, and if at the same time it can give him a form in which he will say them far better than in ordinary thought and speech, then it will have justified itself (*TLS* 11 January, 1917.).

For Pound, as for many of the other contributors, Imagism was just a point on the curve of his development, and the anthology he edited was meant for a limited purpose, he told Harriet Monroe and added, "some people remained at that point, I moved on." William Carlos Williams agreed, writing in his *Autobiography*, "We had had "Imagism" . . . which quickly ran out . . ." (Quoted in Jones 35)

The Imagist anthologies reveal an anxiety to trace their roots to Chaucer and claimed even ancient Oriental poetry as vindicating their ideas. As the poet-editors said in *Some Imagist Poets*, "These principles are not new; they have fallen into desuetude. They are the essentials of all great poetry" (*Some Imagist Poets* 1915 xvi.). In trying to explain their principles to the ordinary reader in the anthologies, they put forth what might be called their manifesto, and traced their literary origins. The diction of Imagist poetry was

based on the language of the common people with a privileging of the *exact* word (*Some Imagist Poets* 1915 vi). In response to the times, they reflected new ideas bringing poetry closer to life. "In poetry, a new cadence means a new idea." The "manifesto" declared the independence of the artist from conventional themes, and aimed at a poetry that was "hard and clear, never blurred or indefinite." Most of them believed that "concentration was the very essence of poetry." As Imagists, they presented images, not the static, snapshot variety, but a moving, dynamic kind. The Imagist anthologies evoked mixed responses among the readers, and it was gratifying to the editors that there was no indifference to them. Individualists themselves, they did not mind disagreement so long as there was no misunderstanding.

The Imagists passed into literary history through their influence on later poets such as Charles Reznikoff and William Carlos Williams, and have been thoroughly assimilated into a modern outlook (Jones 36). Jack Spicer in his *Letter to Lorca* (1957), declares clearly that he would like to "make poems out of real objects . . . The poem is the collage of the real . . . Things do not connect; they correspond" (quoted in Jones 37). William Carlos Williams put it succinctly by saying, "no ideas but in things." Imagism itself was soon deliberately replaced by its founder, Pound, with Eliot for company, by regular rhymed verse. As for *vers libre* itself, it had served its purpose. As Eliot summed it up later, "*Vers libre* does not exist, for there is only good verse, bad verse and chaos." The idea was that good verse was always imbued with certain eternal qualities. Without poetry, according to Pound and other Modernists, there could be no civilization. Yet, they did not conceive of the poet in a didactic role. The poet had to be *au courant* constantly,

aiming for perfection. Pound, in a letter to William Carlos Williams, ironically lists out the favorite topics of poets of earlier times and remarks that they could not vividly perceive anything beyond these clichéd items. It is out of wholly novel subjects that the new poetry should be made (Paige 4-5). The distinguishing note in this new poetry was to be the individuality of the poet: "To paint the thing as I see it." Henceforth, poetry was to become eclectic. The audience itself was to be elitist with the agreement between poet and the common reader broken. Pound would now address the reader who loved the same beauty and in the same fashion as he himself did (Paige 6). Yeats too had similar hopes that Irish poetry would rejuvenate European letters. Pound was fully aware of the difficulty of waging such a battle, and it is not surprising that he should deploy a wide range of strategies and weapons such as magazines, letters, manifestos and prizes among other things discussed above, to try and win it.

It is a paradox of sorts that the writers who appeared in the Imagist anthologies were not all as Imagist as their grouping together would expect us to believe. The sheer variety of writers is enough to make the term a very diffuse one. Yet it can be argued that while it is rare to find a poem that is perfectly Imagistic, we can see Imagism followed more or less. The confusion among critics arises when they go by names, as if the poet began with a fully developed style and never moved further or changed in any way. Most of the Imagists were insistent that Imagism was only *a* phase in their careers. The Imagists were not an "exclusive artistic sect" (*SIP* 1915 viii). Their "manifestos" were not uniformly emphatic on the principles they enunciated, and if the poems conformed to certain fundamental ideas, they can be called Imagistic. Johanna Vondelling has shown

that the manifestos betray socio-aesthetic goals, and in the case of Imagist poetry, it is to rejuvenate language by using words in a hard clear way and ridding them of their encrustations over the centuries (Vondelling 129). This could be done in a positive and a negative way by highlighting the proper usage and by rejecting the kind of sloppiness that they thought characterized some of the writers of the nineteenth century and this was the view that they shared in common. They began by emphasizing their individuality, and thus they implicitly rejected the perceived Victorian tendency to write down to the readers. They were put off by the needless rhymes, and came to advocate *vers libre* and foreign, especially French, influences.

The innovations that the poets introduced in their first anthology, not surprisingly, did not go down well with the ordinary readers who accused them of being "difficult". Therefore, in their subsequent anthologies, they were, understandably, at pains to explain to these readers their canons and poetics which could help tide over the "difficulty." In the view of these poets, English letters of the nineteenth century were cut off from European influences which were the truly progressive ones, and remained insulated. The new poets had been fed on a heavy diet of Continental literature and thanks to this were able to "modernise" themselves. The Imagists suggested a bibliography which the aspiring readers could use to "educate" themselves. These were mostly French writers like Remy de Gourmont, Gustave Kahn, Georges Duhamel, and Charles Vildrac among others. In the second anthology, they discovered that their Preface had caused even more confusion than the earlier anthology which did not have one, and hence they wrote a second Preface. Here they revealed their elitist inclinations by declaring, "A few people

may understand, and the rest can merely misunderstand again, a result to which we are quite accustomed" (*SIP* 1916 v). In this anthology, the shift was made from an equal emphasis on subject and style to the later. "'Imagism' refers to the manner of presentation, not to the subject" (*SIP* 1916 v). Every poet was given full freedom to write on any subject in any manner so long as the presentation was clear. Nor did the "exact" word mean the "word which exactly describes the object in itself, it means the "exact" word which brings the effect of that object before the reader as it presented itself to the poet's mind at the time of writing the poem" (*SIP* 1916 vi). In an implicit acknowledgement of the conventionality of some of their subjects, the editors declare, "It is not what Imagists write about which makes them hard of comprehension; it is the way they write it" (*SIP* 1916 viii). This new way of writing was in accordance with their aim to express the complexities of the times in new forms.

The first anthology of the Imagist school was *Des Imagistes*, edited by Ezra Pound to promote the work of a few young writers, especially of one "H. D. Imagiste." He had sent her work to Harriet Monroe's *Poetry* as early as October 1911, praising it as "some *modern* stuff by an American, I say modern, for it is in the laconic speech of the Imagistes, even if the subject is classic" (Paige 11). The work was "[o]bjective—no slither; direct—no excessive use of adjectives, no metaphors that won't permit examination. It is straight talk, straight as the Greek!" (Paige 11). Perhaps the use of the word "talk" is notable for its rejection, even if unconsciously, of poetic diction, and the privileging of simple language. The anthology was successful in its aims of gaining publicity for its contributors and arousing the curiosity of the readers. In fact the Imagists

went on to publish two articles in *Poetry* explaining their poetics in some detail (Harriet Monroe II 1913 3), one by F. S. Flint and the other by Pound himself. Flint discovered that the Imagists advocated the "direct treatment of the 'thing,'" laconic expression, and varying rhythms. As for the "Doctrine of the Image" they did not wish to reveal it as it would provoke useless debate. Pound's article suggested certain dangers that the aspiring writer should avoid, such as too many adjectives and abstractions. Even a poem picked at random, John Cournos's "Rose," can reveal an overwhelming dependence on nouns and verbs for effect, and the adjectives reduced to the bare minimum in accordance with the declared principles of Imagism: "The calm sea, caressed by the sun, was brightly garmented in blue, veiled in gold, and violet, verging on silver" (Jones 60). The poem's most significant words are the nouns and verbs, "sea," "caressed" "garmented" "veiled" and "verging." The adjectives are carefully chosen and perform a well-defined function. It is the intense individualism of the poet that is reflected here which the words enable the reader to share. As T. E. Hulme, the guru in one sense of the Imagists, had spelt out in his essay, "Romanticism and Classicism," the important features the poem displays: a "dry hardness," and the "great aim of accurate, precise and definite description" (Faulkner 50). Perhaps the Imagists were too successful because very soon the poetic scene was filled with *vers libristes* whose "chopped" or "shredded" prose which soon brought free verse to disrepute, and Pound and Eliot had to fight a rear-guard action to bring back some rhymed verse. The Imagists were anxious to show that their poetry was not identical with *vers libre*, and that it was quite at home with any verse form so long as it suited the occasion.

The authors of *Some Imagist Poets* acknowledged their debts to Pound's *Des Imagistes*. They noted with some satisfaction that the school had been discussed widely by lovers of poetry. The inevitable differences soon forced them apart, and those who decided to band together published the new anthology. The collection differed in the way the selections were made, in that a single editor was replaced by a board, and each of the members chose his or her own poems. Thus there was introduced a democratic framework into the anthology. While the earlier work was based on some negative principles such as "Use no superfluous word, no adjective, which does not reveal anything" (Monroe 1938 298), the later anthologists couched much the same ideas in positive terms. For them, the real crux was the idea that "In poetry, a new cadence means a new idea" (*SIP* 1915 vii). The poet-editors were at pains to explain that the best of their work was not so much an attempt to be new as to revive the old principles of great poetry which were universal until they had fallen into desuetude. Their individuality lay in creating new rhythms to express new experiences. For example, their first precept, to use the language of common speech, is vintage Wordsworth. It had to be a hard and clear language, bereft of descriptions and with a focus on presentation. In *Des Imagistes*, the Imagist anthology of 1914, Richard Aldington's poem "Au Vieux Jardin" was emphatic of his individuality which was strikingly represented: "That which sets me nighest to weeping/Is the rose and the white colour of the smooth flags-tones, /And the pale yellow grasses/ Among them" (Jones 55). The Imagist emphasis on getting one's own experience into the poem is wonderfully fulfilled in the quotation. The language in Aldington's poem is stark and simple, though there are some archaisms like "nighest." The simplicity is an indication of the sincerity of the poet and the absence of what Yeats

called the "prepenne," which was a reflection of inferiority in a poet like Tennyson (Yeats 1936 xv). Instead the writers privileged the individuality of the poets in the belief that the later understood themselves best and hence they should describe their own experiences. Perhaps it is not an accident that some of the central texts of "Modernism" like *Ulysses* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* are autobiographical.

Most Imagist poems were often very short, rarely occupying more than a page. They gave a great deal of importance to typography, and were very keen that printers and editors got it right. This was somewhat of an unusual step to help the reader understand and scan the poem correctly. The brevity in their works they owed to the influence of the Japanese *hokku* which was admired for its precise and vivid expression. Pound would often quote H. D.'s "Oread" as an example of Imagist verse, and announce that it was one of the works they could show without a sense of shame even in London and Paris. It was a search for what they called little, but perfect output. It was this quest for perfection that united most of the "Modernists."

Yeats, we remember, was also interested in this "morbid search" for perfection which he could see even in some of his contemporaries of the 1890s. Ezra Pound's insistence on avoiding over-production was an attempt in this direction. D. H. Lawrence joined this search when he said, "The poetry of the beginning and the poetry of the end must have that exquisite finality, perfection which belongs to all that is far off. It is in the realm of all that is perfect. It is of the nature of all that is complete and consummate. This completeness, this consummateness, the finality and the perfection are conveyed in

exquisite form: the perfect symmetry, the rhythm which returns upon itself like a dance where the hands link and loosen and link for the supreme moment of the end" (Faulkner 130). This exactly fits with the "manifesto" of *Some Imagist Poets* one of whose most important beliefs was that "a new cadence means a new idea" (Jones 135). The wish to burnish words encrusted and blurred in meaning through casual usage is again a goal Lawrence shared with the Imagists. "We can," he says, "get rid of the stereotyped movements and the old hackneyed associations of sound and sense" (Faulkner 132). The inclination towards realism that abhorred beauty for beauty's sake found a reflection in Lawrence who wanted to "feel the mud in the lotus" (Faulkner 130). Even with regard to the relationship between the poet and reader, Lawrence was in full concord. He shared their reluctance to write a preface and instruct the reader. "... [I]s it not better to publish a preface long after the book it belongs to has appeared? For then the reader will have had his fair chance with the book, alone" (Faulkner 133). With so many aims coinciding, it is no wonder that he was included in the Imagist anthology.

It is the refrain of many critics that the Imagists are a diverse group and that their poems are even more varied. Mary Aldis, writing in *The Little Review* wonders, "It is a matter of speculation why six poets of widely dissimilar viewpoints, if similar technique, should choose to band themselves together to publish in a yearly anthology selections from their works" (Aldis in Anderson III 4 1917 20). Probably their very dissimilarity is the reason why they band together in an anthology, for, this is the only genre that can accommodate them all. In his review of the Imagist poets in the same magazine, John Gould Fletcher offers an explanation on the grounds that "the form of the Imagists is,

after all, a matter of lesser importance than the spirit with which they approach that form" (Fletcher in Anderson III 5 1917 32). This spirit can become a little complicated to understand when its earlier and deeply rooted influences are examined. In their attempts to purify language, the Imagists resorted to simplicity which was purely Romantic in its early phases—after all, it was explicitly mentioned in the Preface to *The Lyrical Ballads* (1798). The Imagists were Romantic even in another significant sense: some of them were the closest that Anglo-American culture would go towards the noble savage. Fletcher sees in H. D.'s work the reflection of the savage that comes from a close contact with nature. The point is that a close examination of the poems in the anthology emphasizes the fact that good poetry always has common elements and that it is the sincerity of the poets to their times and surroundings that makes them unique and "modern."

More optimistic than either Pound or Yeats in winning the war for poetry was Harriet Monroe whose influential anthology, *The New Poetry: An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Verse in English* first appeared in 1917. A second edition appeared in 1923 and a third in 1946. It was intended as a textbook for use in the classroom, a fact that was hinted at in the Introduction: "Much newspaper controversy and a number of special magazines testify to the demand for such a book; also many letters to the editors of *Poetry* asking for information—letters not only from individual lovers of the art, but also from college professors and literary clubs or groups, who have begun to feel that the poetry of today is a vital force no longer to be ignored" (Monroe 1917 xxxviii). Almost all the poems that were printed in it came from her magazine *Poetry: A Magazine of*

Verse. The magazine itself had a poor circulation in the beginning, barely crossing a thousand copies in 1912-13, and creeping up very slowly indeed to 1391 in 1921-22 (Abbott 1984 89). The inspiration for the anthology came from the success of *Some Imagist Poets*, most of whom had appeared in her magazine. (*Des Imagistes*, on the other hand, was badly undersold and was available as late as 1935, though only five hundred copies had been originally printed.) Sensing, perhaps, from the correspondence of the reading public enquiring about the new poetry, that the "great audience" she was waiting for had finally arrived, Monroe wrote to the Macmillan Company proposing the publication of an anthology. Overcoming an initial resistance from the publisher caused by the word "anthology," she sent Edward C. Marsh a tentative list. As Abbott says, "Monroe was editing a movement that was still moving." It was still "moving" at the time the second edition came out (1923) and all she had to do was to add a few more names to the table of contents. The Introduction remained the same except for a brief supplement. While two of her rival anthologists (Louis Untermeyer and Marguerite Wilkinson) wrote elaborate Introductions which were in fact, long biographies of the major poets, Monroe was content to trace the general history of English poetry and spend a considerable part defending the innovations, especially in metre, that the new poets were introducing. Even as late as 1946, when the third edition was published, the Introduction remained the same. In the second edition (1923), however, she described a few criteria that struck her as being appropriate to define the "modern movement," only to discard them. In the introduction to the first edition, Monroe exudes a quiet confidence that the poets called revolutionary at the time, and collected in the anthology, would one day form the orthodoxy. Time was to prove her right in most of the cases.

When Monroe corresponded with Pound in the years 1912–1916, the idea may not have been to put together an anthology, but one would say that the differences and agreements, such as they were, seemed gathered in the anthology. It was as clear to him as to her that the anthology was to be a literary history as well as the vehicle that would bring home to the public the established writers of the day. This matter came to a head on the issue of payment to T. Sturge Moore, and Monroe may have irked some poets by asking them for free contributions—which she got anyway (Abbott 1984 94). According to Pound, Monroe had already fouled the pitch by admitting an "awful rabble" (Paige 70) to *Poetry* which would put off any good and well known British poet. "What I want, and what would be good for the magazine would be for me to be able to *select* from Moore's mss.—from anybody's—and to know when he had really done a really fine thing and then get it in" (Paige 71; Pound's emphases). Sturge Moore, in Pound's assessment, may not have been a "colossus," but neither was he a "yahoo" like Chesterton. Eventually Monroe did not include him in the anthology and was able to claim in her autobiography, with only some exaggeration, that no contributor to the anthology had demanded a payment for being included. For Pound, anthologies like *Des Imagistes* and the *Catholic Anthology* were different from *The New Poetry* as they were introducing *new* poets to the reading public. But the latter, he was sure, had to pay since she was collecting established authors.

Sometimes it appears that Monroe's anthology reflects a Poundian view of poetry, though there are some glaring omissions and inclusions as well as a few views that may have horrified him. Like Pound, Monroe believed that poetry was an art which needed to

be diligently cultivated. The newness of the poetry that was being published lay in its rejection of archaic diction and old themes. One cannot but remember the letter that Pound wrote William Carlos Williams listing out the old topics that poets of the past dealt with *ad nauseum* (Paige 4-5). These can be summed up broadly under the rubrics of god, home, nature, love, war and voyages, roughly the large topics one finds represented rather assiduously in Palgrave. The new verse, in underplaying these subjects, was to be a poetry that was remarkable for individuality even as it drew upon the best of the past. Like Pound, again, she traced the rejuvenating influences to the Orient, especially to China, India and Japan. Rabindranath Tagore was a poet whom she held in an undisguised awe, and included in her anthology. *The New Poetry* was thus international in every sense of the term, proving that the editor was, at last, more for poetry than for American poetry (Paige 9).

Yet, Monroe was a reluctant editor when it came to publishing poems which went against her grain either because they were too pessimistic or she saw something irreligious, or they had a subject matter she considered *risqué*. Pound, for example, had to use all his persuasive powers and threats to make her print Eliot's "Prufrock" and succeeded only six months after submitting the poem. His disagreed with her on the Whitmanian idea about great poets needing great audiences, and it was an explosive issue for Pound (Pound in Harriet Monroe I. 2 30-32). On some of the most crucial matters, Monroe was prone to being carried away by a merely superficial wit. For example, she refers to the new poets as "vers-libertines" (Monroe 1917 xliii), echoing Untermeyer. If we remember that for Pound and Eliot, "No *vers* was *litre* for the man who wants do a

good job" (Pound 1924 12), Monroe's observation is clearly defiant, if deviant. In the end, Pound's own judgment of the magazine was ambiguous: "... a distressful magazine which does however print the few good poems written in **our** day along with a great bundle of rubbish . . ." (Paige 98). Competition from magazines such as *Others* kept her on her toes and she did take many of the chances that Pound gave her to modernize herself. Eliot too, in a review in *The Egoist* called "Reflections on Contemporary Verse," could not but comment wryly on her other effort, the anthology, saying that it was a "document of great importance for future generations," because while it contained a few good poems, it preserved "a great many bad poems (but bad in a significant way) which would otherwise perish." Thus, Eliot goes on, the anthology presented "a unique picture of a very chaotic world." The reader might feel that the chaos nullifies Monroe's claim "to wring the neck of rhetoric," to adopt Yeats's words, in her Introduction because fewer poets than she said "have avoided rhetoric" and those "chiefly by the exercise . . . of intelligence, of which an important function is the discernment of exactly what, and how much, we feel in any given situation" (Quoted in Abbott 1984 95-96).

Monroe's Introduction carefully eschewed any criticism of the poetry she collected. It was confined to tracing the history of English literature, especially prosody, from Chaucerian times and showing that the new poets were rebelling within a tradition in that they were innovating just as the great poets in the past had done. In other words, she was trying to dispel the reader's habitual suspicion of anything that was unfamiliar. In three editions, she reprinted the Introduction explaining the modern movement, presumably still hoping for the great audiences she thought great poets needed. She notes

with satisfaction how lay readers such as lawyers had developed a great taste in poetry, and as proof, adduced their aversion to the "over-appareled" Victorian poetry. She traced the beginnings of the new poetry to the works of Yeats and John Millington Synge. Quoting from a speech that Yeats gave under the aegis of *Poetry* in Chicago, she recognized the rejection of rhetoric and artificialities as the main distinguishing feature of the new verse. But what was really worrisome for her was a xenophobia in the arts even as she traced the contributions of eastern art: "This oriental influence is to be welcomed because it flows from deep original streams of poetic art. We should not be afraid to learn from it . . ." (Monroe xlv). In the Introduction to the second edition (1923), she again went on to list out what she had left out, rather than what she included in her anthology. The translations of Ezra Pound, if included, would have entailed the inclusion translations from India and China. The anthology would have been "led too far" (Monroe i.), meaning perhaps, that it would have been too inclusive and vague as literary history. Abbott's remark about the first edition was still true of the second: "In general it can be said that she edited more by omission than by selection" (1984 93). Also omitted were great writers, such as Whitman, who were too "ancestral" (Monroe 1946 xlv) to be anthologized. Monroe also left out writers who had stopped writing poetry, or had taken to other professions. She declares in her Introduction that "the present edition aims simply to add to that collection of twentieth-century verse in English the most significant work of the period which had passed since the first book appeared" (Monroe 1946 xlv). The editors had to resist a temptation to stretch the "modern movement" by tracing its beginnings from wherever their quest might have led (Monroe 1946 xlv). The "modern" was defined against the high Victorian, which enabled her to consider poets like Robert

Bridges, Wilfred Blunt and A. E. Housman, poets who wrote towards the end of the nineteenth century, as moderns. Browning and Christina Rossetti too augured the new in poetry. Kipling was noted for his "modern balladry" and his "incisive directness" (Monroe 1917 xlvi). Hopkins was praised for his "deeply original metric pattern, capable of exquisitely rich, subtle and flexible modulations" (Monroe 1917 xlvii). The focus is still more on metre than on the subject matter of Hopkins's poetry. Synge was considered influential, but was, however, not included as he was dead, and the anthology printed only the living poets. The "Modernists" had praised all these poets at some time or the other, and Monroe felt herself vindicated by having their opinion on her side. The list of probables for the anthology includes only three Americans (Whitman, Dickinson and Stephen Crane), and might be an indirect response to Conrad Aiken's criticism in *The Dial* mentioned below. Apparently still smarting from it, Monroe quotes "a young English poet" on American poets being impressive because of their "race-vitality" and because added "an inner force to the poem which is not found in English verse" (Monroe 1917 li). In her view, as American poetry ceased to be colonial, British poetry seemed comparatively colonial. As if to represent a cross-section of British opinion, she then brought in Mrs. Padraic Colum, and Sir J. C. Squire of Georgian vintage to bolster her point. Mrs. Colum had said that the continental size of the United States would make Americans so different as to have nothing to learn from their British counterparts. In the light of the letters that Pound wrote to Monroe and others like W. C. Williams about England and its literary standards, the statement appears rather strange. Squire in his anthology, *Selections from Modern Poets*, had not included even a single American among his forty-six poets, while she (Monroe) did include some British poets at least.

After this lame excuse, in an apparently direct answer to Aiken, she suddenly showed what the reviewer had called her "cocksure attitude": "If the proportion of these [British poets] is smaller than certain critics may demand, we can only reply that it presents justly our relative importance and significance of the two groups." She goes on to justify this on the basis of the general principles of making an anthology: "Every editor feels, and must necessarily reveal, certain unconscious sympathies and predilections; it is better, then, to reveal them quite frankly, without extenuation or apology. There is increasing evidence that Americans are beginning to give a direct and independent rating to the art of their contemporary fellow-countrymen. In particular they may begin to appreciate their poets' offering . . ." (Monroe 1917 Hi). This idea was nothing new, as Pound himself had, with an unwonted optimism, declared in a letter to Monroe that "the American Risorgimento," when it came, would "make the Italian Renaissance look like a tempest in a teapot!" (Paige 10). *The New Poetry* was at once, comprehensive and selective, and Monroe seems to reject Aiken's classification of anthologies along these two principles of inclusion (Aiken lxxii 389).

The poets in Monroe's anthology (in all its editions) were arranged alphabetically, thus reducing its literary historical value to some extent. Even about the title, *The New Poetry*, she felt slightly uncomfortable, aware that the "phrase [was] no doubt rash and most imperfectly descriptive, since the new in art is always the elder old, but difficult to replace with any form of words more exact" (Monroe xxxviii). Nor was she as "new" as some of her poet-contributors would have liked. Pound found Kreyemborg's anthology, *Others*, "a harum scarum vers libre (sic) American product, chiefly useful because it

keeps "Arriet," (edtr. *Poetry*) from relapsing into the Nineties" (Paige 82), but in her anthology, she made some progress for she did print "Prufrock" in the second edition. The first edition did not carry it only because Eliot had politely refused her permission citing its proposed inclusion in a forthcoming collection of his own (Valerie Eliot 141).

In a hard-hitting review of the anthology titled "The Monroe Doctrine in Poetry," Conrad Aiken pans Monroe for excluding the British except for a few poets, as mentioned above. *The New Poetry* was "very imperfectly" comprehensive (Aiken lxii 389) and a mistake, because Monroe should have, in his opinion, limited herself to editing a *selective* anthology. Probably he thought that the new poetry had produced enough to justify a selection without aiming at preservation, as Samuel Kettel had done with his *Specimens of American Poetry* (1823). He laments the scanty representation of such poets as John Masefield, Ralph Hodgson, Rupert Brooke, F. S. Flint, Walter de la Mare, and Gordon Bottomley, all of whom, with the exception of Flint, were represented in the Georgian anthologies. Indeed, for Aiken, these anthologies, along with *The English Review*, were heralds of the modern in poetry. Some of the American poets were not even what he perceived to be "new" in the sense that she intended in the title. Even the poems were not pruned of their ludicrous lines such as Amy Lowell's "And the buttons of his waistcoat bruised my body as he clasped me" and it would have been better if she had simply excluded "Patterns" from which the line was taken. In selecting some of the less well-written poems from Frost and others, he says of the editor "It seems almost as if Miss Monroe had a peculiar instinct for choosing a poet's second best" (Aiken lxxii 389). Aiken criticizes Monroe for exactly the same reasons as Pound did, for example, when he

wanted to include the poem on cabaret dancers (Paige 34) for being too prudish, and for a limited realism. Her radicalism was limited to form in poetry which is why she confines her selections to the "distinctly traditional" verses of Josephine Preston Peabody, and the "punctilious lyrics" of John Hall Wheelock, Joyce Kilmer, Louis Untermeyer and other less well-known but almost equally adroit makers of verses pleasantly conventional" (Aiken lxxii 390). In other words, even though Monroe notes the individuality and sincerity of the poets as their most important qualities, she chooses the Parnassian and the uninnovative. Summing up the anthology, Aiken says, "In short Miss Monroe, like many other anthologists, has willed the good and achieved the evil. An anthology of the new poetry which shall be equally fair to English and American poets, to realists and romanticists, is much to be desired. But a tangle of personal predilections, biases, editorial necessities, dimly seen as ideals, and half-resisted nepotisms and the reverse, has proved too much for the editor. And the result is a disappointing half-success—a provoking half-failure" (Aiken lxxii 390). The anthology hangs in some kind of a limbo because of its compromises. The irony inherent in the title of the review puts paid to everything that Monroe was claiming to have achieved with her magazine and anthology.

Aiken's review of Monroe's anthology is an illustration of the ways in which the practitioners of the "new" poetry differed in their views of what it ought to be. Their sensitivities were offended even after the broad agreement on such issues as the internationalization of poetry had been met; the extent of the representation in the anthology was as important as the idea of the representation itself. Aiken's comments on the editor's prudishness and insistence on the non-American element in the anthology are

also a vindication of Pound's views on the composition of the "new" poetry. The varying distances to which the protagonists of the poetry were willing to go and their radically divergent ideas could be accommodated only in the anthology.

The tendency of the anthologies and periodicals of the times to use the word "new" caught the attention of writers such as Pound who commented on it with some bitterness: "WHY 'new,' why this passion for 'newness' always confined to the title? Put there presumably to keep it out of the way. Not that one desires newness so awfully AWFULLY, goodness would suffice" (Paige 114). He would himself freely admit that some of the new poetry *was* good, though quantitatively, the "good" was not as much as he would have liked to see.

V

The effort to canvass a wider readership for poetry among the reading public was spearheaded by many poets who took to editing anthologies for this purpose expressly. The Imagist group with its three anthologies is a case in point. Often these poets would provide the lead and the professional anthologists would take over, with their own predilections and editorial compulsions given due place of course. This was the age when Helen Vendler's statement that poets are the true and final fashioners of taste more true than at any other time in literary history. The professional editors may have achieved more or less success, but what is common to them was the ability to sacrifice their own

tastes to put together an anthology that the people wanted. This may have been somewhat ironic because the best of the poets of the times refused to write down to the ordinary reader. Probably no anthologist of this kind achieved greater fame and aroused deeper resentment than the American, Louis Untermeyer. Even if only the sheer number of copies his anthologies sold is considered, he would be arguably the most influential anthologist after Palgrave.

Untermeyer started a veritable "anthology industry" that went on into the seventies from its inception in 1919. Gifted with a fluent style and an ability to coin catchy expressions such as "*vers libertines*" and "futilitarians", he helped promote the new poetry among the readers in no small measure, in spite of what T. S. Eliot and Robert Graves might say against him. Eliot had protested against his inclusion in *Modern American Poets* (1921) in a letter to the *Times Literary Supplement* of that year, to which Graves wrote a reply in support in the next edition. The controversy seemed to have ended in Untermeyer's favour when a reader declared that he was prompted to buy some more of Eliot's works after reading him in the anthology in question. However, even Untermeyer's bitterest critics praised him for eschewing his own ideas and anthologising poetry that he personally did not like, such as *The Waste Land*, for example. (He had objected to its pessimism, as he saw it, and received a youthfully excited and warmly commendatory letter from Hart Crane.) It was only in his later editions that he was able to truly appreciate the poem, a journey that was long and reluctantly undertaken. Even his literary values, at some very crucial points, were at variance with those of the new poets. For example, for Harriet Monroe, Pound and others, translations were an important tool

of criticism. For Untermeyer, it was something that kept an idle, ivory tower poet preoccupied (Untermeyer 1921 xv)

Untermeyer devoted a section to every major poet in his Introduction and explained the prominent features of the work, providing in the process, in easily understandable language and terms, a local habitation to a mere name. The short sections helped the reader digest the literary history of the time in easy blocks. He often included poets who were experimenting, and preferred poems that were less anthologized to those which were adequately included elsewhere, something that deserves more appreciation, given the commercial risk involved. Thus his range and representation were considerable, and equally important, he targeted young readers both in and out of the classroom. He was, however, a huge success even in the marketplace, and became the envy of editors like Harriet Monroe whom he outsold by the thousands.

The success that this editor achieved can be attributed to his uncanny sense of what the readers wanted. He could also write memorable Introductions that appealed to the readers. His directness of approach allowed the reader gain access to a poetry that was already notorious for its 'difficulty' sugar-coated with puns and other humorous devices. The Introductions used arguments that seemed to flow naturally into each other, and were expressed in a staccato like phrasing: "America developed a national consciousness; the West discovered itself, and the East discovered the West" (Untermeyer 1919 3). Sometimes he deployed the tactic of reinforcement by repetition, and paradox: "Wholly underivative, her [Emily Dickinson's] poetry was unique; her influence, negligible at

first, is now incalculable" (Untermeyer 1919 9). Such Introductions played a considerable role in popularizing modern poetry as the *TLS* reader's admission about his purchasing Eliot's poems, mentioned above, shows.

For all his self-proclaimed catholicity, however, Untermeyer was quite conservative in outlook, which at times made his anthologies appear uninnovative, if not outdated in spite of all their self-conscious titles. Pound is represented, for example, among other poems, by "The Ballad of the Goodly Fere" which he had, as early as 1912, marked out for exclusion from his canon. Untermeyer found in this ballad "lines so passionate and imagination so exuberant that they seemed to possess an almost physical force" (Untermeyer 1919 204-5). Yet, with remarkable insight, he could juxtapose and compare Archibald MacLeish's "Poetry should not mean/But be—" with Emily Dickinson's "Beauty is not caused, /It is" (Untermeyer 1919 8). By associating the new to the known, he made modern poetry more acceptable. But sometimes he could be quite amusing: he must have had a great respect for his own poetry since he gave himself nine pages, exactly the same number was allotted Pound! Against this, it must be said that he devoted twenty-four pages to Eliot, though he did not agree with some of his poetic ideas—almost as many pages as Robert Frost, Untermeyer's favourite poet and anthological advisor, who fills twenty-eight.

The anthologist's own acceptance of the new poetry took a long time to be reached. In his *The New Era in American Poetry* (1919), Untermeyer was pretty scornful of many of the poets in the Modernist canon now. He accused these poets of being

determined "to avoid the cliché at any cost" becoming "incoherent in metaphors that are more delirious than daring" (Untermeyer 1919 309). They wished only to "respond to a theory" (Untermeyer 1919 310). He completely missed the significance of their works as an influence on literary history, dubbing their innovations as being as transitory as fashions in clothes are. Their little magazines were negative in their attitude because they wished to criticise rather than create. It required an unusual elasticity of mind to move from such ideas to meet the needs of a growing readership with varied tastes.

Untermeyer's anthological career stretched into the second half of the twentieth century spanning almost sixty years. For all his weaknesses, he wielded a considerable influence on the careers of poets by playing a role in popularizing them, and on readers' tastes by guiding them.

For an anthologist who purveyed what people wanted, Untermeyer claims surprisingly personal criteria in selecting his inclusions. Elaborating in his autobiography, *From Another World* (1938), he says, "When it is impossible to forget, you are ready to assume that there is a vitality which will not let this piece, this poem die. But there is the next consideration which asks: Besides vitality, does it have "value"? Here a complexity of determinants comes into play: memory and association, familiarity and novelty, time and training and natural taste. There is the pleasure of recognition and there is the pleasure of surprise. There is the delight in being charmed and soothed, and there is the other fascination in being piqued and excited. Somehow the selective mind strikes a balance. Somehow it appreciates how common words made the familiar seem strange or the strange familiar, how they assumed a fresh personality, even a fresh potency"

(Untermeyer 1919 330-331). Yet one cannot help feeling that the repeated "somehows" make poetry more a mystical experience than an art that can be understood by study.

VI

One of the most important anthologists of the times, Untermeyer preferred to catch his readers early. His collection *This Singing World: An Anthology of Modern Poetry for Young People* (1923) is, as the subtitle states, and the introduction makes clearer, meant for children still at play, meant for pleasure, and is not designed to be used as a textbook. In preparing such an anthology, he was not alone. His contemporary anthologist, Marguerite Wilkinson also had similar strategies with her *New Voices* (1919), which addressed young readers specifically.

This Singing World is in many ways uncharacteristic of Untermeyer. The Introduction is unusually brief, and has quite a few platitudes. The beginning of the Introduction itself is a little apologetic and defensive. "You won't like all of these poems," he states bluntly. The anthology is not a personal one, but is meant to contain something for everyone. The editor attempts a sort of "negative capability" by trying to guess what poems different readers would like. And Untermeyer, significantly, addresses people not just readers, in his title. It is at once an affectionate and holistic attitude towards the readers encompassing, by implication, the whole personality. After all, he thought that poetry had to educate the reader, not just give pleasure. When he addresses

the reader, it is with the emphatic reflexive pronoun, "himself (or herself)" (Untermeyer vii; emphasis added). Untermeyer, However, is not free of some surprising banalities in his Introduction when he declares, for example, that "this remarkable world" has "as many tastes as there are flavors" (Untermeyer 1923 vii). He then lists his own classification of the owners of these tastes as people fond of music; dreamers; studious and sports-loving. There is something to delight every one of them in the anthology. At least he hopes that the book has something for everyone. Poetry is pleasurable not only for its music and stories, but also for its words. Great poets have always enjoyed finding words for their emotions and good readers have enjoyed reading them. In fact this seems to be the essence of poetic enjoyment, the common uniting factor between all the varied readers. ". . . whatever else you may look for (and, I hope, find), I think you will take pleasure not only in the sounds and the stories, but in the words themselves."

Untermeyer's title is carefully chosen and he devotes some space in his introduction to explain it. Making the usual claim that the current age produced more poets than before and were met with more readers who wanted to enjoy their works, he claims, a little ambitiously perhaps, that the anthology was as comprehensive as could be. He goes on to explain that "Most of the poems in this book were written by living poets—and so it is this singing world—your world as well as theirs—that is between the covers," and the singing continues (Untermeyer viii; his emphases). He stresses the immediacy and contemporaneity in the experience. The poems themselves are alive with a life of their own, just as characters like Oliver Twist, Robinson Crusoe, Hamlet, D'Artagnan and so on are alive. They are valuable because the poet has put something of

his own life's experience into it. As if to show the young readers that there was poetic spark in them also, he quotes Thomas Carlyle to the effect that while every fine poem was, in the end, biographical, ““it may be said, there is no life of man but is a heroic poem of some sort, rhymed or unrhymed”” (Untermeyer ix). Using a parlance that children understand most, he says that the Carlylean idea was the "moral" behind the introduction because “[e]very introduction, you know, must have one!” (Untermeyer 1923 ix). Still with the language of children, he sums up the reader-poetry relationship "boiled down" to an amazing equation which is a little simplistic, surely: "Poetry + People= Education + Enjoyment. At any rate, they are four good words" (Untermeyer 1923 ix). Some what confusingly and tautologically, he adds, "They seem, like things equal to the same thing, equal to each other." The words "seem" and "like" are too much like hedging and one does not feel the wiser for having read that. The equation is so specious that one suspects that it has been put there more for its alliteration and assonance than for any meaningful relationship of the components or parts, emphasized by their de-composition into "four good words."

The poetic propounded in the anthology is, fundamentally, Romantic, and would not look out of place in the *Lyrical Ballads*. The writers help the reader "discover the everyday magic in Common Things" (Untermeyer 1923 viii). For the reader who dislikes didacticism, there are poems of pure joy in a whole section which "Rhyme without Reason." Even the child who likes only to play cannot be impervious to the charms of the anthology. For each of these readers Untermeyer divides the anthology into sections such as "Laughing Legends," "Open Roads" and so on. The first of these opens, quite

appropriately, with "Songs of Awakening." Containing poems about spring, sunrise and April, it is an awakening in more than one sense. It is an archetypal awakening associated with nature's own first primeval stirrings. The section begins with Robert Browning, raising interesting ideas about literary history as Untermeyer viewed it. Harriet Monroe in the second edition of her anthology, *The New Poetry*, published in the same year as *This Singing World* (1923), too, considered Browning as a modern and thought it reasonable, for a while, to begin her own anthology with him. Nor was Untermeyer hesitant in including poems with archaic spellings as in W. E. Henley's "Ballade of Spring." Apparently Browning's colloquial style and his experimentation in verse forms appealed to Untermeyer as modern. But he departs from the moderns in having a large group of poems on nature in a part of the anthology named, "Breath of the Earth," of which the first section, "Songs of Awakening" occupies a significant space. And the Introduction, which is more like an Instruction, ends, naturally, in an exhortation: They [the four words—poetry, people, education, enjoyment] are, everywhere, and especially in this book, closely related. Let them stand together" (Untermeyer 1923 ix).

Almost all of Untermeyer's anthologies were intended to be textbooks and sometimes he went to elaborate lengths to find and accommodate the views of his readers. Thus, in an article named "Pegasus in High School" in the *American Mercury* (1929 61-64), he reported the results of a questionnaire he had sent to various American high schools. Proving that the public was unnecessarily pessimistic about poetry and its future, the survey showed, on the contrary, how deeply interested and enthusiastic the respondents were, since they selected some of the most recent poets as their favourites,

and not just the old ones. The Boston Brahmins, for example, were dethroned by the new writers such as Robert Frost, a sure indication of changing tastes in the matters of theme and form in poetry.

VII

The theme of newness found many manifestations and almost all anthologies carried the word or its synonym in their titles. Thus Marguerite Wilkinson, one of the more popular anthologists, had a collection named *New Voices: An Introduction to Contemporary Verse* (1919), which, presumably the introduction being made, was followed by another anthology, simply titled *Contemporary Poetry* (1929). In both the anthologies, the editor uses religious symbolism quite extensively perhaps to drive home the sacredness and significance of poetry in general. Poetry had therapeutic effects for the ills of society, and one may neglect it at one's own peril. To bring this therapy home, to the business and bosoms of readers, many poets, and anthologists like Wilkinson were exerting themselves. It seemed that the Americans, having finished the conquest of the continent, were now turning their energies to the arts. Even the academics were doing what they could to popularize poetry, putting together their own selections whenever a satisfactory anthology was not available. In short, it might be said that the age of the anthology had dawned. The *New Voices* aimed to provide "a new solace, recreation and inspiration, just the things which they might expect to find in music or in a beautiful new friendship" (Wilkinson 1922 4), and the book was to be specifically an introduction to contemporary poetry, "the beginning of an adventure of acquaintance" (Wilkinson 1922

4). But Wilkinson was anxious to disillusion the reader of the idea that poetry was easy, or could be appreciated naturally without an effort to learn it. The reader should look for beauty, not prettiness which was an ephemeral quality. "Prettiness is pleasant and negligible, a light coquette. But beauty is strong, profound, austere, a great maternal force. Those who desire prettiness desire the lightest of literature. Those who desire beauty will find poetry" (Wilkinson 1922 8). Accepting the principle that "a new cadence means a new idea" as the Imagist poets had said, the anthologist set out to explain the new rhythms and cadences of modern poetry in some detail. This was one of the main aims of her next anthology, *Contemporary Poetry* (1929). While in the earlier anthology, the editor had grouped poems along such divisions as technique, diction and so on, in the next edition, she grouped the poems along the lines of nationality with American poets forming one group, and British, Irish and Canadian poets forming another. Perhaps this was because the anthology could not accommodate all the available poems, and this was possibly one way of presenting representative samples from those nations which had begun to make significant contributions to the new poetry. That she assigned a whole section to the Americans was indicative of their arrival on the literary scene. The efforts of the "Modernists" to internationalise poetry were beginning to be reflected, more or less, in the anthologies.

For all her international inclinations, Wilkinson was, at heart, an old-fashioned editor who drew a considerable proportion of her poetries from those very anthologists whose influence the Modernist writers were trying to combat. Though she did not acknowledge her debts specifically, it is possible for even the most casual reader

recognize her models. We have already seen her obligations to the Georgians; indeed she traced the "new" in poetry to them (Wilkinson 1924 9) and judged later writers by some of their standards. Ugliness, for example, in William Carlos Williams was criticized because, in the opinion of the editor, it served no purpose, but the Georgians were praised for making good use of it "for the sake of larger beauty" (Wilkinson 1924 117), a concept she does not define because it was impossible to do so any way. Thus, in crucial aspects, the editor fails her readers, especially students for whom the anthology is avowedly meant as an introduction. If Wilkinson swore by the Georgians, she owed nothing less to Palgrave. The poems in her anthology would be a consolation to the poor, and a "fortification" for the souls of the affluent (Wilkinson 1924 7), just as the Victorian editor intended his *Golden Treasury* (1861) to be. The poems in *New Voices* were also selected to show to the reader that the old styles of poetry, good for their time, should not be allowed to ossify into an orthodoxy, or turn into cramping habits, but the old and the new could exist together since they did not compete, but complemented each other.

Of fundamental importance to the editor was the idea that poetry was meant to be heard more than read, an idea that was emphasized by the title *New Voices*. Wilkinson takes considerable trouble to point out which of the poems in the collection were to be recited aloud, either individually or in groups. Like a drama, a poem could be a public experience sometimes. The kinship of these ideas with the reading societies in England of the time is unmistakable.

Wilkinson's conservative ideas inevitably led her into making selections that would amaze a modern reader. As late as 1924, she was hostile to Pound and Eliot, calling them radicals who were too clever to be poets. Pound was singled out for special criticism, being accused of producing works that were either too formidably clever to be called poetry or were so bad as to be inferior to the parodies they invited. In fact, the editor was clueless as to what place Pound occupied in modern letters. She even made the amazing admission that Pound would be amused by her selections if she ever made them from his works. Like the Georgians and Quiller-Couch before her, she too chose the "Goodly Fere" as a poem with power, but did not print it. While the inclusion of Rabindranath Tagore was justified partly on his winning the Nobel Prize, no such consideration was shown to the writer of the *Waste Land*. Mentioned briefly and critically in the Introduction and dismissed, the two central figures of Modernism disappear entirely from the selections. Unlike Untermeyer, Wilkinson made no compromises with a public taste that was increasingly favouring the two writers. Ironically, she had words of praise for poets like Harriet Monroe who repeatedly admitted their tutelage to Pound, and learnt also from Williams, to mention only two examples. One suspects in her a sympathy for fellow-anthologists who also wrote some poetry, for almost all of them, Untermeyer, Jessie Rittenhouse, Harriet Monroe, and others, were included. In sum, *New Voices* is an amazing anthology in its uncompromising attitude towards those writers whom the editor did not like.

The immense variety of anthologies and their popularity can attributed to the growing number of readers surely, but the fact also needs to be noticed that the

anthologists were already catering to niche markets such as students and children. Quite often they reached out to these readers through surveys, questionnaires, and paid attention even to the letters these readers wrote back to them. Their strategies in popularising the poetry were as simple as they were effective: sometimes they deliberately excluded over-anthologised pieces and included newer or neglected ones, at some risk to their commercial success. The long introductions they often wrote were a valuable service to readers and to a poetry that prided itself on its terseness and suppressed links between lines and ideas. In other words, they were gradually realising the potential of the anthology and its devices. An unprecedented number of poets themselves turned to the anthology and brought to it an authentic if polemical atmosphere. Whether poets, publishers, critics and readers agreed or argued, poetry remained firmly in focus.

Chapter IV

W. B. Yeats's *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*
(1936)

and

Michael Roberts's *The Faber Book of Modern Verse*
(1936)

Change has come suddenly, the despair of my friends in the 'nineties part of its preparation. Nature, steel-bound or stone-built in the nineteenth century, became a flux where man drowned or swam; the time had come for some poet to cry 'the flux in my own mind.'

—W. B. Yeats, *Oxford Book of Modern Verse*

For the moment all that the poet could do was to concentrate upon surfaces: in a world in which moral, intellectual and aesthetic values were all uncertain, only sense impressions were certain and could be described exactly.

—Michael Roberts, *Faber Book of Modern Verse*

I

With the exception of Pound's *Profile: An Anthology for MCMXXXIII*, the thirties were not remarkable for any major anthologies. Untermeyer did see some reprints, and Harriet Monroe went on to publish a second edition of *The New Poetry*, but apart from these, there were few significant anthologies. Let us also recall, if only in passing, that 1929 saw I. A. Richards's *Practical Criticism*. Its title indeed masks the real project Richards undertook, with anonymous poems and readers. Today an anthologist might do the same exercise with many poems he would short list for a possible reader. What Richards did was to collect poems and invite "interpretations" of them from readers whom he knew, but those who did not know whose poems they were reading and interpreting. "Anonymity is," as Aaron Jaffe remarks on this exercise, "for Richards, the means of isolating his subject of study: the moment of communication, or lack thereof, between reader and poem" (Jaffe, 26). Neither the New Critics like Brooks and Warren who learnt some tricks of the trade from Richards, nor later anthologists seemed to have sufficiently credited Richards's pioneering work as anthologist *manqué*.

The two anthologies of note of the mid-thirties, however, are Yeats's *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse* and Michael Roberts's *The Faber Book of Modern Verse*, both published in 1936, and both saw the academy as their target readership. These were perhaps the first anthologies that sought to print selections, not with any noisy axe to grind, but in accordance with the poetic ideas of the editors themselves. Even Laura Riding and Robert Graves, who detested anthologies for being crassly commercial,

partisan, or planned to an agenda, and therefore either biased or limited, were willing to offer advice to Roberts in making the anthology, as we shall see. *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse* and *The Faber Book of Modern Verse* were the earliest anthologies to record the history of Modernism after it had been recognized as a movement of sorts by itself. They shaped the Modernist canon and fixed the limits of its literary history for generations to come, at least as far as Anglo-American poetry was concerned. This is a claim that can be vindicated even by a cursory survey of some of the well thumbed narrative literary histories that quote them with the respect that is due to any established authority. The editors of the two anthologies were revolutionary in what they included, even in the very poets they chose to begin their anthologies with, but perhaps were less so in what they excluded. The collections mark a time when Modernism had, more or less, achieved its aims and was soon to segue, according to some literary historians, into Postmodernism, commonly dated from World War II which began in the year of their publication. Yeats and Roberts were among the first major anthologists to present a comprehensive view of literary history in a serious manner, ignoring the compulsions of the market. They could do so because they had no movement to popularize, or any readers to win over. They bravely went where no anthologist in the twentieth century until then had been before, ignoring the lazy reader, or the one with preconceived ideas. They could include poets who were united by some common ideas in poetry, and not just by the accident of being born, or having published, around the same time. Of course, the similarities go only so far.

Yeats recognized, as we shall see, that the Faber book was going to rival his anthology not only in the marketplace, but also in ideological terms, since it was going to be a "radical" collection, and he carefully girded himself for what he called "the war of the books" in a letter to Charles Williams of the Oxford Press. The other party to the war was also aware of the challenge, beginning with T. S. Eliot himself who wrote to Roberts in a letter that incidentally reveals the compulsions of publishing such collections, "The existence of these anthologies (Yeats's *Oxford Book* and Ian Parsons's *Progress of Poetry*), makes it desirable that our book should be a bulky one, and I think we are giving very good value for the money. Of course, it will take us a considerable time to get our money back, but we are counting on a long run. Incidentally, I have all confidence that your book will succeed because it will be the best" (Quoted in *TLS* June 1977 728). The two books, in retrospect, seem to anticipate what came to be called the "Anthology Wars" of the sixties and seventies, even in the thirties. For these reasons *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse* and *The Faber Book of Modern Verse*, which, for a considerable time, virtually occupied the field all by themselves and eclipsed Parsons, the third competitor, require the detailed attention I have given them here.

II

"... I have been a maker of anthologies myself," says William Butler Yeats in a letter to his publisher Fisher Unwin (Kelly 460). Written in connection with a request for permission to print some of his poems, the letter shows Yeats at the centre of a

relationship that involved a fellow-anthologist, and his own publisher. Yeats valued the anthology because it provided him with an opportunity to reach out to the reading public though he was not entirely free of some misgivings about it, for, he felt that beyond a point that was difficult to define, it did a poet no good. It is also interesting to speculate if the word "maker" is not the literal translation of the Greek word "*vates*," a word which also means "poet" or "prophet," which latter capacity Yeats also claimed for the poet. The letter also reveals his concern for Unwin's financial interests. This 1895 letter, in other words, reflects the pride Yeats felt as an anthologist, and the value he attached to anthologies. Indeed, it might be said without any exaggeration that Yeats was ever an anthologist in being, and that he could never read a poem without adopting an anthologist's perspective, even from the earliest to the last days of his literary career. For example, writing to Katherine Tynan as early as 1889, he says that his friend, Edwin John Ellis, may not be much of a poet, but "still he will have a small nitch (sic) some day" (Kelley 135). One wonders what else the "nitch" can mean but a place in an anthology. Ellis was to get two-and-a-half pages in the final anthology that Yeats edited in 1936. Again, writing to Charles Williams, in a letter dated October 11, 1935, almost towards the end of his career, he says, "[Richard] Aldington is also a friend of mine, but *I have always known that if ever I did an Anthology I would have to reject his work*" (Quoted in Jeffares and Cross Ed. 181; emphasis added). It is interesting to speculate whether the upper case "A" with which Yeats spells the anthology here, and in some other places was not, perhaps, an unconscious reflection of his own conception of an ideal anthology, an *Idaea*, in Plotinus's terms. When he refers to his *Oxford Book of Modern Verse* (1936) in his letters to his friends, it is always as the "Anthology." It is as if the anthology were a

goal, an inevitable destination of a poet, and that appearance in it was the distinguishing mark of a great poet. The letter about Aldington to Williams is, again, indicative of Yeats's refusal to compromise his anthological principles for a personal friendship, another measure of the importance this major poet attached to anthologies. Indeed, we might go further and say that Yeats's anthological instincts extended to, or rather were the consequence of, a desire to form groups: "We want to let people know that there is a little school of us" (Kelly 195). They [the people] would know about the school through their anthology, *The Book of Irish Verse* (1895). While even his friends might be excluded, Yeats always includes, or tries to include, those writers who may not have been so kind to him earlier in literary matters. Thus Laura Riding and Robert Graves, in their *Pamphlet Against Anthologies*, had criticized his "Lake Isle of Innisfree" as a typical "anthology piece" designed to fit into any collection, and yet, Yeats held no animosity against them. He had read Riding for *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, and had liked her work, acknowledging, in the frankest terms, his early mistaken aversion to it. In his letter to Dorothy Wellesley he writes, "I had rejected her work in some moment of stupidity but when you praised her I reread her in "The Faber Book of Modern Verse" & delighted in her intricate intensity. I have written to her to apologise for my error & to ask leave to quote "Lucrece and Nara," "The Wind Surfers," [and] "The Flowering Urn." She will refuse, as Graves has, but as a matter of honour, I must ask" (Raine Ed. 45). In other words, Yeats saw the anthology as a powerful if personal means of propaganda for literature, and realized that this aim could be accomplished only by collecting the "best," whatever his own attitude towards the writer may have been.

Yeats was in fact an obsessive anthologist all his life for, even while editing the Oxford anthology, he was also compiling *Irish Broad-sides*, a collection of ballads, a genre that was dear to him. The point is that for him, the anthology was a valuable means of not only popularising poetry, but was also useful continuing its contemporary development, as we shall see. Not surprisingly, his letters to his friends around this time are full of the broadside project, for it was a collection he had undertaken on his own. As for the Oxford book, his enjoyment in working on it was always emphatically stated: "It has been an excitement reading and selecting modern poets," an excitement that continued even after the anthology was printed. Writing to Dorothy Wellesley again, he says, "The Anthology which is being hurriedly reprinted is having an immense sale" (Raine Ed. 118), and yet again he noted with satisfaction, "The Anthology continues to be a best seller" (Raine Ed. 139). The final reference to its sales came later when wrote her, "I think I told you that 15,000 copies of the Anthology were sold in three months" (Raine Ed. 147). As will be seen later, Yeats was insistent in casting the anthology in his own image, or something much like it. Protesting a critic's baseless allegation that the Oxford anthology was not his own compilation, he wrote to Wellesley, "You chose the two [Rudyard] Kipling poems, my wife made the selections from my own work. All the rest I did" (Raine Ed. 127). In the end, he could legitimately pride himself on the thoroughness with which he read even modern poems to make his selections, later regretting the sole exclusion of Margaret Sackville.

Yeats's involvement with the making of anthologies can be traced to his youthful days at the Rhymers' Club in the early 1890s. The Rhymers had published two

anthologies called *The First Book of the Rhymers' Club* (1892) and *The Second Book of the Rhymers' Club* (1893), solely at Yeats's urging. In a moving reminiscence, he recounted that he wanted to make these anthologies because he desired to have his favorite poems of the Rhymers "in my hand" (Yeats 1966 301). For him, the anthology was invaluable for preservation, an inerasable personal history that touched his own literary life as well as contemporary literatures be they Irish, English or European. However, it might be mentioned here in passing that the editor of the Rhymers Club anthologies was Yeats's friend, George Arthur Greene, who was also included in them.

One cannot read about Yeats's anthological efforts without a sense of *déjà vu* after being familiar with Ezra Pound's more famous and better documented attempts to "resuscitate poetry and the arts." Yeats, for instance, wrote to Katherine Tynan, much as Pound advised his fellow-propagandists, what the broad principles of her forthcoming anthology, *Irish Love Songs* (1892), should be:

A book such as you are doing should be Irish before all else. People will go to English poetry for "literary poetry" but will look to a book like your collection for a new flavour as of fresh turned mould. . . [E]very poem that shows English influence in any marked way should be rejected. No poetry has a right to live merely because it is good. It must be *the best of its kind* (Kelly 289; Yeats's emphasis).

As the letter suggests, for Yeats, as for Pound, the anthology was something more than a mere literary portmanteau. He was keen that the anthology should be so focused as to

fulfill the expectations aroused in the reader by its title. Yeats's interest in the anthology needs to be viewed in the context of the renaissance he was trying to bring about in Irish literature much as Pound, again, would later try to do in English letters. It was inevitable that nationalism, as evidenced in the desire to exclude English influences in the quote above, should play a major role in all his literary efforts and for this reason, it merits some attention.

Early in his youth, Yeats was taken up by the idea of an Irish literature which he saw as inevitable to form an Irish consciousness. Ireland was beset by many evils like journalism, says Yeats, but “[c]osmopolitanism was one of the worst. We are not content to dig our own potato patch in peace. We peer over the wall at our neighbour's instead of making our own garden green and beautiful. And yet it is a good garden, and there have been great transactions within it, from the death of Cuchulain to the flight of Michael Dwyer from the burning cabin” (Reynolds 106-107). A feeling of Irishness might well begin with a love for the natural beauty of the country. He praises William Allingham, a contemporary poet because “if he was no national poet, he was at any rate, no thin-blooded cosmopolitan, but loved the hills about him and the land under his feet” (Quoted in Reynolds 15). Again in *Letters to the New Island* he writes, “Cosmopolitan literature is, at best a poor bubble, though a big one. Creative work has always a fatherland” (Reynolds 74). He adds:

To the greater poets everything they see has its relation to the national life, and through that to the universal and divine life; nothing is an

isolated artistic moment; there is unity everywhere, you can attain only what is near you, your nation, or if you be no traveller, your village and the cobwebs on your walls. You can no more have the greater poetry without a nation than religion without symbols. One can only reach out to the universe with a gloved hand—that glove is one's nation, the only thing one knows a little of (Reynolds 74).

The intellectual, and even the divine, could only be anchored to nationalism, and a poet who did not have this anchorage was adrift, somebody who could end up, by turning inward in the very narrow sense of egoism, as the War poets like Owen did, in a contemptible self-pity. It made little difference to Yeats that this pity encompassed all men who fought in the War. In the Yeatsian view of poetics, these writers could never qualify as what he called the "greater poets," and consequently, had no place in his anthology, except in an indirect way, as writers who had influenced others.

For Yeats himself, with such ideas of nationalism, and unable to escape living in London, the situation appeared truly gloomy. If he were to learn English literature and culture, he would, he says have to give up his "Irish subject-matter, or attempt to found a new tradition. Lacking sufficient recognized precedent, I must needs find out some reason for all I did. I knew almost from the start that to overflow with reasons was to be not quite well-born; and when I hid them, as men hide a disagreeable ancestry; and that there was no help for it seeing that my country was not born at all. I was doomed to imperfect achievement and under a curse, as it were, like some race of birds compelled to

spend the time needed for the making of the nest in argument as to the convenience of moss and twig and lichen" (Yeats 1966 166). His friends like Arthur Symonds, Richard le Gallienne and John Davidson were provincial, but curable, whereas he was incurable (Yeats 1966 166). He noticed that his Irish friends had acquired the "'impurities' curiosities about politics, about science, about history, about religion; and that we must create once more the pure work" (Yeats 1966 167). Irishness was to be the base of his literary achievement. Remembering the days when he was in his mid-twenties, Yeats very meticulously listed out his nationalist interests:

I had three interests, interest in the form of literature, in a form of philosophy, and belief in nationality. None of these seemed to have anything to do with the other, but gradually my love of literature and my belief in nationality came together. Then for years, I said to myself that these two had nothing to do with my philosophy, but that I had only to be sincere and keep from constraining one by the other, and they would become one interest. Now all these three are, I think, one, or rather all are the discrete expressions of a single conviction. I think that each has behind it my whole character, and has gained thereby, a certain newness—for is not every man's character peculiar to himself—and that I have become a cultivated man (Quoted in Richard Ellmann 241).

Yet, while Yeats despised politics, he was at best ambiguous in his response to nationalism for its own sake. It is an accepted view that he joined Irish nationalist parties only to pursue his interests in occultism, and Maud Gonne. Above all he disliked the kind of hatred that the Irish patriots spewed out at their colonizers. In "September 1913" he laments the death of "Romantic Ireland" with that of John O'Leary. But he was soon to write what some critics regard as a palinode in "Easter 1916". Nationalism, like any other powerful emotion in life, provided him with the poetic inspiration, and he wrote about both, its noble and ignoble consequences, casting something of a "cold eye" on them. For him, the forging of a great literature was "a greater service to our country than writing that compromises either in the seeming service of a cause" (Quoted in Stead 1964 28). Irish nationalism had a special appeal. His country, still with a folklore intact, and young at heart, had advantages over England and other European countries which did not. His early efforts at anthologizing and group-forming attempts have their roots in this feeling of nationalism. Literature was to be one of the important forces in shaping it, and anthologies were to play key roles from the very beginning and help in taking both literature and nationalism to the readers. Implicit in Yeats's statements about Celtic nationalism is the idea that the other European nations could rekindle their moribund literatures and nationalist feelings from the Irish fire. An Irish literary renaissance could thus widen into a renaissance in European letters.

Yeats's own first major anthological effort in this direction, *A Book of Irish Verse*, was published in 1895. It was the first anti-colonial literary effort by a single artist. British colonialism sent into hiding the nationalist identity of the colonised country, and

the editing of such anthologies was aimed at facilitating the return of this feeling of nationalism. The Introduction, even from the excerpts that one can sample, and the selections in this collection, are of considerable significance because they show how early Yeats's literary ideas had crystallized. He was, for example, against what he called the "literary poetry," and "rhetoric", a point he was to repeat even in the *Oxford Book of Modern Verse* (1936). Such regrettable developments occurred in the literatures of old nations like England, but a country like Ireland, with its folklore and culture intact, was better placed to usher in a renaissance in her literature. Yeats too felt a need to draw strength from the land of his origin.

A Book of Irish Verse also illustrates his anthological ideals, though he did not, later, stick to all of them strictly. The importance of the Irish collection also lies in the fact that it anticipates the ideas that were to guide him in making the *Oxford Book*:

This book [*The Book of Irish Verse*] is founded upon its editor's likes and dislikes, and everything it contains has given him pleasure. Several names familiar to Irishmen are excluded, and some quite unfamiliar included, and the selection may well be capricious and arbitrary. He might have partly avoided this by giving a little from every eminent writer, whether he liked him or not, but it did not seem possible to make a good book in this way (Quoted in Marcus 99).

The Irish anthology is also important because it shows that Yeats had fixed his canon as far as the Rhymers are concerned. The poems of Dowson and Johnson which were to appear in *The Oxford Book* are already present in the earlier book.

The story of how Yeats came to edit the *Oxford Book of Modern Verse* may be briefly told. The University of Oxford was looking for an editor for its proposed anthology in 1930, and Lascelles Abercrombie, whose work had appeared in Edward Marsh's *Georgian Poetry*, was persuaded to work on it. After four years of work, in 1934, Abercrombie opted out for personal and professional reasons. The publishers then decided to approach Yeats who was, as we have seen, already an established anthologist. In a surprisingly short time, agreement was reached on most issues, fees included, and Yeats began to read for the anthology with as much pleasure as profit.

The *Oxford Book*, which Yeats edited in his last years, shows his poetic thought in its final development. He was very particular about the historical aspects of the anthology, rejecting the year nineteen hundred (which was the terminal year of Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch's 1900 collection, *The Oxford Book of English Verse 1215-1900*), as arbitrary, and asked his publisher for permission to start with the years around the death of Tennyson. This date served two purposes: firstly it enabled him to begin with Gerard Manley Hopkins and include his friends from the Rhymers' Club, like Earnest Dowson, for example, and as he put it "some others who belong to the Modern Movement though they died before 1900" (Quoted in Jeffares and Cross Ed. 176). Secondly, he seems to have thought about literary history in terms of personages rather than in the passage of

years. Apparently, even while he recognized Tennyson as a major poet, he regarded him as symbolic of all the less commendable aspects of literature that Victorianism stood for, if we consider his repeated attacks on this poet. But an equally important reason was Yeats's cyclical view of the arts that paralleled nature's patterns, a view which he explained in an illuminating essay, "The Autumn of the Body" (1898):

I see, indeed, in the arts of every country those faint colours and faint outlines and faint energies which many call 'the decadence' and which I, because I believe that the arts lie dreaming of things to come, prefer to call the autumn of the body. . . Its importance is the greater because it comes to us at the moment when we are beginning to be interested in many things which positive science, the interpreter of exterior law, has always denied: communion of mind with mind in thought and without words, foreknowledge in dreams and in visions, and the coming among us of the dead, and much else. We are, it may be, at the crowning crisis of the world, at the moment when man is about to ascend, with the wealth that he has been so long gathering upon his shoulders, the stairway he has been descending from the first days (Yeats 1961 192).

It was this crisis as described by de Sola Pinto in his book, *Crisis in English Poetry 1880-1940*, that most important poets of the time were trying to face and portray in their works. More clearly than anyone else, Yeats saw in the eighteen nineties, called the 'decadent'

years, the beginnings of what came to be regarded as Modernism. This insight was to launch in *The Oxford Book* a unique chronology, carefully developed in the Introduction which remains a remarkable contribution to literary history even as it provides a valuable insight into the history of readership. With Tennyson at the terminal point, Yeats's literary history is consequently, more comprehensive and continuous than that recorded by many others who tended to see Modernism as a spontaneous development that occurred *sui generis*.

Yeats's Introduction began with a survey of the poets he proposed to include, with an emphasis on comprehensiveness. They were arranged chronologically. In a brilliant coup against the newspaper reading public that he hated so much, he began the anthology with Walter Pater's "purple passage" which the editor rewrote in *vers libre*. It is for such interesting innovations that *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse* can be regarded as a map of Yeats's poetic and its origins. Many of the important issues that engaged him in his career as a poet can be seen expressed here in a compendious manner, either directly or indirectly. As the final collection of a major writer who helped mould Modernism, and was in turn considerably influenced by it, the anthology presents a unique vantage point to study the movement and the evolution of this poet's own ideas. Pater's "Mona Lisa," placed at the beginning of *The Oxford Book*, affords the reader a portal through which the anthology and Yeats's mind may be entered. For the anthologist's purpose, the passage in Pater is perfectly suitable since it presented the confluence of the past and the modern and was a timeless piece on an immortal painting. As mentioned earlier, the ordinary reading public had forgotten Pater, and Yeats quoting a friend says, "no newspaper has

given him an obituary notice” (Yeats 1936 viii). And so he began the anthology with this prose piece rewritten in *vers libre* as if to see reborn in the public mind the author of *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (1873). The "Mona Lisa" embodied in itself all that Yeats wished a poem to be. It can even be said that some of his most important ideas were derived from Pater, with Matthew Arnold too playing an important role.

Yeats saw in Pater's lines an “active virtue” that he regarded as the sine qua non of any great poem. This idea of “active virtue” Yeats took from Pater and, modified it for his own purposes and according to his own ideas. Talking of Wordsworth in his Preface, Pater says that his work has much that might be forgotten. He continues:

But scattered up and down it, sometimes fusing and transforming entire compositions, like the Stanzas on *Resolution and Independence* or the *Ode on the Recollections of Childhood*, sometimes, as if at random, depositing a fine crystal here or there, in a matter it does not wholly search through and transmute, we trace the action of his unique, incommunicable faculty, that strange, mystical sense of a life in natural things, and of man's life as part of nature, drawing strength and colour and character from local influences, from the hills and streams, and from natural sights and sounds. Well! that is the *virtue*, the active principle in Wordsworth's poetry; and then the function of the critic of Wordsworth is to follow up that active principle, to disengage it, to mark the degree in which it penetrates his verse (Pater 1873 250).

The "Mona Lisa" is one such "fine crystal" that Yeats spotted and printed. Claiming the privilege of an editor, he plucked "the foreign feathers" of Oscar Wilde's *Ballad of Reading Gaol*. As an anthologist and critic, he set about marking the works in which the "active" principle/virtue penetrated the verses of the poets he chose. While Yeats did not speak about nature as much as Wordsworth did, his dislike of London and longing for the kind of idyllic settings of Innisfree made him akin to the Romantic poet in some ways. But the idea of an "active virtue" becomes a major element in his own poetry and poetics, liberating him from current issues of no importance, and the sentimental. Yeats's "active virtue" was far different from what Pater saw in Wordsworth. It was a deeply embedded on a poet's character and it made tragedy a joy, and the poet himself/herself more than a mere recorder of what fate doled out. The image would be matched by the mask. Such a mask da Vinci wore, according to Pater's analysis:

He (da Vinci) trifles with his genius, and crowds all his chief work into a few tormented years of later life; yet he is so possessed of his genius that he passes through the most tragic events, overwhelming his country and friends, like one who comes across them by chance on some secret errand (Pater 78).

We can see in Pater's description of da Vinci the same aristocratic disdain of the masses that Yeats had. The Renaissance man had in him "blood and guts" that Yeats alone possessed from among the Tragic Generation. And like Yeats, da Vinci too packed a great deal of creativity into his old age. The themes he chose were timeless as Matthew

Arnold would have recommended, and da Vinci's painting encompasses the past, the present and the future. The next few lines of Pater, after Yeats's excerpt, summarise this:

The fancy of a perpetual life, sweeping together ten thousand experiences, is an old one; and modern philosophy has conceived the idea of humanity as wrought upon by, and summing up in itself, all modes of thought and life. Certainly Lady Lisa might stand as the embodiment of the old fancy, the symbol of the modern idea. (Pater 78)

In spite of all his sufferings, the painter too cast a "cold eye" on his subjects, as Yeats would have done. No wonder Yeats began the anthology with Pater's lines.

The "Mona Lisa," exemplifies one of the most important tenets of Modernism: that poetry and prose are only graduated versions of each other; and that there is no basic difference between them, an article of faith with the Imagists too. The poem also bore witness to the close relationship between the visual arts and poetry. Attributing to the lines a revolutionary significance, Yeats saw the poem anticipate a whole philosophy in which the individual was reduced to the flux that Pound describes in his *Cantos*. It was amazingly prescient. It summed up the fifteenth century, which, according to Pater, had a two-fold movement introducing the Renaissance and the "modern spirit" that introduced realism, and an appeal to experience along with a return to antiquity and nature (Pater 86). Modernism too was doing the same things in the twentieth century. The "Mona Lisa" was a fine blend of all these features. In printing the poem at the very beginning, Yeats may have hoped to awaken in the reader that literary sense which Voltaire, "with his

clear, fresh writings" had aroused in Rousseau (Pater 86). The poem was revolutionary also because, in dissolving all the corruption that tradition had suffered, it suggested an ideal of a life every moment of which was intensely lived, as "a pure gem-like flame" (Yeats 1936 ix). This way of life replaced the idea of moral earnestness that characterized much of Victorian poetry. Since "all accepted him for master" as Yeats says (1936 ix), it was appropriate that Pater's poem should head the anthology.

Pater's "Mona Lisa," embodied, in keeping with the Renaissance spirit, the holistic development of man, in a few lines.. Pater's lines were easily turned into *vers libre* by Yeats showing their inherent poetic form that conformed to Modernist ideas. The poem was a landmark thematically, since it showed where the earlier age ended and the modern began. The "voyage within" was achieved by the fine analysis of the psychology, "the inward world of thought and feeling, the whirlpool" (Pater 187) of da Vinci's sitter. Here, the flux is even more rapid, the fire even more intense, than it was in the outward physical experience. She was a private individual and a timeless representative of humanity at the same time. By placing Pater's poem at the beginning of the anthology, Yeats emphasised the Modernist shift from the Victorian obsessions with nature, didacticism, poetic diction, and "scientific and moral discursiveness" (Yeats 1936 ix) to a concern with life. Taking Pater's advice to live life in a "pure, gem-like flame," contemporary poets like the Rhymers took to wine, and some of them ended up as suicides. For them, life had become a ritual, and for a while there were some conversions to Catholicism. The poets withdrew into an ivory tower, away from political and social concerns. There appeared among them a new conception of Matthew Arnold's

"diminished" view of poetry. But before that, Victorianism was to take its last stand in Rudyard Kipling and William Watson.

Then at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Paterian way of life was given a short shrift. The Victorian artificiality was replaced by self-conscious imitations of folk songs, of which Ireland had the best living tradition in Western Europe. But folk song only lent a superficial simplicity and charm to the works. The only exceptions were A.E. Housman, Thomas Hardy with his objectivity that Yeats associated with the Aesthetes, and John Synge who brought a kind of "masculinity" to Irish verse by his harsh "disillusionment" (Yeats 1936 xiii). For Yeats, Irish literature appeared to be the silver lining to an otherwise dark cloud that hung over English letters. This was possible due to a simple public life which was also exciting. With a wonderful insight, Yeats remarks that there were no major poets in English from 1900 to 1936, to match the Victorian age in its Brownings and Tennysons. Then came writers who, though not innovators themselves, used themes from the past to depict modern issues. Among these, according to Yeats, were Laurance Binyon, T. Sturge Moore, Sir Walter de la Mare, and the Sitwells. Their leader was Robert Bridges with his innovations in cadences that expressed new impulses, and made commonplaces unforgettable. Theirs was a descent from Virgil, and not from Homer. The point is that they were more literary than rooted in life and Yeats displayed at best an ambiguous attitude towards them.

The modern "voyage inward" began in earnest, according to Yeats, with Edith Sitwell who used her own innovations in metrics to reflect a dream world. All modern

writers were obsessed with "essential form" (Yeats 1936 xx) that rejected the superficial and the relatively more transient, and aimed at depicting the more permanent. In humans, this was the skeleton as expressed in Eliot's lines "No contact possible to flesh/Allayed the fever of the bone" (Yeats 1936 xix). Exactly the same focus on "essential form" could be found in the painting of the time. Yeats was recording the *Zeitgeist* of the age. Perhaps in a world always in a flux, the artists were searching for something that was a little more permanent. For Yeats, the Victorians failed because they were unaware of this flux which began in the seventeenth century when man was rendered passive by a Cartesian view of a nature that was mechanized. This theme, already foreshadowed so prophetically in Pater's poem, was to occupy most of the Modernist writers. The first poet for Yeats to raise the issue of the flux was Walter James Turner.

The enshrining of Pater at the beginning of the anthology was a masterstroke of literary historical implications and suggestions. Many poets who wrote in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries lived and wrote on the Paterian principle of a life lived in a "pure, gem-like flame," though it was insufficient as a motive for life as well as poetry. The conversions to Catholicism, the drinking of absinthe and the suicides that beset these writers could be understood partly in this context. They lacked what Yeats's contemporary, John Davidson, called 'blood and guts' which, admittedly, Yeats had (Yeats 1966 318). In Pater, Yeats saw one of the two main trends that literature in the twentieth century was to take, which, in modern psychology came to be known as introversion and extroversion. Pater's "Mona Lisa" passage was the epitome of introversion, and hence it had for Yeats a revolutionary significance (Yeats 1936 xxx). Her "trafficking" with people from every

class of life symbolised the "voyage out" and thus the poem gathered in itself the two main tendencies in modern poetry. It also foreshadowed the philosophy and flux that were to be two of the main burdens of the works of modern writers like Walter J. Turner and Ezra Pound. Da Vinci's Mona Lisa echoed an immortal and recurring idea and was the painter's version of Shakespeare's Dark Lady, whose "private reality" and artistic significance Pater caught perfectly in his passage (Yeats 1936 xxx). It was no mere coincidence that Yeats, who was striving for a renaissance in Irish letters all his life, should start his own anthology with a poetic meditation from a book on the Renaissance. Pater's piece was invaluable in that the writers who followed him had not revolutionized their own poetry so thoroughly, and therefore, it looked forward into the future.

The next poet, Wilfrid Scaven Blunt, wrote some excellent love poetry, but his anti-imperialist verse did not rise to the same level (Pinto 24). Yeats could print only some selections from his love sonnets addressed to 'Esther,' and a didactic poem. It might strike the reader as surprising that Yeats did not include Blunt's anti-imperialist verse at all. Perhaps it struck him as being full of rhetoric and archaisms such as "thou" and "shalt" which were used liberally in a poem like "The Canon of Aughrim," regarded by Sola Pinto as one of his more successful poems on the subject. It might also be suggested that the verse, while being full of feeling and inspiration, fails to achieve an "active virtue" since it merely portrays the suffering of the colonised nations, and the guilt of the coloniser. It is one more example of a painful as opposed to a tragic experience that does not yield any "ecstasy," making the poems unsuccessful. Finally, if his attitude toward the colonizer, England, is considered, Yeats was not without fair play

and was always willing to give her a chance to redeem herself, as he put it in "Easter 1916": "For England may yet keep faith/For all that is done and said" (Jeffares 95). Though Yeats acknowledged his affinity, paradoxically, with William Earnest Henley, the champion of the British Empire, and Blunt, the anti-colonialist, he says that he did not feel their influence because of his Irish inheritance (Yeats 1936 xv-xvi).

Noting with approval the arrival of realism through Thomas Hardy, Yeats nevertheless makes a selection from the poet that effectively confines Hardy's unrelenting pessimism and his conception of an inexorable fate that broods over a humanity forgotten by God, into some literary historical limbo as far as the *Oxford Book of Modern Verse* is concerned. Three of the four short poems "Weathers," "Snow in the Suburbs", and "Former Beauties" that represent Hardy in the anthology are in the folk tradition and "The Night of Trafalgar" sounds like a ballad again. It is selections like these that laid the anthology open to charges of arbitrariness that Yeats had frankly admitted to when making *A Book of Irish Verse*.

The Rhymers merited their inclusion in the anthology because they too signalled a revolt against everything "Victorian". Their place in literary history was assured also because they played, says Sola Pinto, an important role in the education of a great poet, namely, Yeats himself. But this role was largely a negative one in spite of the love with which he helped anthologise them. Yeats elaborates:

They [the Rhymers] had taught me that violent energy, which is like a fire of straw, consumes in a few minutes the nervous vitality, and is useless in the arts. Our fire must burn slowly, and we must constantly turn away to think, constantly analyse what we have done, to be content even to have little life outside our work, to show perhaps, to other men as little as the watch-mender shows, his magnifying glass caught in his screwed- up eye. Only then do we learn to conserve our vitality, to keep our mind under control and to make our technique sufficiently flexible for expression of the emotions of life as they arise (Yeats 1966 318).

They were also to teach him, as Yeats acknowledged here and in a poem called the "Grey Rock", an uncompromising commitment to poetry, a profound contempt for the middle class readers, and material pleasures. For, pressure from the masses to write down to them was a phenomenon that occurred early in their lives. While Yeats did desire to reflect "the emotions of life as they arise," (Yeats 1961 300) he did not like to have anything to do with the merely political. The Rhymers steered clear of Trafalgar Square, the place of violent public demonstrations, and withdrew to the Cheshire Cheese (Yeats 1936 xi). Even more importantly, the Rhymers, with a "heroic ecstasy" (Raine Ed. 7) were free of any desire to moralise, something that Yeats abhorred as fatal to poetry. Among those who had this "ecstasy" was Ernest Dowson whose lines Yeats quoted from memory repeatedly: "Wine and women and song/To us they belong/To us the bitter and the gay." An interesting tendency that Yeats consistently displayed, especially with regard to the Rhymers, was his untiring references to them, and the generalization of a

few individual stories to portray them as the "tragic generation." They were described as such because, as Yeats told Ernest Rhys later, "One begins to think of 'the Rhymers' as those who sang of wine and women . . ." (Quoted in Kelly 307n). Some of them, like Rhys himself, outlived Yeats—the "tragic generation" was not so unmitigatedly tragic after all. The efforts of the Rhymers and their contemporaries were directed at Victorianism and all that it stood for, best symbolized for Yeats in Tennyson, whom he accused of having a "passionless sentiment" (Yeats 1961 352). The age desired a classicism of its own, with Catullus as its ideal with some influence of Jacobean and French masters like Paul Verlaine and Charles Baudelaire.

The exception of Yeats as the only major poet of the times did not prevent the age from reflecting a 'crepuscular' atmosphere. Writers like Oscar Wilde produced a poetry that was lost under a patina of what Yeats, in the Introduction, calls the "artificial, trivial, arbitrary" and which needed to be rescued by editorial authority (Yeats 1936 vii). Henley's poems were mostly "rhetorical," so that very few of them were worth preserving, and Yeats excluded his 'hospital' poems because they did not "arise out of [their] own rhythm" and yet, this English poet started a new trend of realism in describing everyday life, a feature that according to Yeats, was created for the masses and was "their peculiar delight" (Yeats 1936 vii). The "crepuscular" spirit, identified with Victorianism, was soon to be exorcized also by the introduction of foreign influences such as that of the French. Following Verlaine's advice to "wring the neck of rhetoric" (Yeats 1936 ix), the public began to reject everything that was associated with the age of Victoria. "The human voice," says Yeats "can only become louder by becoming less articulate, by

discovering some new musical sort of roar or scream" (Yeats 1936 ix). For this, poetry should become declamatory, a point Pound, Yeats's friend and editor, would have agreed with wholly. Yeats, we might remember, was a regular and popular reader of poetry at the Rhymers' Club and the Poetry Society. Victorianism remained in a vestigial form, however, in the works of Rudyard Kipling and Sir William Watson. The former was insulated from the changes, in Yeats's view, by his stay in India. "He (Kipling) settled among the natives and never returned," wrote Sola Pinto (Pinto 31), echoing Yeats. Watson, whom few literary historians praise, found some generous words in Yeats who remembered many pages of his poetry as he edited *The Oxford Book*. Earlier, Yeats was not so generous to him, writing in a review that all Watson could produce was a "a fire that will not warm our hearths, but gives a thin flame, good to read by for a little, when wearied by some more potent influence" (Kelly 218n). Though condemned as "rhetorical" by the followers of Verlaine, Yeats admired many of his verses, seeing in them some Miltonic and classical features (Yeats 1936 xii). In the end, Watson did not figure in the anthology only because his executors did not permit it. The anthology was the occasion for Yeats to look back and carry out a literary historical reassessment that included some very personal associations.

Like his contemporaries who would be labelled the "Modernists" Yeats showed an early awareness of the value of schools and groups, and planned the Introduction to the *Oxford Book* along these lines. He began, after Pater, Hardy and a few others, with the Rhymers and closed with the Auden group, by any standards a comprehensive view of the literary history of the age. Those writers, including himself, who fell between

different schools, he barely mentioned at the end of the Introduction, or left them undiscussed. He gave, what seems in retrospect, an exaggerated importance to Dorothy Wellesley and underplayed the significance of T.S. Eliot and Pound.

III

It is well known that every anthology, by its selections and omissions, is an act of criticism. As in the case of *A Book of Irish Verse*, Yeats intended to make the Oxford book a very personal anthology. While some of his exclusions can be explained as being based on his taste, the absence of a group of poets whose importance is rated at a no mean level by every critic and anthologist, needs a careful study of Yeats's poetics and other literary ideas.

Chronologically, the first to be excluded was John Davidson. Like Yeats, Davidson thought of the poetic inspiration as a fire, and very early, the fire died out in him. "The fires are out and I must hammer the cold iron," he told Yeats, who expected his suicide. But Yeats's own judgment was harsher: "With enough passion to make a great poet, through meeting no man of culture in early life, he lacked intellectual receptivity, and, anarchic and indefinite, lacked pose and gesture, and now no verse of his clings to my memory." It would not be out of place here to remember that for Yeats, "culture" as he understood it, rose from nationalism, a personal philosophy and literature. Even in the Rhymers' Club days he was never considered the equal of either Johnson or Dowson. We recall that Yeats could find some poems of William Watson fresh in his

mind years after reading them. This was his touchstone of a great poem. Davidson was doomed to be dropped from the anthology. However, he told Dorothy Wellesley that Davidson had to be excluded because there was "too much matter" already (Quoted in Jaffares and Cross Ed. 180). The list of other individual poets that he excluded is equally interesting. Notable are Dylan Thomas, Richard Aldington, Robert Graves (who refused permission), Ford Maddox Hueffer, T.E.Hulme (because he was "the mere leader of a movement" (Quoted Jeffares and Cross Ed. 181), Charles Doughty (whom Yeats could bear only in prose), and A. C. Swinburne.

But probably the greatest controversy was aroused by the absence of the Trench Poets such as Wilfred Owen and Alun Lewis. Rupert Brooke is represented by one poem that does not refer to war directly though it does use military imagery. Charles Williams, an editor of the Oxford University Press at its London office, in a letter to Yeats asked for the inclusion of Owen because "he will be expected, both by old and young" (Quoted in Jeffares and Cross Ed. 75). The exclusion of these poets, because of their themes that portrayed their mere pathos as victims of war, Yeats himself knew, would cause some controversy. Probably it is because of this that he dedicated an entire section in the anthology to explain himself. Even as he acknowledges their courage and sacrifice, he could hardly restrain his sense of contempt for their work. "[P]assive suffering is not a theme for poetry," he declared bluntly. Matthew Arnold, in his "Preface to First Edition of *Poems*" (1853) "omitted" his *Empedocles on Etna* for the same reason. The poetry of the Trench Poets, Yeats added, came to be inspired and written merely because "some

blunderer has driven his car to the wrong side of the road—that is all" (Yeats 1936 xxxiv).

Yeats's reasons for these exclusions were complex and elaborate and were repeatedly expounded at various places, in his prose, poetry and other writings. Thus, in his "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen," he says:

The night can sweat with terror as before
We pieced our thoughts into philosophy,
And planned to bring the world under a rule,
Who are but weasels fighting in a hole
(Jeffares Ed. 121).

For Yeats, everything had to be bent to the service of civilization and could not remain a vague, undigested experience. In his talk on the BBC on "Modern Poetry," Yeats complained that these poets were "too near their subject-matter to do, as I think, work of permanent importance . . ." (Yeats 1966 500). Writing to Dorothy Wellesley in December 1936, he could not hold back his contempt for the War Poets:

When I excluded Wilfred Owen, whom I consider unworthy of a poets' corner of a country newspaper, I did not know I was excluding a revered sandwich-board Man of the revolution & that some body has put his worst & most famous poem in a glass-case in the British Museum--however if I

had known it I would have excluded him just the same. He is all blood, dirt & sucked sugar stick (look at the selection in Faber's *Anthology*—he calls poets 'bards' a girl a 'maid' and talks about 'Titanic wars'). There is every excuse for him, but none for those who like him (Raine Ed. 113).

It is worthwhile to examine Yeats's debt to Matthew Arnold in evolving his poetic. The idea about passive suffering being unsuitable for poetry, and the development of an idea over time to make it truly worthy of putting it in the form of a poem, find echoes in Arnold's Preface for the 1853 poems.

It might be mentioned here in passing that the Trench poets were also, in Yeats's view, guilty of what he calls "cosmopolitanism" since they rejected nationalist ideals and spoke for soldiers of all nations from a humanitarian perspective. We remember Yeats, praising John Millington Synge, say, "He was the man that we needed, because he was the only man I have ever known incapable of a political thought or a humanitarian purpose" (Yeats 1966 567). With their pity-centered themes, the War poets would have appeared weak and unheroic to Yeats and consequently failed to rise to the level of artists: "There are indeed certain men whose art is less the like an opposing virtue than a compensation for some accident of health or circumstance" (Ellmann and Feidelson Ed. 757). For him the works of the Trench Poets were "passive . . . an obsession of the nerves." They lacked the mask because they wrote in the first person, and "made the suffering their own" (Yeats 1936 xxxiv). Yeats was pretty sure that of the impossibility of any great poetry resulting from such subjects. War was an unavoidable fever that

should be forgotten immediately after it is over. It could be seen even in a comic light, as the soldiers in the anecdote Florence Farr narrated to Yeats did. She had heard these soldiers laugh at the death of an unpopular officer who, whirling around when hit by a bullet, had his own intestines wrapped about him. For Yeats, comedy was cathartic as well. These ideas, in their criticism of the poetic diction Owen uses, also show how much Yeats had imbibed of the Modernist ideas: words were nearer to the soul than life itself. He agreed to include (his wife had chosen his poems) his own "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death" presumably because it was reflective of thoughts "pieced . . . into a philosophy." The Great War was represented by Herbert Read's long poem "The End of a War," written seven years later, after the experience had become somewhat distant in time and, a philosophical perspective developed that "made it a part of the mind" (Yeats 1936 xxxv). In such an education, T. S. Eliot played a significant role, and yet, Yeats's choices of this major Modernist poet, while including some characteristically representative poems, leave out some very important works such as "Prufrock" and *The Waste Land*. Instead, Eliot's shorter poems, such as "The Hippopotamus" and "The Journey of the Magi," that have become regular anthology-pieces, are printed. In the Introduction, Yeats was severely critical of Eliot who was for him, more of a satirist than a poet (Yeats 1936 xxii). We recall that for Yeats, a satirist was quite a negative kind of person. In his talk on "Modern Poetry," in 1936, the year of the publication of Oxford anthology, he described Lionel Johnson as 'never a satirist, being too courteous, too just, for that distortion' (Yeats 1961 492). Thus Eliot was out of the mainstream of English poetry. Very rarely did he write in the tradition, "the great manner," of Shakespeare and the translators of the *Bible* (Yeats 1936 xxii). Yet, Yeats made some surprising inclusions

such as Eliot's "The Hollow Men", which could hardly be an example of "active virtue." Perhaps he saw in the poem a language that was close to ordinary speech. (One remembers that the line "Headpiece filled with straw" was Mrs. Eliot's favourite in her quarrels with her husband). It was an intellectualized suffering, a suffering that was "pieced . . . into a philosophy" as his theory demanded. In an interesting coincidence that occurs in an essay in *Mythologies*, written in 1917, he recollects a line, "a hollow image of fulfilled desire", that he had read thirty years earlier in a prose allegory. He goes on, "All happy art seems to me that hollow image, but when its lineaments express also the poverty or the exasperation that set its maker to the work, we call it tragic art" (Yeats 1961 329). If the hollow images were associated in his mind with humans, we may, perhaps, see in this recollection and comment, the reason for Yeats's apparent contradiction of his own poetic criterion in including the "Hollow Men". It may be that for him the poem caught the "exasperation". He further justifies its inclusion in the Introduction (Yeats 1936 xxii), attributing to the poem a "rhythmical animation" that saves it from being merely passive. However, in the context of Eliot's centrality in Modernism, it is striking that he barely managed to make it over the threshold, but Owen and his fellow War poets were left out in the cold. Yet, Yeats conceded that the Trench Poets were not entirely without effect, for, "their sense of tragedy, their modernity, have passed into young influential poets of today: Auden, Spender, MacNeice, Day Lewis, and others" (Yeats 1961 500).

Yeats thought that the need of the hour was a "heroic discipline" (Raine Ed. 7). His dissent with some major Modernist poets did not end with the War Poets, but

continued to indict the poets named above because they “*look* for strength in Marxian Socialism, or in Major Douglas; they want marching feet. The lasting expression of our time is not this obvious choice but in a sense of something steel-like and cold within the will, something passionate and cold” (Wellesley 8; Yeats's emphasis). The emphasis on the word “look” suggests a passivity since they “lacked marching feet” (to mean also poetic rhythms) to get them anywhere. He had a Modernism of his own, that, while it was far from looking for what seemed to him to be simplistic solutions to ephemeral problems, required the poets to be anchored in a heroic commitment to those impulses which build civilizations and were free from the “sensual music” that caused one to “neglect/Monuments of unaging intellect” (Meyer Ed. 873)

Amidst all the criticism that Yeats invited by his unyielding insistence on excluding the War poets, it is possible to find something to commend in it. Seamus Heaney puts it concisely when he says that Yeats faced the consequences of his beliefs for, “his poetry was not just a matter of printed books making their way on a world of literate readers and critics; it was rather the fine flower of his efforts to live as forthrightly as he could in a world of illiterates and politicians” (Heaney 100). But the final word is Yeats's own when he stresses the commitment and duty of a writer:

A poet is by the very nature of things a man who lives with entire sincerity, or rather, the better his poetry, the more sincere his life. His life is an experiment in living and those who come after him have a right to know it. Above all, it is necessary that lyric poet's life be known, that we

should understand that his poetry is no rootless flower but the speech of a man; that it is no little thing to achieve anything in art, to stand alone perhaps for many years, to go a path no other man has gone, to accept one's own thought when the thought of others has the authority of the world behind it . . . to give one's own life as well as one's words (which are so much nearer to the soul) to the criticism of the world (Quoted in Heaney 100-101)

The *Oxford Book of Modern Verse* is a demonstration of these heroic ideas which could also include tragedy whose definition is coloured by Yeats's own personality and life.

IV

Tragedy, for Yeats, became worthy of poetry only when it had been carefully processed in the intellect, and that took time. Reminiscing in *Autobiographies* he says, "I . . . being in the intemperance of youth, denied, as publicly as possible, merit to all but a few ballads translated from Gaelic writers, or written out of a personal and generally tragic experience" (Yeats 205). He soon outgrew the intemperance to develop a more elaborate view. In *The Trembling of the Veil*, he writes:

... I am persuaded that our intellects at twenty contain all the truths we shall ever find, but as yet we do not know truths that belong to us from

opinions caught up in casual irritation or momentary fantasy. As life goes on we discover that certain thoughts sustain us in defeat, or give us victory whether over ourselves or others, and it is these thoughts, tested by passion, that we call convictions. Among subjective men (in all those, that is, who must spin a web out of their own bowels) the victory is an intellectual daily re-creation of all that exterior fate snatches away, and so that fate's antithesis; while what I have called the 'Mask' is an emotional antithesis to all that comes out of their internal nature. *We begin to live when we have conceived life as a tragedy*" (189; Italics added).

Yeats contrasted this fusion of intellect and passion in tragedy to a mere sentimental response to what an "exterior fate" threw in the path of humans. In his cyclical conceptions of life such as in the phases of the moon, the two halves of the circle could be taken to stand for opposing forces. Richard Ellmann, explaining Yeats's gyres, writes, ". . . Yeats divided the self into two sets of symbolic opposites, Will and Mask, Creative Mind and Body of Fate. These may be roughly translated as Imagination and Image of what we wish to become, and Intellect and the Environment" (Ellmann 160). In some writers, whom Yeats calls the "supreme masters of tragedy," "the whole contest is brought into the circle of their beauty." He carefully elaborates this idea:

Such masters—Villon and Dante, let us say—would not, when they speak through their art, change their luck; yet they are mirrored in all their suffering of desire. The two halves of their nature are so completely joined that they seem to labour for their objects, and yet desire whatever happens, being at the

same instant predestinate and free, creation's very self. We gaze at such men in awe, because we gaze not at a work of art, but at the recreation of the man through that art, the birth of a new species of man, and it may seem that our hairs of our heads stand up, because that birth, that re-creation, is from terror (Yeats 1966 273).

This was what he meant by the term "Unity of Being" which he compared to "a perfectly proportioned body" in which everything was interconnected. His father had compared this to a musical instrument which could not be struck in one part without striking another. The intellect cannot be unaffected when the emotions are aroused. Yeats viewed tragedy as an "ecstasy," (Yeats 1961 471) for, as he says in the Introduction to *The Oxford Book*, "the Greek Chorus danced." In even more detail we find him saying:

There is a relation between discipline and the theatrical sense. If we cannot imagine ourselves as different from what we are and assume that second self, we cannot impose a discipline upon ourselves, though we may accept one from others. Active virtue as distinguished from the passive acceptance of a current code is therefore theatrical, consciously dramatic, the wearing of a mask. It is the condition of arduous full life (Yeats 1961 469).

In the Trench Poets, Yeats could not see the "Will" and the "Mask" unite. What they had was a mere sentimentality which Owen called "the pity," of which his poems were full to

the exclusion of what Yeats called "ecstasy" that a tragedy ought to have. Their pity-filled work was hardly poetry because these writers had not seen life as a tragedy and were, consequently, yet to "begin to live." In surrendering to this pity, they were overwhelmed by fate without discovering fate's opposite force. The circle remained half incomplete. Owen and his fellow Trench Poets achieved no victory over themselves or over life's problems, as Yeats demands in poetry. With such views, he was bound to deny Owen a place even in a country newspaper. The War was the result of a historical accident and the writers were merely victims of this War, which like all wars, served no purpose. They did not have the "active virtue" that could have turned them into real heroes. However, as pointed out earlier, he did recognize their influence over later writers. For all his settled views of what made great poetry, he could still be very objective.

Yeats completely excluded the Americans on the advice of T. S. Eliot who had said, "[D]on't attempt to make your selection of American poets representative, you cant (sic) have the necessary knowledge and will be unjust; put in three or four that you like" (quoted in Jeffares and Cross Ed. 181). Eventually, he included only Pound and Eliot, both expatriate Americans, one of whom he knew intimately, and both of whom had spent a significant part of their lives in England. We may note in passing that for all the association and advice that Pound, in his younger days gave Yeats, the latter was impatient with him in selecting works for the anthology. In fact Yeats came very close clubbing him with Tennyson, accusing him of being a "passionless American professor" (Raine). In all his inclusions and exclusions, we find Yeats's principles at work. The

anthology capture a great poet's poetics in action even as it offers us a memorable collection.

V

Even before *The Oxford Book* was published, Faber brought out Michael Roberts's *Faber Book of Modern Verse* (1936), and Yeats knew that he was up against a formidable competitor. He wrote to Charles Williams, one of Oxford's editors, "I hear that Faber and Faber are bringing out an anthology and as the entire contents seem to be approved by Laura Riding we are apparently in for a war of the books" (Quoted in Jeffares and Cross Ed. 181-2). The anthology wars began much earlier than the sixties. Both the anthologies were aimed at similar audiences of which students in schools and universities were important sections. Yeats was considerate enough to omit a poem or two of his to suit these readers. As he wrote to Williams, "I enclose a poem which please return. I did not put it in the Anthology as I thought it would exclude the book from school libraries and for all I know you are counting on that public" (Quoted in Jeffares and Cross Ed. 181-2). While Yeats made the selections on his own except for Kipling and his own work, he took Eliot's advice for omitting the Americans. Roberts, it appears, relied considerably on Laura Riding, who, with Robert Graves, had co-authored *A Pamphlet Against Anthologies* (1927). Though Yeats was attracted by Riding's poetry after reading her in the Faber anthology, he could not print her as she laid down elaborate conditions that he could not accept (Raine Ed. 186).

The Faber Book, like Yeats's *Oxford Book*, has rightly been described as one of the most influential anthologies of modern times. It is interesting to compare the two collections and the story of poetry they tell. At many points, the editors are in complete agreement and at others, they could not have differed more. Together, they offer the reader some insight into the way literary history is made. It is interesting that both editors viewed Modernism as a post-*Georgian Poetry* phenomenon. As pointed out earlier, Yeats punned on Marsh's name and, after excepting Housman from the anthologies, described "everything" else as being "marsh." Roberts too, in his early notes proposed to call it *Anthology of Post-Georgian Poetry* (Smith 25). Following is a brief history of the making of *The Faber Book of Modern Verse*.

It began with T. S. Eliot almost casually mentioning the possibility of the anthology to Roberts who had already achieved renown as the editor of *New Signatures* (1932) and *New Country* (1933) that introduced some young poets like W.H. Auden, Stephen Spender, Cecil Day Lewis and Charles Madge. "My firm (Faber)," Eliot wrote, "has conceived idea that there is room for another anthology of modern verse and we were wondering whether you would consider editing a collection for us" (Smith 725). Roberts wanted to edit an anthology that would serve "some useful purpose" and hinted at a radical anthology that would need an editor with a very "thick skin" (Smith 725). As Janet Adam Smith, author of the *TLS* article mentioned above recounts, the anthology for Roberts had to "define the modern movement in a way that was not just chronological but a question of sensibility and technique" (Smith 725). In Roberts's own words, it was to be "a collection of poetry which is alive today, not as an illustration to literary history"

(Smith 725). In a letter to Eliot, he goes on, ". . . the anthology as I see it . . . is bound to have a noticeable effect on public taste, it will be the standard book of this kind for ten or twelve years" (Smith 727). His claim was to prove rather modest with hindsight.

Roberts was an editor who refused to compromise with the compulsions and wishes of his publishers, and his letter insisting on the inclusion of the *Waste Land* even won an admiring reply from Eliot. Penciled on Roberts's letter was Eliot's tentative suggestion of the title of the anthology, "F. Bk. of Modern Verse?" (Smith 727), a name that was to set a trend at Faber's. But in the anthology itself, it was the editor who had his way where choice of the poets was involved. He was equally good at designing the pages. As Smith reminisces, "Richard de la Mare told the protesting printer that 'most of the editor's corrections improve the appearance of the book so much that they should be effected'" (Smith 728). As for the Introduction to the anthology, Eliot was clearly pleased, and was unusually generous in praise: "I find your Introduction very interesting indeed, and it represents, as it should, a newer point of view than my own" (Smith 728).

Modernist poetry anthologies fall into two broad categories: the anthology which is aimed at an elite readership, a readership that has some knowledge of modern poetry, and is not antipathetic to it; and the other kind of anthology assumes that the reader is either ignorant of poetry, and even hostile to it, and needs to be taught that poetry can be useful as well as delightful. The editor of the earlier kind of anthology is also an elitist and has profound scorn for the ordinary reader who does not want to take any trouble to understand it. To this category belong editors, many of them poets themselves, like Yeats

and Pound. The editor of the second category betrays a desire to reach out to the ordinary reader and justify the ways of modern poetry to him/her, and is by far, the more numerous. This category includes professional editors like Louis Untermeyer and poet-editors like Harriet Monroe and Michael Roberts. Both kinds of editors are the transmitters and recorders and have some role also as the makers of literary history, especially when the more influential ones, with the differences and similarities that follow.

It is no exaggeration to say that elucidating the history of modern poetry is one of the important tasks that the two editors, Roberts, and to much lesser extent, Yeats, chose to address. Faced with a new kind of poetic that made increasing and difficult demands on the readers who were already antipathetic to poetry, the anthologists took upon themselves to explain its origins and themes with an aim to show that this poetry was not, after all, as isolated and 'difficult' as it was alleged to be. Both editors adopted the chronological method of arranging the poems. What makes the anthologies interesting as records of literary history is the choice of poets and poems.

Roberts's first inclusion, Gerard Manley Hopkins's *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, too anticipated a poetry that made the "voyage within," revealing a psychological turmoil that was far ahead of his times. He too was a revolutionary writer even though he used metrics that Milton had popularised in *Samson Agonistes*. Hopkins was a Victorian whose works were published when Modernism was reaching its peak, in 1918. His editor Robert Bridges had to wait for twenty-nine years after the poet's death to

feel confident that the public was ready for the poems. Ten more years were to pass before his readers could appreciate him. Even Yeats found him difficult to read when he was editing the Oxford anthology.

Hopkins was a nature poet, but he is better known for his intense religious works. One of his most moving poems, "Felix Randall," describes the suffering of one of his parishioners, reflecting some social commitment. In another poem, "That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort of the Resurrection," he talks of the "endless flux of nature and human life as transformed by the Resurrection" (Bergonzi 15). While Roberts includes this poem, it is surprising that Yeats omits it, since the poem has flux as its theme, a theme to which he assigns a centrality that marks the modern in poetry. Perhaps the author of "The Magi" and "The Second Coming" was not so convinced by Christianity as an all-encompassing way of life as it had been for Hopkins.

The importance Roberts gave to Hopkins can be seen in the number of pages he allotted to him: twenty-two with thirteen poems, compared to Eliot, who got twenty seven pages with only five poems, and a mere sixteen pages with just eight poems were given to Yeats. This suggests that for Roberts, Hopkins was a more important Modernist poet than either Yeats or Eliot, at least if the number of poems and pages are used as yardsticks. It may be that Eliot's own reluctance to include too many of his poems was a reason for the relatively smaller number of works and pages.

Roberts perhaps found Hopkins more innovative than either poet, his criterion for his inclusions, and he attributes precisely this ability to Hopkins's poetry. The Victorian could work on the reader's mind in a subterranean fashion, something that Eliot too would aim to do later. What Hopkins expressed for the reader in this way was "the tension and disorder he found in himself (Roberts 4). But the reading public could accept Hopkins decades after his publication because the problems that he faced and described were ahead of his time. Or his thought was understood only by a few or it was so intricate that only a small group of elite readers could follow it. Yet, Hopkins claimed that the sprung rhythm he used is "of common speech and of written prose, when rhythm is perceived in them" (Quoted Cunningham 856). There seems to be an apparent contradiction in Roberts's argument when he says that a poet, far in advance of his time cannot be understood, but a poet like Pope or Eliot, who discussed only the problems peculiar to their days, and are no longer relevant for the present or the future, can still be enjoyed even if the reader does not directly experience them (Roberts 6). Perhaps it is the hindsight that history provides that makes this comprehension possible.

The very name of the "modern" involves a break with the past, and most editors were anxious to define it against the Victorian age, especially all that was considered "preposterous and artificial" (Yeats 1936 xiii) in it only to end up with "a facile charm and a too soft simplicity" (Yeats 1936 xiii). Roberts too records this change quoting Ezra Pound in his Introduction:

[A]t a particular date in a particular room, two authors, neither engaged in picking the other's pocket, decided that the dilution of *vers libre*, Amygism, Lee Masterism, general floppiness had gone too far and that some counter-current must be set going. Parallel situation centuries ago in China. Remedy prescribed *Emaux at Camees* (or the Bay State Hymn Book). Rhyme and regular strophes.

Results: Poems in Mr. Eliot's *second* volume, not contained in his first *Prufrock* (Egoist, 1917), also *H. S. Mauberly* (Quoted in Roberts 1936 17).

At least in recording some of the most significant moments in literary history, the anthologists could be amazingly objective and in perfect accord, if only we go by these two examples.

The Faber anthology is given more to taxonomy than the Oxford collection. Roberts classifies the poets on the basis of their European and 'English' "sensibilities" (Roberts 8). The former were influenced by some Continental writers, while the latter looked to William Langland, John Skelton, and Charles Doughty as well as William Blake, Percy Bysshe Shelley and Edward Lear. However Roberts was careful to suggest that the two classes were not exclusive and represented "moods of poetry rather than two kinds of poet" (Roberts 8).

In tracing the themes and issues that engage modern poetry, both editors agreed generally in going back to the seventeenth century when the changes that required the

modern response began to happen. Roberts mentioned Donne as the first poet to record these changes (Roberts 1936 5), while Yeats looked at man become "passive before a mechanized nature" (Yeats 1936 xxvii) at about the same time. As an alternative view, he thought that Henri Stendhal had started the trend in modern literature when he described a masterpiece as a "mirror dawdling down a lane." The tendency was towards what Hopkins called "Parnassian poetry" in which a poet could write automatically on current themes, fancies and fashions that may appeal to him: "I am sitting in a chair there are three dead flies on a corner of the ceiling" (Bergonzi 124).

Both Roberts as well as Yeats were poets, and both took a great deal of advice from other poets in editing their respective anthologies, providing a unique synthesis of views on poetry and poetics of the times. Yeats was modern without being a Modernist and his anthology can appear both intimate and objective at once. The anthologies are reflective of their editors' personalities as individuals and as poets. Appearing at a time when Modernism was already established, the collections are both a consolidation and an assessment of the achievements of the movement. The prestige of the two great publishing houses meant that there were to be considerable consequences for the canon through the anthologies, both within and outside the classroom.

With an assurance that few editors can have, Yeats claimed to be comprehensive in collecting *all* the good poets from within a few years of the death of Tennyson to the most recent. Roberts was less confident and was at pains to disillusion the reader of any ideas of his anthology being all-inclusive. But the exclusions were very carefully planned

to position the anthology so as to make a unique contribution to modern poetry—to make it a collection that looked to the future prophetically, instead of merely purveying poems to the expectations of a readership. Thus Roberts says, "I have included only poems which seem to me to add to the resources of poetry, to be likely to influence the future development of poetry and language, and to please me for reasons neither personal nor idiosyncratic" (Roberts 1936 2). The arbitrariness in his selections he acknowledges later is not only limited but also inevitable, given the very nature of anthologizing. Roberts admits in his Introduction that many of the poems he included were not controversial at the time he was editing the book, and controversy was not valuable in itself. On the contrary, he began with Gerard Manley Hopkins, a pioneering trend in anthologies, though the poet was already a part of the canon, and had some significant similarities with his contemporaries and predecessors. It seems that like Yeats, Roberts too was looking for a bridge that linked the old and the new. They both selected poets who mainly lived and wrote in the nineteenth century. A Victorian who wrote poetry anticipating the modern style, and was published after Roberts's earliest selection, 1910, Hopkins was to become a major influence in English letters. "The *Wreck of the Deutschland*" is arguably the most difficult poem in the Faber anthology, a sort of "dragon at the gate." Perhaps the comprehension of this poem is the shibboleth that admits a modern reader to the circle.

But Roberts saw in the Victorian many features that would influence later writers. Speaking of Hopkins, he put his finger on a fundamental point in his own and modern poetic: Hopkins had an intensity that Charles Doughty (also rejected by Yeats) lacked. For Yeats, Hopkins was 'difficult' to read and needed a lot of effort to comprehend. *The*

Oxford Book, beginning with Pater's immortal lines, captured the "inner voyage," one of the two main themes in modern poetry, and Hopkins who fled from "God to God," exemplified the "voyage out." The Faber editor felt perhaps, that with the passage of time and the repeated efforts of the readers, the "dragon" could eventually be tamed. The exclusions in both anthologies were equally interesting. While Yeats ignored the Trench Poets, Roberts excluded all "mystical poems," calling them 'poetical,' a term he used to describe the attempts to evoke a mystical state of mind by the use of symbols (Roberts 1936 2). For him the word 'poetic' by contrast, defined "a special concentration of sensuous impression, idea, evocation or phrase" (Roberts 1936 2). In sum, while Yeats wanted to change an existing canon in part, and consolidate it insofar as it agreed with his own, Roberts was generally seeking to lay the foundation for a canon that may be described as future—oriented even as he, too, tried to consolidate the one that seemed to come into being at the time of editing the collection.

Roberts is more objective in his selection criteria than Yeats since he shows a greater willingness to accept the influences of the poets' own manifestos and principles. We can go further and claim that Roberts's anthology is in tandem with the collections edited by those poets now known as Modernists, such as Ezra Pound and the editors of *Some Imagist Poets* (1915, 1916 and 1917). Thus, Roberts records the liberation of the poet from poetic diction and Victorian poetic themes when he writes, "Good poetry is more likely to be written about subjects which are, to the writer, more important, than about unimportant subjects, because only on subjects of personal importance to himself does he feel the need for that accuracy of speech which itself lessens the tensions which it

describes. Deliberately to imitate a style arising from one poet's crisis would be absurd, but something similar is bound to appear when a crisis of a general kind arouses a personal conflict in many poets " (Roberts 4). We remember Eliot's confession that *The Waste Land* was the result of one man's personal grouse against the world. Again Roberts says, "Words do something more than call up ideas and emotions out of lumber-room: they call them up, but they never replace them exactly where they were" (Roberts 5). This is reminiscent again of Pound's emphasis on the need to keep words meaningful, and his comparison of his images to the factor x in mathematics with its changing values in opposition to the Symbolists' use of their symbols in fixed values, much like counters, and therefore very limiting and confining for poetry of their kind (Pound 1930). Indeed it appears that Roberts projects a Poundian view of poetry and its functions. For example, if his contemporaries could not understand Hopkins, it was because he wrote of problems that they did not perceive until much later. This matches the idea of Pound that poets are the antennae of the race.

It is significant that Yeats and Roberts were concerned with literary terminology, using very carefully defined terms in tracing trends in literature, and in a poet's own growth. Thus, for example, Roberts and Yeats used words such as 'rhetoric,' 'satire' and 'science' with unusual precision. For Yeats, rhetoric denoted an obsession with poetic diction and following Verlaine's advice, proceeded to "wring its neck." For Roberts, rhetoric had to do with effectiveness of speech and the attempts to improve it, and carried no pejorative connotations (Roberts 6). Nor was the word 'satire' as bad for Roberts as it was for Yeats. Satire was better than indignation, reflecting a desire to correct. For Yeats,

it was a quite simply a "distortion." For both editors, science had a negative connotation—for Yeats, it destroyed his belief in the supernatural and religion, and for Roberts, science was bad because it devalued the individual and reduced him to a machine.

Modern poetry, as perceived by the two editors, in part subscribed to a conservative attitude when it surveyed social changes. It bemoaned the loss of tradition and its values. Roberts examined this trend summing it up with a quotation from Yeats's "The Second Coming":

Turning and turning in the widening gyre,
 The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
 Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
 Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
 The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
 The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
 The best lack all conviction, while the worst
 Are full of passionate intensity
 (Jeffares) Ed. 98-99).

Yeats too surveyed a similar situation and quoted exactly the same lines adding an interesting confession:

Doubtless because fragments broke into ever smaller fragments we saw one another in a light of bitter comedy, and in the arts, where now one technical element reigned and now another, generation hated generation, and accomplished beauty was snatched away when it had most engaged our affections. One thing I did not foresee, not having the courage of my own thought: the growing murderousness of the world (Yeats 1961 192).

Yeats then proceeded to quote the lines from "The Second Coming" that Roberts quoted, as mentioned above. The point is that the poets of the early decades of the twentieth century were more daring than Yeats was in the eighties of the nineteenth century in facing reality. Literature was coming to terms with life. Apparently for Yeats, this traumatic experience, of tradition decaying, the centre being unable to hold, was no less than a war, and he could not countenance those who fled it. This throws more light on his exclusion of the Trench Poets who, for Roberts, were central.

Roberts notes a shift in the focus of critics from an obsession with 'decadence' to a concern with form. The 'decadence' was discussed in the second decade of the twentieth century while the concern with the issue of form went back to the middle of the first decade. In tracing these trends, Roberts was narrowing down on an issue that engaged the minds of all the Modernist poets. It was a major subject of the Prefaces the poet-editors affixed to *Some Imagist Poets* (1915, 1916 and 1917). Echoing them, Roberts explains the organic relationship between form and content. As the Imagist poets put it, "In poetry, a new cadence means a new idea" (*SIP* 1915 vii).

For Roberts, the most important aim of poetry is to realize the potential that is present in language, to stretch it to new limits. It is not the poet's duty to exhort or instruct, which might actually deflect him or her from the true objective (Roberts 3). It is not even to be intelligible to ordinary reader—that time will take care of. Hopkins is a case in point. From being an "obscure" poet initially, he became a part of the canon (Roberts 3). For this editor, "primarily poetry is an exploration of the possibilities of language" (Roberts 3). Even Eliot and Pound "may feel more acutely the inter-relation of culture and politics, but, nevertheless they would agree with Mr. Auden that 'poetry is not concerned with telling people what to do, but with extending our knowledge of good and evil, perhaps making the necessity for action more urgent and its nature more clear, but only leading us to the point where it is possible for us to make a rational and moral choice'" (Roberts 11). This was the "diminished poetry" that Arnold talked about in his Preface to *Poems* (1853).

The readers addressed in the two anthologies were strikingly different and were illustrative of the personalities of the editors. For Yeats, the 'difficulty' of modern poetry was limited to a few poets like Eliot, and was the result of the special conditions in their lives, not say their own peculiarities. For Roberts, the same problem was of greater significance because he also had in mind the ordinary middle class, academically trained reader, whom Yeats despised and ignored. The result was that the younger editor spent more time explaining the reasons for the 'difficulty' and showing the reader how to get over it. Roberts was generous to the War Poets and the *Faber Book of Modern Verse* was crucial in their canonisation. One critic at least accepts that the exclusion of these poets

from the *Oxford Book of Modern Verse* and its imitations "probably increased the time Owen spent in obscurity" and consequently "he did not appear in some anthologies until the 1950s, his work was not taught in schools and most literary histories said little about the war poets, or treated them as a special case, outside the mainstream" (Merryn Williams 49). It is surprising that this critic does not consider the counter-balancing role that Roberts's anthology surely played at least in part. The point is that the two anthologies, with their contrastive styles and selections, poetics and politics, offer the reader a variety of poetry, and a critical insight that is unique.

With the history of the making of these two anthologies now available, we can see that both editors and publishers were aware of the others and the books were bound to be responses to each other, at least as much as they could mutually anticipate. It Yeats repeatedly delighted in the success of his sales, Eliot was confident that the Faber book was the "best" in the area, a sentiment echoed by Roberts's wife, Janet Adam Smith who found the book "flourishing" even in the late seventies. As the quotations above have shown, the books still command a respect that shows no sign of flagging.

Chapter V

The Classroom Anthology and the Anthology Wars/Walls

Omissions are not accidents.

—Marianne Moore,
Epigraph to *Complete Poems*

I

Poets and theorists of early Modernism laboured to make the anthology a programme, and in some respects, a manifesto of sorts. With the increasing number of English Departments across Britain and North America in the mid-twentieth century, the need for textbook anthologies became more urgent and crucial. In such departments congregated not only teachers and students of Anglo-American poetry, but professionals: critics, scholars, editors, circuit lecturers and certain propagandists of poetry. The opening chapter of Jonathan Culler's *Framing the Sign: Criticism and Its Institutions* (1988) explains the inevitable rise of professionalism especially in the departments of English literature. Culler puts this in perspective when he contrasts two models of the University—the preserver/transmitter of cultural heritage model, and the producer of new knowledge model—professionals believe in and vouch for. The argument between these models goes like this: (1) the University is essentially a preserver and transmitter of cultural/national heritage; (2) No, the University is the place where new knowledge is produced.

Neither view is wholly contemptible, although pushed to the extremes, the transmitters do not have to write (produce new knowledge) and the generators (of new knowledge) do not have to teach. These views are still heard on academic campuses here and abroad but, mercifully, English teachers are seldom known to take such extreme positions. Now the anthology is sometimes seen as a compromise, if not a ready solution, albeit a reactionary one, in some quarters. And, if one were to go by the sheer number

and variety of anthologies produced by teachers of English, one would find equal number of radical and traditional hands on either side of the divide. There is yet another reason to consider the opposing professional models in the light of Anglo-American anthologies of poetry. If, through the 1940s and 1950s were heard the rumblings of a war between anthologists and teachers of poetry, through the 1960s and 1970s, it seemed, there raged a full-fledged war between/among the anthologists themselves. How did this happen? For one thing, the anthologists contended with their adversaries whether the anthology was primarily a transmitter of traditional heritage, or an advancer of new knowledge. For another, were not the anthologists both preserving/transmitting cultural heritage *and* advancing new knowledge? They did not find the format of the anthology contradicting the two models but in fact reconciling them.

This new role of the anthology, or the role as perceived by its users and makers in the pre- and post- World War II years, is easily expressed by the sociology of poetry. Dana Gioia wrote in an article called "Can Poetry Matter" (1991) that "by opening the poet's trade to all applicants and employing writers to do something other than write, institutions have changed the social and economic identity of the poet from artist to educator. In social terms the identification of poet with teacher is now complete . . . The campus is not a bad place for a poet to work. It's just a bad place for all poets to work" (Gioia 102). We shall see in the following pages a brief sketch of the progress of this debate between the transmitters and producers of poetic knowledge. That they have conducted this debate mainly through poetry anthologies is a point worth making. I have begun this sketch with a preserver/transmitter "anthology" *par excellence*—Brooks and

Warren's *Understanding Poetry*. They entered the scene in disguise with a book heavily annotated and illustrated, producing useful knowledge, in other words, *while* transmitting valuable heritage in the form of canonical poems of England and the U. S. From Brooks and Warren to their successors, transmitters and producers again, is a natural connection. We shall see how "natural" this connection seemed despite the so called "anthology wars."

It is remarkable that even in the early Modernist years, the teens of the twentieth century, anthologists were anxious to influence the classroom with their own canons and poetics. Harriet Monroe, for example, complained to her publisher that not enough was being done by way of publicity to promote her anthology *The New Poetry* (1917) while Louis Untermeyer could boast sales of up to one hundred thousand copies of his *Modern American Poetry* (1919) (Abbot 1984 90). Though they were attuned to the needs of the classroom, these anthologies did not exploit the anthological apparatus to the full to meet its requirements. While they did carry bibliographies and introductions, they did not supply the elaborate notes and glossaries that one associates with a classroom anthology or textbook of today. Perhaps the first true classroom anthology that harnessed its pedagogical potential to the full was Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren's *Understanding Poetry*, a textbook that ran into four editions (1938, 1950, 1960 and 1976). The editors were greatly dissatisfied with the existing plethora of textbooks that, in the view of Brooks and Warren, were, at best, casual in their approach and poorly equipped to meet their purported aims. These textbook-anthologies had an "impressionistic" (*UP* 38 iv) vagueness in their explication of a work and often set the

student statistically itemizing the references to pretty objects in the poem, marginalizing in the process, its artistic features (BW 1938 iv-v). The Brooks and Warren "anthology" was thus the response of two teachers to the need for a useful and convenient textbook for the classroom. This ur-*Understanding Poetry*, therefore, comprised the mimeographed papers the teacher-editors had originally taken to the classroom.

In fact, Brooks's dissatisfaction with contemporary classroom anthologies dates back to his own student days. In an interview (Hunter et al. Ed. *Contemporary Literary Critics* 20-43) he recounts how he frequently, along with other issues, wondered, "Why does [a good poem] capture my attention?" He had to discover the answers for himself because "the books I was reading did not address these questions" (Hunter et al. Ed. 41). Indeed, disappointment with the existing anthologies and textbooks lay at the root of many "anthology wars" that were to be waged subsequently. Brooks and Warren's *Understanding Poetry* was thus self-consciously aimed at helping the student comprehend poetry at a time when the very concept of literature was, as Brooks says in a martial metaphor, under "attack" (Brooks 1982 170) from the linguist and the psychologist who had invaded the academy through the textbooks that they (Brooks and Warren) complained against. This was one anthology that was born and nurtured in a war that was, in the minds of the editors at least, fought on many fronts. While the linguist was present in the philological studies, Brooks complained that "[t]he symbols that the average reader knows are not disciplined by traditional and concrete rituals. They are often the emanations of a popular vulgarized Freudianism" (Brooks 1964 2). Their immediate objective now was to focus attention on the text itself, and it was achieved, at

any rate, to Brooks and Warren's satisfaction: "I do know that Warren and I reached a lot of people through *Understanding Poetry*. Perhaps these were the vehicles (sic) of dissemination. The approaches taken by many teachers who had been influenced by the books may have opened up new doors and windows to the study of literature" and, Brooks adds modestly, "It is hard to say for sure" (Hunter et al. Ed. 40). While speculating over their role in opening up new vistas for the academy, Brooks also makes a much larger claim for New Criticism which is that its principles are universal and natural and, indeed, he implies that they are the rules that any good critic will have to learn to follow if s/he does not do it unprompted. As an illustration, Brooks refers to Laura Riding and Robert Graves, who in their extremely close analysis of Shakespeare's sonnet, "The expense of the spirit in a waste of shame," had applied recognizably New Critical principles in their *Survey of Modernist Poetry* (1927 62-72). Incidentally, Brooks mistakenly mentions that the analysis is in the authors' later book, *A Pamphlet Against Anthologies* (1928). What is more, William Empson, hearing I. A. Richards mention the analysis, declared that he could do the same for every poem in the English language, and upon being challenged, produced *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930). The point is that in Brooks's view, the academy was merely returning to its true function of criticism in the true way. From this perspective, the other textbooks were inadequate when not actually heretical, and had to be anathematized for the untold damage they did to critical studies in the classroom.

In contradistinction to the incomplete and unhelpful books that preceded it, *Understanding Poetry* was an all-in-one book which included not only the poems and

quite often their explications, but also a fairly lengthy glossary of selected literary terms appended at the end. And yet, ironically, it could not escape the very charges it levelled against other textbooks and sought to avoid. One reviewer, Walker Gibson, slams Brooks and Warren even as he praises them: "The questions and exercises have the faults of most questions and exercises in most of the books: they probe here and there, ask this and that in isolation and conclude nowhere. The teacher can take comfort in the 100-page collection of poems without exercises added to the 1950 edition. In sum, *Understanding Poetry* remains a decent, high-minded book that will embarrass you far less than most of the heavy-hands . . ." (Gibson 257). Brooks and Warren were thus lauded for what they did *not* do, rather than for what they did, the latter aspect getting only the faint praise of appearing to be the best of a bad lot. *Understanding Poetry*, however, could claim many firsts to its credit, though not all of them would have made the editors feel proud. It was, for instance, the first anthology to run the text of a poem and its detailed commentary together, an advance on anthologies that merely supplied bare texts or only a very general and perfunctory kind of an introduction. In fact, *Understanding Poetry* was specifically made to fill these gaps left by other anthologies which treated the poem in an inadequate or "wrong" way, as Brooks and Warren saw it. For example, quoting a line from a textbook that noticed the "subtlest kind of symbolism" in a poem by William Blake, Brooks and Warren assert that such subtlety "should not be flung at [the student] with no further introduction than is provided by this sentence" {*UP* 1938 vii). They continue: "In any case, the approach to poetry indicated in this sentence raises more problems than it solves" {*UP* 1938 vii). This is where the teacher comes in, playing a central role in taking the poetry to the students. Therefore, Brooks and Warren address the teacher directly in a

letter which is at once a statement of purpose and an apology, a plea that the explications in the anthology supplement, if not augment, the teachers' efforts, and in any case, do not supplant them. The teacher's view of the poem is, however, to be regarded as only *one* of the possible interpretations, and certainly not the final one. Brooks himself willingly admitted that his understanding of the poems he read and reread over the years was constantly evolving. In an apparent contradiction or dilution of the above assurance of not usurping the teacher's role in the "Letter to the Teacher," Brooks admits in the interview quoted that the decentralization of the teacher's authority was a positive achievement, a democratization of the study of poetry by providing the student with almost all that the "understanding" of a poem would require. Brooks and Warren, in putting forward the *raison d'être* of their textbook, draw the attention of the teacher to the serious and common ailments of a reader of poetry as they see them: the tendency to paraphrase the poem, the fruitless efforts to glean biographical information about the author, and finally, moral-hunting, efforts that only eclipse the poem itself. *Understanding Poetry* undertakes to teach a poem in a systematic manner, in sequential steps. The editors acknowledge that a paraphrase might be "a preliminary and necessary step" and has some value, if only in a heuristic sense. The second tendency, searching for biographical details, serves the limited purpose of clarifying interpretations which, by implication, have to be arrived at by the reader independently and separately. The third tendency, moralizing, can be admitted, but only after the reader can "grasp the poem as a literary construct" (*UP* 1938 iv). The attempt seems to be not so much as to exorcise these regrettable tendencies as to transcend them. The first step towards a better understanding of poetry is to introduce the student-reader to narratives that are more amenable to independent interpretation. In later

editions, a section called "Poems for Study," a group of mostly modern poems, unmediated by the editors, is placed at the end. But the preparation of the reader for the independent appreciation of poetry includes some fairly detailed explications of select poems. As the editors explain, "The analyses . . . form parts of an ascending scale and should not be studied haphazardly" (*UP* 1938 x). However, they point out clearly that narrative poems too can have all the complexity of traditionally "difficult" poems such as those with psychological content, and the editors expect the reader to return to the narratives themselves with increased interpretive skill and knowledge. Inevitably, since Brooks and Warren are editing an anthology that is pedagogical, their selections too are bound to be pedagogical: "A poem, then, is placed in any given section because it may be used to emphasize a certain aspect of poetic method and offers it is hoped, an especially teachable example" (*UP* 1938 xi). The words "especially teachable" are a give away, drawing our attention to the most important weakness of the anthology—its narrow selection of only those poems that can be discussed in the classroom. What we have here is, in fact, a double diminution of a poem which is chosen for its "teachability," and is then studied in a "certain aspect." The editors go on to introduce a division between reader and poet, a division that has very serious implications for the reader in particular and for poetry in general. For the first time here, in *Understanding Poetry*, the poem is given a "speaker," or to use the editors' words, a "sayer," a detail to which we shall return. Sayers, of course, can be good, bad, or indifferent as the listeners too may be, and it is the duty of the anthologist to level the differences and close the gaps in the listeners' abilities to "understand" poetry. Towards this end, Brooks and Warren adopted many strategies, some of them unique.

Understanding Poetry is alone in analyzing bad as well as good poems to "educate" the reader by contraries to appreciate what the editors think is "great" poetry. Indeed, the New Critics can go further and argue for a formal education for poets too. "Poets may go to universities and, if they take to education, increase greatly the stock of ideal selves into which they may pass for the purpose of being poetical. If on the other hand, they insist too narrowly on their own identity and their own story, inspired by a simple but a mistaken theory of art, they find their little poetic fountains drying up within them" (Ransom 1938 2). Probably the single most significant effect of *Understanding Poetry* was that it seemed to have divided the constituency of readers into academic analysts making close studies, and Robert Lowell's "midnight listeners" whom it excluded from its purview presumably because they displayed an untrained gut reaction of sorts. This polarization was to evoke strong responses among critics and anthologists. For example, Robert Pack, one of the editors of the second edition of *New Poets of England and America* (1962), an anthology in the handbook line of Brooks and Warren, says, "The idea of raw, unaffected, or spontaneous poetry misleads the reader as to what is expected of him. It encourages laziness and passivity. He too can be spontaneous and just sit back and respond. A good poem, rather, is one that deepens on familiarity; it continues to release your feelings and engage your thoughts" (Pack 1962 178). This familiarity is presumably that which is nurtured by close and repeated readings. Coming after three editions of *Understanding Poetry*, this is not surprising, but Pack fails to consider the possibility that the dead and routinised philological analyses of the earlier times can reassert themselves in a new way through New Criticism in its decadent forms. A close reading, for example, can result in a dissected, exploded view of the poem,

whose parts viewed separately can never recapture the whole, frustrating what Brooks and Warren call the "massive effect" (*UP* 1976 9) of the poem on the reader. This is not a new idea—Matthew Arnold, in the Preface to his *Poems* (1853) regards it the duty of poets to produce works that culminate in a "total-impression" (Arnold in Cunningham 526), and urges the critic to demand the same as a matter of right and duty. At the other end of the spectrum are anthologies like Donald Allen's *New American Poetry* (1960) that collect poems which rarely have "form" in Brooks and Warren's sense. These, in Arnoldian poetics, purvey a "true allegory of the state of one's own mind in a representative history" (Arnold in Cunningham 526). The terms are new, but the issues are pretty old.

The amazing success Brooks-Warren achieved soon set standards for everyone concerned—the poem, the poet, and the student. Perhaps the emphasis in the classroom on a philological study of poetry in a purely linguistic approach to the exclusion of criticism as a policy in the period preceding the publication of *Understanding Poetry* may have had something to do with this success. Brooks and Warren, by contrast, even in their title, convey a sense of ambiguity and a suggestiveness which, while programmatic and therefore limiting, did tell the student-reader what to expect. The title suggests that poetry can surely be *understood* in the first place, because it had something inherent that *ought* to be understood. It is of some interest that Brooks and Warren use the term "grasp/graspable" (*UP* 1938 10) at least twice in their Introduction, as if gaining some command of the poem was the primary aim. For the New Critic, this was of the greatest importance and the poem could not be left unmediated for the reader to "understand" or

"grasp." The expert had to intervene and strengthen the reader's hands so the grasp could be more tenacious. In their "Letter to the Teacher" in the first two editions of *Understanding Poetry*, Brooks and Warren say: "These *analyses* [the poems they go on to analyze in their book] are intended to be discussions of the poet's adaptations of his means to his ends: that is, discussions of the relations various aspects of a poem have to each other and to the total communication intended" (*UP* 1950 xvi). As a title, *Understanding Poetry* has further implications for its users. It suggests also that we can "understand" what poetry is and what it is not, because poetry itself deals with the "objective":

Poetry . . . is a response to, and an evaluation of, our experience of the objective, bustling world and of our ideas about it. Poetry is concerned with the world as responded to sensorially, emotionally, and intellectually. But—and this fact constitutes another significant characteristic of poetry that cannot be overemphasized—this response always involves three of these elements: a massive, total response—what we have called . . . *the multidimensional quality of experience*. As Coleridge put it, poetry 'in ideal perfection, brings the whole soul into activity.' A major concern of this book will be to investigate, directly or indirectly, how this massive effect is achieved and what it means in human experience (*UP* 1976 9; editors' emphasis).

Poetry is read and understood because it is rooted in reality: Brooks and Warren had nothing but scorn for the idea of "Art for art's sake." Poetry should reflect "experience" as its central concern, and it is astonishing how many textbook-anthologies of the fifties

and sixties subscribe to this poetic. Laurence Perrine's *Sound and Sense: An Introduction to Poetry* (1956), says that in literature, the "concern is with *experience*" (4; emphasis added). Norman C. Stageberg and Wallace L. Anderson's *Poetry as Experience* reflects the same concerns even its very title.

Brooks and Warren conflate the scientific and the poetic by basing both on the objective experience of the "bustling world and our ideas about it" and we might conclude that both (science and poetry) are engaged in making sense and order out of it. But poetry appears superior to science because while the latter is limited to a "sensorial" and "intellectual" experience, poetry is richer as it satisfies even the emotions and involves the soul too, leading to a more holistic effect upon the reader. The anthologist has the task of helping the reader realize this effect. It is interesting to note, incidentally, that such an arch anti-anthologist as Robert Graves also uses this contrast between the scientist and the poet to show the superiority of poetry over science (Graves 62 33). Having established the content of the poem, Brooks and Warren turn their attention to another distinguishing feature of poetry: *form*.

In Brooks and Warren's view the poem becomes "graspable" because it has form, or rather, *only* because it has form. Every teachable poem ". . . by *the fact of its being 'formed'* and having its special identity, it somehow makes us more aware of life outside itself. By its own significance it awakens us to the significance of our experience and of the world" (*UP* 1976 11; Brooks and Warren's emphases). The poem is thus open to a scientific kind of analysis, but not quite, because as the editors themselves acknowledge,

the poem "*somehow*," in some inexplicable way, does its work. By placing form at the centre, Brooks and Warren were to create in readers an attitude that was indifferent towards other kinds of poetry which had no recognizable form, such as that of the Confessional and Beat writers, to take only two notable instances. The emphasis on experience, as distinct from moralising, as a profound, significant and extraordinary "situation" in life that inspires the poem, seems to have led them to posit an "experiencer," who is also the "sayer," whom we may identify distinctly for the first time in literary history, as the "speaker" of a poem:

The situation . . . provokes a response which is the poem, and so for the poem to make sense, we must have some idea of the identity of the "sayer" who responds to the situation. Ultimately, the sayer is, of course, the poet . . . [S]ince the poem is a little drama, we must have some sense of the identity of the speaker, that the voice of a poem is not heard in a vacuum . . . Therefore, we must always begin by thinking of the identity of the speaker as revealed in the poem, no matter whether the image is identifiable only in the vaguest, most general way . . . or more specifically identifiable in the actual poet . . . (t/P 1960 13-14).

But Brooks and Warren go on to tell us that the poet speaks through a "mask" (UP 1976 15). The readers have to answer for themselves the questions, "Who is speaking?" and "Why?" (UP 1976 15). The assumption is that when the readers get a clear picture of the identity of the speaker, we may assume that the idea of the poem, in all its nuances, will

be easily grasped or will be closer to being grasped. One of the poets to whom a large amount of space and explication is devoted is Robert Frost, who, in a letter home from England (February 1914) writes, "*The ear does it*. The ear is the only true writer and only true reader. I have known people who could read without hearing how the sentence sounds and they are the fastest readers. Eye readers we call them. They can get the meaning by glances. But they are bad readers because they miss the best part of what a good writer puts into his work." It is to catch this "best part" that Brooks and Warren lavish considerable attention on the section called "Tone and Attitude" in the earlier editions, and in the last edition, simply, "Tone."

Occupying seven separate sections, an innovation in the 1976 edition, the idea of "tone" is also treated in the Introduction as well as in an appendix. "Tone," the editors emphasise quite early on, is metaphorical rather than real, but is also the key to the meaning of a poem. As if to highlight the significance of the concept, they describe it in short staccato sentences: "Tone . . . expresses attitudes . . . A poem is an utterance. There is someone who utters. There is a provocation to utterance. There is an audience . . . even if it is only the self (*UP* 1976 112-113). Without an "I," implicit or explicit, there is "no poem" and it is that attitude that the poet expects us to take towards the poem (*UP* 1976 112-113). In other words, the poem is understandable only through tone. In a lecture titled "The Primacy of the Author," Brooks bemoans the tendency in literary studies to regard the writer merely as a medium through which "a particular culture or . . . a special climate of ideas" is expressed due to which the very notion of a specifically *literary* art has been called into question" (Brooks 1982 170: Brooks's emphasis). However, the poet

and the poem are only two of the trinity in poetic experience, the third being the reader who is elevated to the level of a judge and a creator of sorts. For, it is after all, the reader who will reconstitute the words on the page into a meaningful poem: “. . . the reader also counts, for it is he who brings the literary work to full life in his own mind" (Brooks 1982 256).

If it is the reader who decides "the end and object" of the poem, we can see the "intentional fallacy" of William Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley, one of the keystones of the new Critical arch, in clearer perspective and understand better the attempts of Brooks and Warren to "educate" the reader who now occupies a place of supremacy, and for whom now, the poem is deemed to be written. Thus by reversing the poet-reader relationship, they introduce a revolutionary change in literature. The speaker-poet, by an act of choosing the subject and form of the poem, can only "frame" the subject and that might be quite significant in itself, but, in Pound's terms, in what "gallery," this frame with its subject hangs, and what it is made to mean, especially in juxtaposition with the other "frames" in the "gallery," is, of course, the anthologist's and the reader's privilege. The "verbal icon" is no longer seen in reference to the artist who brought it into being. Examining their view of the identity of the speaker, we can notice the disturbing assertion that without him/her, the poem is heard in a "vacuum." The poet is reduced to a character in his/her own "drama" and the ludicrous in the etymological sense of the word (ludicrous) is never far away, but perhaps, for Brooks and Warren, this is one of the differences between "good" and "bad" poetry. Finally, to assume that simply by positing a "speaker" the vacuum would disappear strikes one as arbitrary, for echoing the Marxist

critics, one might assert that the "speaker" too is in a vacuum without reference to the socio-historical factors that shape and influence poetry. Of course such a reference to particularities of literary production would be heresy in New Criticism. This heresy is represented by Jacques Derrida whom Brooks, echoing M. H. Abrams, finds to be an "absolutist who cannot find an absolute" (Brooks 1982 18). Such a view is "devastating to any concept of humanistic value" (Brooks 1982 17). The anthology was the chief weapon to combat such literary nihilism as Brooks and Warren saw it.

The idea of the speaker's voice finds consenting echoes in many anthologists of the time. In *Exploring Poetry*, (1955) of M. L. Rosenthal and A. J. M. Smith, the first sentence reads, "In a good poem, we hear the voice of a person speaking" (quoted in Gibson 257) and Walker Gibson, the reviewer of the book, incidentally a teacher, approvingly writes, "Surely that is the place to begin" (Gibson 257). Towards the end of the Section on "Tone," Brooks and Warren themselves reinforce their point (the primacy of the speaker and the voice) through the first line of an Emily Dickinson poem, "Tell all the truth but tell it slant" by asking the question, "How can the first line be understood as a description of the method of all successful poetry?" (UP 1976 193). The answer, of course, is that it has an unmistakable sense of a speaker and a voice. In a lecture delivered in 1982, Brooks added a new dimension when he explained this line as literature's link with reality: "It (literature) tells the truth through a *fiction*" (Brooks 1982 25; Brooks's emphasis). A local and contemporary truth is universalised by the authors' mysterious ability to "write better than they know" (Brooks 1982 177).

If the speaker appears, the listener, as we have seen, cannot be far behind and if the speaker speaks with a carefully cultivated art, the listener/reader must develop his/her art of listening/reading. This forms the *raison d'être* of the anthology and the editors' efforts are directed at helping the reader "understand" poetry even better. Brooks and Warren themselves draw attention to the significance of the title, suggesting experience as their central theme:

The title of this book is *Understanding Poetry*. It might, however, with equal reason be called *Experiencing Poetry*, for what this book hopes to do is to enlarge the reader's capacity to experience poetry. What is at stake in the choice between the two titles is a matter of emphasis. The title *Experiencing Poetry* would emphasize the end to be hoped for—a richer appreciation of poetry, a fuller enjoyment. Our chosen title emphasizes the process by which such an end may be achieved (*UP* 1976 15).

But finally, the anthology will have served its purpose "*only insofar as it can return readers to the poem itself*—return them, that is, better prepared to experience it more immediately, fully, and, shall we say, innocently" (*UP* 1976 16; Brooks and Warren's emphasis). The guilt, presumably, lies in the acquisition of information the editors consider extraneous to the poem. No amount of experience, however, is enough and the reader may only be more or less ready for the poem. The writer's experience that goes into the poem is balanced by the reader's own experience that he/she brings to the work. "The privilege of interpretation accorded to the reader or hearer may also be looked upon as an obligation. In either case the work is literally *delivered* into his hands. He has the

privilege of responding to its invitation to use his own imagination to invest it with a fullness, with a *richness*, gleaned from his own experience" (Brooks 1982 26). The editors' duty is to see that this privilege is enjoyed and honored in an appropriate manner. The reader, like Trofimov in Anton Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard*, is a "perpetual student."

To achieve their aim of "educating" the reader, Brooks and Warren deploy a variety of organizational and textual devices. With every edition, fortified and enriched by new experiences, the editors enlarge and innovate so that especially after the first two editions, the book becomes a completely different one in format, look, and size. Not only is the number of poems increased, but also a few new sections are added subsequently to aid the student. Parodies of poems, for example, are included in a special section at the end of the fourth edition (1976) so that they might enable the readers to come to a better understanding of the poems. A unique feature of *Understanding Poetry* is the deliberate inclusion of what Brooks-Warren think are "bad" poems to contrast them with the good ones. And just as some of the "good" poems are analyzed in detail, so are some of the "bad" ones. For example, in their analysis of Joyce Kilmer's "Trees," they excoriate the poem for its inconsistency in the flow of thought, whimsical imagery, and at least one illogical conclusion, which the student is expected to discover for himself/herself by answering questions like "Is there any basis for saying that God makes trees and fools make poems?" (UP 1960 290). Even more unusual are the diagrammatic representations of some poems, such as "Cleopatra's Lament," an excerpt from Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* (UP 1960 292-293). Another interesting technique that Brooks and Warren use is the rewording of some poems to bring out the beauty of the original, which

is not a new idea—even T. B. Macaulay had expressed a similar idea in one of his essays in which he attributes to the words of the poet the inevitability of the magical password to Ali Baba's cave. Brooks-Warren quote Shakespeare's "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow" speech from *Macbeth* Act V. Scene 5, and follow it up with Davenant's version of the poem purged (in Davenant's view) of its offences against "correctness" and "reasonableness" (*UP* 1976 290-291). Asking the student-reader to analyze the passage from Shakespeare in detail, they also require the reader to compare the two versions somewhat elaborately. This is repeated a few times in the anthology when, for example in the Introduction, they alter Robert Burns's famous lines, printing them as [mis]quoted by Yeats: "The white moon is setting behind the white wave,/And Time, is setting with me, O!" (*UP* 1960 17). Brooks and Warren's alteration reads in the second line, "And Time, O! is setting with me" (*UP* 1960 17). They go on to note, ". . . the first version . . . may be in itself more melodious than the second," but "is superior primarily because it contributes to the total effect, or what we might call the total interpretation, of the scene" (*UP* 1960 17). Yeats's summary of the poem is then given in full, followed by an even more drastically altered version, with a "gold moon" behind a "gold wave" and the second line now reading, "And Time is setting for me, O!" (*UP* 1960 17). Brooks and Warren surprisingly, do not draw the reader's attention to the fact that Yeats had misquoted the lines from Burns. The original line reads "The wan moon is setting ayont the white wave."

The influence of *Understanding Poetry* in its various editions over time is truly incalculable as it made itself seemingly inevitable in the classrooms. What Brooks and

Warren wanted to impress upon teachers was their volume's thoroughness and apparent ability to cater to the needs of the students, teachers, and teaching assistants. The "success" that Brooks and Warren achieved came, however, at the price of isolating poetry from the general reader. Perhaps it seemed to make the university somewhat the arbiter of the destinies of writers and literature. With its emphasis on form and an "understandable" content of which it made a "close study," the New Criticism of Brooks-Warren made poetry highly specialized, if not esoteric. Any writer who desired to be counted in the Brooks and Warren scheme was invited to the models they proffered along the formal and graspable lines of the poems praised in the anthology. Poems from now on valorized form since "[f]orm is the recognition of fate made joyful, because made comprehensible" (*UP* 1960 xiv). Form was to become a central issue in poetry, the cultivation and sustenance of which necessitated hard practice by the poet, for which again, *Understanding Poetry* offered numerous examples.

Yet the original intention of *Understanding Poetry* had been to make poetry simple, and thereby, popular: "Most of the modern poets treated herein (*Modern Poetry and the Tradition* of 1939), are regarded as being excessively difficult. This study provides, I hope, some sort of explanation for that 'difficulty.' But the best defense against the charge of unintelligibility is to submit detailed interpretations" (Brooks xxxi). This was how *Understanding Poetry* soon became a guidebook not only to the readers but also to the writers. New Criticism consolidated and legitimized the poetics of Modernism partly through the English classroom. A kind of a symbiosis between the poet and the academy emerged, and perhaps an incestuous production kept fresh blood out of

poetry. At least, this is a charge often made against their poetics. Understanding Poetry is a much larger mission than understanding the specifics of a given poem. A truer understanding of poets and poetry is also an understanding of larger subjects including language, culture, habits of thought and discursive practices a race or nation is known by. The latter idea of poetry as representing the "dialect of the tribe" underlay Pound's famous pronouncement, "Poets are the antennae of the race." Poets who wrote according to non-New Critical tenets were either ignored or forgotten, and even today, there are instances when New Criticism continues to dominate discussions of poetry. "The 'new criticism' of Brooks and Warren," says Paul Marcotte, "is old. Perhaps it is defunct or perhaps it is only playing possum. This judgment is difficult to make" (Marcotte 46). But Frank Lentricchia is even more forthright when he says that New Criticism "is dead in the way an imposing and repressive father is dead" (Lentricchia 1983 xiii). It still looms large in the background.

It has become a fashion to decry New Criticism as pedantic and pedagogical and so destructive of the pleasure of poetry since it creates an artificial division between the poet and the speaker and the close study it makes unravels the "mystery" of the poem. But one cannot help feeling that the New Critics do not always get a fair deal from most critics. Marcotte, for example, faults Brooks and Warren for dilating, if only unintentionally, beyond the limits they set themselves, by defining poetry, for example, something they had avowedly abjured. But one feels that this critic does not distinguish between what poetry *is* and what poetry *does*. If poetry is said to be "a mode of communication" (*UP* 1976 9), Brooks and Warren's words quoted are only an emphasis

on one of poetry's most significant functions. It is illustrative of the overt hostility that critics have towards New Criticism that Marcotte faults *Understanding Poetry* for doing and not doing the same thing. For example, while he laments that the expression "the effect intended by the poet" (*UP* 1976 18-19) is an encouragement to commit the "intentional fallacy," (Marcotte 52), he also regrets "how little [Brooks and Warren] have to say about the meaning of the word *intend* even after having singled it out for special attention" (Marcotte 53).

Understanding Poetry, despite its claim to merely aid the teacher, certainly overdoes the help. Very few poems stand alone here, unmediated, that is, except in the last section. This mediation may take different forms. A poem is often elaborated in great detail; its theme, technique, imagery and metrics are analysed closely. Thus in the third edition, Yeats's eight-line poem "After Long Silence" is explained and an exercise formulated in two full pages (*UP* 1960 164-166). Again, a poem might be printed only with some questions that the reader is expected to answer independently as in William Barnes's "A Brisk Wind" (*UP* 1950 88). This student/reader-centred attitude leads occasionally to an embarrassing amount of help. Sometimes Brooks and Warren are mere do-gooders who probably exceed the limit they had set for themselves. As mentioned earlier, the editors aimed at an "instructed innocence" with which the reader could return to the poems themselves. But echoing Eliot, one might wonder, "After *such* knowledge, what forgiveness?"

Now it is not difficult for us to see the sheer success and influence of *Understanding Poetry*. The book made it almost inevitable that the poetry of the academy should be cast in its image and many subsequent anthologies did follow its model. The revolt against Brooks and Warren also seems, in retrospect, inevitable. It is debatable whether the polemics generated by anthologies of the 60s onwards may be called "walls" rather than "wars." Small battles, which in retrospect became the war, wall in and wall out conformists and rebels respectively. Against this perspective, the so-called anthology wars that were waged between 1957 and 1982 sometimes make sense. They began with the publication of the *New Poets of England and America* (1957) edited by Donald Hall, Robert Pack and Louis Simpson, an anthology that perpetuated the Brooks and Warren canon. When in 1960, Donald Allen brought out his *New American Poetry* the war was joined in earnest. Another canon was fired by Hall through his *Contemporary American Poetry* (1962 and 1972). The "raw" anthology reply came with *The Postmoderns: The New American Poetry Revised*, edited by Donald Allen and George F. Butterick in 1982. The early Modernists too had fought their own "wars" in magazines and anthologies and there is nothing unique about the events that began in the late fifties and extended through to the early eighties. That such conflicts were called "wars" is, perhaps, indicative of the growing importance of the Anglo-American poetry anthology, which is now clearly a site rife with contest and power, and the maker of the canon almost exclusively in the post-World War II era.

By the late fifties, it had become evident that *Understanding Poetry* had come to constitute, if not an ultra-orthodoxy, at least an embarrassingly reactionary book. There

seemed to be none who had not seen and used it. And yet, none seemed to be entirely happy with it. That, perhaps, is the sure sign of success, no matter how dubious, for it clearly made readers think about poetry. This is recognized even by the academically-oriented anthologies, such as *Contemporary American Poetry*, whose editor Donald Hall says, "We do not want to substitute one orthodoxy for another—Down with *Understanding Poetry*\ Long Live *Projective Verse*!" (Hall 1972 25). That Brooks and Warren had to go could not have been more emphatically stated, a rejection of the overcooked, if not the merely cooked. Of course this was more easily said than done. In the second edition of the *New American and British Poets* (1962), for instance, we find the editors include parodies and a majority of the poems with regular rhyme with a recognizable narrative. Were they beginning to "understand Poetry" on Brooks and Warren's terms? In any case, the new poems of the 60's anthology were "especially teachable." Since they were including only poets under forty, it might be said that Hall and Pack were updating the section "Representative Poems of Our Time" in Brooks and Warren. Yet Hall's unequivocal recognition that the earlier Brooks and Warren type of anthology (*New Poets* 1957) of which he was one of the editors, symbolized an "orthodoxy" that was limiting poetry is a significant deflation of the "war" rhetoric. This idea is reinforced by his subsequent interviews, as will be mentioned later.

At the heart of the "war," again, is the *understanding* of poetry, what it is, and equally importantly, what it is not. Poetry is to be identified henceforth as having a formal structure and is written on select subjects in a manner that was hospitable to close study. So powerful did this method of analysis become that it is accepted tacitly even by

the most extreme rebels against a canon that is perceived to be notoriously biased and closed. Cary Nelson, for example, championing the poets carefully excluded from the mainstream, writes, ". . . we are unlikely to find [Horace] Gregory and [Marya] Zaturenska's essays satisfactory, since they do not include the kind of close textual analysis we now demand" (Nelson 18). Thus while the new poetic finds some aspects that are worthy of emulation in the old guard, there are significant points of divergence of views. This powerful and influential tradition is, of course, the one propounded by *Understanding Poetry*, which appears to its challengers such as Allen as a reactionary anthology that perpetuates its poetics through its immense popularity, which, perhaps was achieved fortuitously by being the first to arrive on the academic scene. *Understanding Poetry* debated and decided with the air of immutability how poetry should be written and read and the clones of the Brooks and Warren anthology, like the *New Poets*, further deepen this influence. The inclusion of Donald Hall, one of the editors of the latter anthology, in *Understanding Poetry*, for some time the youngest poet in the latter anthology, provides a continuity between them. And yet what we find is not so much of a "war" of irreconcilable ideas as a disagreement on emphasis. Nelson, again, illustrates this point lucidly when he says:

By the 1950s a *limited* canon of primary authors and texts was already in place. The names of the canon continued to change, but a substantial majority of interesting poems from 1910-1945 had already been forgotten. Academic critics had come to concentrate on close readings of a limited number of texts by "major authors." University course requirements were

increasingly influential in shaping the market for anthologies. And the professorate, largely white and male and rarely challenged from within its own ranks, found it easy to reinforce the culture's existing racism and sexism by ignoring poetries by minorities and women (Nelson 35; emphasis added).

Nelson's main quarrel is not so much with the canon itself as with its exclusivist attitude as evidenced by his criticism of a "*limited* canon" above. The "war" was thus the result of the attempt by some later anthologists to recover these lost or neglected works, and the academy's refusal to admit them or to believe that "[f]he cultural meaning of poetry is historically constructed, and it is often energetically contested" (Nelson 135). The problem is radicalized when some critics and readers begin to question whether what the old guard privileges is poetry at all. This is, of course, possible when a new poetry is written, engaging issues that concern it and which it perceives as unique. This explains the obsession of the anthologists with the idea of the "new" in their titles, suggesting that this poetry is different in form and content. Paradoxically, according to its critics, this kind of poetry forces the writers to repeat themselves in content and style and, in the process, closes the door on innovations.

The rival anthologies made it clear that there was an exuberance of poetry that prompted Donald Allen to name one group, somewhat confusingly, "the San Francisco Renaissance." In a surprising throwback to the 1820s when Samuel Kettell was editing his *Specimens of American Poetry* with the avowed aim of preserving them for posterity,

Allen too seeks to rescue his poets from such fugitive and ephemeral sources as little magazines, broadsides and manuscripts. Like Kettell again, Allen also aspired to boost a national literature and increase audiences for poetry. In the context of this abundant output, the limited canon of the academicians appears to Allen and others like him to be unnecessarily constraining. Hall and Pack, in contrast, were decidedly for the university as the sole and legitimate place for the study of literature. Their poems were collected from books already published by the writers or from such established magazines as the *Hudson Review* and the *Paris Review*. In a revealing Introduction in the second edition, Hall and Pack seem more concerned with rebutting Allen's poetics than they are with introducing their own poets. Even in their defence of their "academic" poetry against critics, they hark back to the prestige of such writers as William Wordsworth and Yeats from whom they trace the descent of the poetry they collect. This is a sure sign that the "raw" poetry had arrived and was being considered a force to reckon with.

Yet it is possible to argue that the Allen anthology, too, was aimed primarily at the classroom. Keith Tuma, for example, writes, "Only literary scholars . . . are especially interested in "chapters" of literary history" (Tuma 95). Allen, by referring back to Pound, Williams and other Modernist writers while tracing the artistic roots of his poets, implicitly acknowledges a concern with literary history and when he declares that the biographies and poetics in his anthology "are aids to a more exact understanding of literary history" (Allen xiii), he specifically reveals his academic leanings, or, in Tuma's terms, his literary scholarship. In fact it is the literary historical divisions that save the poems from being dismissed as mere "anthology pieces" (Allen xiii). If Brooks and

Warren, and Hall and Pack after them, were leading us to understand poetry, Allen is taking us towards literary history. Herein lies one of the primary points of conflict between the anthologies: for Brooks and Warren, the canon is already made and will admit very few changes whereas Allen is committed to preserving poems and building up a literary history. This explains why he carries elaborate biographies and poetics. Evidently, both, the Hall-Pack and Allen anthologies are attempts at making poetry familiar to readers primarily in the academy. The success of the *New American Poetry* is recorded by David Perkins, who in his *History of Modern Poetry* (1987), declares that he had got used to referring to poets as the Black Mountain Group or the New York Poets, clearly appropriating Don Allen's terms. But the differences among the anthologists are quite considerable, making them rivals in significant ways.

Allen's selections do not compete with fiction for they are too deeply disquisitory or uncompromisingly anti-narrative, lacking the continuity and lucidity of Robert Frost's poems, for example. Sometimes, though, the reader gets the feeling that the techniques of surrealism and stream of consciousness have entered into poetry when Olson, in his "Kingfishers," jumps from one association to another. This poet can also seem very Kafkaesque as he probes the mind of a Gregor Samsa-like character who wakes up in bed "fully clothed" with his memories full of kingfishers (Allen 1960 2). In Olson's poetical ideas reprinted by Allen, he is concerned about the readership of poetry and suggests drastic measures to regain it, much like Pound, whom he explicitly acknowledges as master. Frequently he expresses Pound's ideas in Poundian terms. "Any slackness takes off attention, that crucial thing, from the job in hand, from the *push* of the line under hand

at the moment, under the reader's eye, in his moment" (Allen 1960 390; Olson's emphases). This is reminiscent of Pound writing to Harriet Monroe about the need to sustain poetry at a very high artistic level if the reader is not to be put off (Paige). When Olson writes, echoing Robert Creeley, that "FORM IS NEVER MORE THAN AN EXTENSION OF CONTENT," (Allen 1960 387; Olson's emphasis), the New Critical attitude is unmistakable. Nor is this instance unique. The anti-narrative approach of the Allen anthology also requires a considerable amount of effort at disquisition by the reader who may be used to the linear story. This is explicitly recognized by the poets themselves and again, ironically, is phrased in terms that would have warmed the heart of the most committed New Critic. Robert Duncan, for example, declares, "A poem, mine or another's (sic), is an occult document, a body awaiting vivisection, analysis, X-rays" (Allen 1960 400). Such pronouncements make one wonder what the "anthology wars" were about. The differences as such seem trivial as Olson, again, illustrates when he emphasizes the need to keep the "whole business" (Allen 1960 398) moving, "must must must MOVE, INSTANTER, ON ANOTHER" (Allen 1960 398; Olson's emphasis). It is perhaps these kinds of statements that make the "academic" or New Critical anthologists uncomfortable. At a superficial glance, the poetry that Olson lauds seems designed for the speed viewing of a blasé television audience, and frustrates the carefully written and studied poetry preferred by New Criticism. But the unity of form and content, and the privileged metrics in Olson's poetics all go to stress the common ground that the two camps share. Indeed Olson regards the typewriter as having a revolutionary significance providing an opportunity to poets to compose in a strict form. What differences there are between the two camps are not irreconcilable though they are noticeable.

The poetics-based work in Allen's anthology prepared the reader for contemporary theories such as Deconstruction. The poets in the *New American Poetry* marked the return of theorizing poets who were rare among the Modernists after the Second World War. Perhaps this marks an attempt by the poets themselves to break the ivory tower and reach out to the reader by making the poetry simpler through their "frames" such as poetics and guidelines, a situation that may have been necessitated by the "difficult" poetry of Modernism whose advent was marked by *The Waste Land* and the *Cantos* which appealed to an elitist audience. One remembers that James George Frazer, the author of *The Golden Bough*, was unable to make any sense out of Eliot's poem and Amy Lowell herself had called it a "piece of tripe." A poetry that was marginalized was now attempting to reclaim its readers. That poetry had lost a substantial part of its readership is vouched for by the gloomy reviewers of the Hall-Pack and Allen anthologies, and poets themselves and these mutual recriminations boded ill for poetry. The reasons were many, ranging from the financial to the sheer apathy of the general reader. Donald Hall, editing the *Best American Poetry 1989*, notices that as many as forty-two million Americans admitted in a National Center of the Arts poll to having read poetry, but is shocked that Lawrence Ferlinghetti sold "only one million copies" (Hall 1989 xix; Hall's emphasis). He goes on to remark that those people who read poetry without buying any copies are "cheap sons of bitches" (Hall 1989 xix). The anthologies of Hall and Pack and Allen can be viewed as some earlier of the attempts to brighten this bleak situation by collecting poetry that could appeal to their own kind of readers. The poetics that Allen prints at the end of his collection is one of the main grounds for the "anthology wars." Brooks and Warren, and their imitators have little patience or space for

literary theory, either from the poets or from the critics. ". . . the discussion of literature, and particularly of literary theory, ought not to be allowed to overwhelm literature. Moreover, I agree that it may be useful for the reader to look at poems and novels with an innocent eye, to range about for himself, to experience the thrill of making his own discovery" (Brooks 1982 254). So where does the anthologist come in? "Nevertheless, it would be equally naive to believe that the innocent reader does not sometimes require help" (Brooks 1982 254). The qualification of "sometimes" notwithstanding, it is a major role that Brooks and Warren and their clones envisage for the anthologist and critic.

The academic anthologies, viz., *New Poets* (1957 and 1962) and *Contemporary American Poets* (1962 and 1972), are published on the belief that to win back the readers, poetry has to be orderly and systematic and present a "narrative." Their stock-in-trade is a poetry that resembled Robert Frost's in its narrative structure and form. A linear, sequential story, like the one advocated in *Understanding Poetry* is privileged here. The editors, Hall, Pack and Simpson of the former anthology, and Donald Hall of the latter, were convinced that the university was the last and the best hope for poetry. It was a poetry that would be simple yet suggestive and to which the reader would repeatedly come back for a richer understanding and experience. These anthologies, however, largely left the readers to their own resources with barely any hints about the poetry and poets they were to read. It was a learned poetry that, by its parodies and allusions, presumed readers who had some knowledge or were willing to acquire it on their own, again preferably in the university. It is interesting to note that Hall and Pack collect poems that are comparatively short with few of them extending beyond two-and-a-half

pages and are, presumably, chosen because they can be taught completely in a single class. Allen, by contrast prints fairly long poems that are often difficult to teach. The anthology had come to be tailored perfectly for the classroom.

In their utilization of the anthological apparatus, Hall et al. and Allen differ in many significant ways. In the first edition, the editors were reluctant to write out an Introduction as they wanted the readers to judge the poems for themselves: "What characteristics are to be discovered in this poetry, we leave to the reader to determine. That poetry today is worthy of its inheritance, we hope we have shown . . ." (Hall et al. 1957 9). In this they are like the Imagist poets and Ezra Pound when they edited their early anthologies. The Introduction by Frost is intended more perhaps as an authenticator rather than as a true representative literary history of the times. It is meant to reassure the reader that the young poets in the anthology are by no means inferior to the older ones. Thus the newness of the poets collected in the anthologies is based partly on chronology and only then on the innovations of the authors. The first edition of the anthology did not divide British and American poets into separate sections, but printed them together in an alphabetical order. Only in the second edition did the editors separate them. While Allen carries a fairly detailed bibliography at the end of the anthology, Hall and Pack provide brief introductions to the writers along with their major works in the contents page. Allen follows the somewhat unusual method of getting the writers themselves to provide brief introductions to themselves and their poetics. Oddly enough, these are called "biographies" and they range in length from a few lines to one and a half pages as in the case of Gregory Corso. Some of them are whimsical, using sentences that run into

paragraphs and some that have a telegraphic abruptness and terseness. One cannot avoid the uncomfortable feeling that sometimes the poetry seeks validation from the aberrant lives that the poets have lived. Corso, for example, has a history of imprisonment.

Perhaps, by collecting poetry from varied and rare sources which were often difficult to obtain, and reaching out to a variety of readers between them, the anthologies of Hall and Pack and Allen increased the readership until, as the poll mentioned above shows, an unexpectedly large number of people read poetry. It is also true that the constituency of readers was riven along academic and amateurish or dilettantish lines.

That a critic like Donald Hall, at least partly, veered around to the "raw" kind of poetry later is, to a considerable extent, due to the presence of anthologies like Allen's. The titles of these anthologies involved in the so-called war draw our attention to the fundamental assumptions and principles that they were based on. Hall et al. seem to focus on the writers of the poems (*New Poets*) in their title, while Allen seems to stress on poetry itself (*The New American Poetry*). The former try to give a more comprehensive picture of a writer's work by including only those poets "of whom we could choose at least three or four pages of poetry" (Allen 1962, 22). Allen includes some poets who are represented only by one poem, supposedly to save the poetry from fugitive and ephemeral magazines. We cannot help noticing that while Anglo-American Modernism is marked by a bewildering variety of styles, themes, ideologies, and so on, Allen's anthology, with its definite article "The" seems to subsume the poetry of the period, at least in a representative way, under one banner, and between the same covers. Perhaps

the categorization by geography instead of their poetics, and the further grouping of the poets under their local affiliations in the Introduction and sections of the anthology can function under an overall American rubric, in Allen's view. Hall's own anthology, edited without collaborators, *Contemporary American Poets* (1962 and 1972), carefully eschews both "new" and "modern." The anthologists who rebel against Brooks and Warren do not have a sharply defined area that is mutually exclusive. In an interview, Hall acknowledges his European influences in emphatic terms, and his relationship as a critic and anthologist with the poetry of Eliot and Pound. The European influence has now become American and even international. As for the Eliot and Pound influences, he says, "I used to think that there was a total discontinuity between Eliot and Pound and what happens now. I no longer think so" (Hall 1986 146), and continues in a Freudian vein of the Oedipus complex: "Perhaps I needed to think that way. If your father existed, you would have to kill him, so it was easier to insist that your father did not exist. Now may be we can read *The Waste Land* as a surrealist poem—at least with a small s. Certainly it is not some historical, Christian assemblage of ironies" (Hall 1986 146). This civilized version of the Freudian complex, where the killing is done only by wishing Eliot out of existence, perhaps enabled Hall to be wiser than he thought he was when he edited the anthologies and acknowledged, if only in passing, Eliot's and Pound's influence even as he blamed them for an un-American and overly erudite practices. The old orthodoxy may have declared that "surrealism had failed," (Hall 1972 25) but was all the same, at least in retrospect, hospitable to surrealist interpretations, leaving a space to broaden the canon.

II

The notion of a war fought between the anthologists, with polarized views of nationalities, poetics and poets who published their editions from the late fifties to the early eighties, tends to obscure the important fact that the war was fought, perhaps inevitably, *within* the anthologies themselves as well, a situation that occurs as far back as the early decades of the twentieth century. The point is that the war has been oversimplified and its issues occluded by the individual views of critics and reviewers. Complicating the picture is the fact that one of the editors of *New Poets of England and America*, Donald Hall in his *Contemporary American Poets* made inclusions which go against the American part of the co-edited anthology. Thus, for example, Hall prints Allen Ginsberg in his *second* edition of the anthology in 1972, a poet left out by Pack who edited the American section of the *New Poets*. Hall admits that it was ridiculous not to have included the major Beat poet. The reason adduced in the earlier anthology for the exclusion was that the Beat group was the creation of the popular magazines like *Life* and *Time* whose only interests lay in the salacious and the exotic. These magazines tended to focus more on the poet than on the poetry. This is reminiscent of the contempt the writers of the early Twentieth century had for popular magazines. Another major failure in the *New Poets*, according to Hall, was the non-inclusion of Allen Ginsberg in the first edition of *Contemporary American Poets*, along with representative African-American poets. He and his co-editors of the earlier anthology had no regard for a poetry that was inward-looking and merely autobiographical—a poetry expressing only "neuroses," as Simpson, the third editor, was to say later in a review of Donald Allen's anthology in the *Hudson*

Review in 1963. Responding to a question, Hall gave a more detailed explanation of his then antipathy towards the Black Mountain Poets and the Beats:

"... [T]wo things are going on in any failure to recognize excellence when it first happens. One of them is that you have an idea of what poetry is; this is true whether you are being a poet or being critic or both. You are *set*; when something new comes along, instead of having the imagination or the energy to accommodate yourself to it, the easier thing is to deny it and to say that it's not poetry, its no good. This is what happened to Wordsworth when he published *Lyrical Ballads*. This accounts for some of my planned ignorance when new things began to happen in the late 1950s.

But there was also another thing; my own fear of poetry, my own fear of the looseness of the imagination, my fear of fantasy. Most of this new poetry was not fantastic, but a lot of it was considerably more loose and less conventional than mine, especially in intellectual and spiritual ways. So I feared the poetry not only because it attacked my stylistic set, but also it was a danger to my *emotional* set. Learning to read some of this poetry has been a liberation to me. I think of Allen Ginsberg, among others, although as my own writing has changed, I don't think it has come to resemble Allen's (Hall 1986 17-18; Hall's emphases).

Hall's anthology of 1962 had, as mentioned above, excluded the African-American poets but, after some criticism, he, like Brooks and Warren, admitted only two of them, Dudley Randall and Etheridge Knight, into his *Contemporary American Poets* of 1972. (LeRoi Jones, who appeared in the Allen anthology, refused permission). The editor made the somewhat strange plea that his understanding of black poetry was inadequate since it was "hard to judge these poems, as if I were trying to exercise my taste in a foreign language, which I am" (Hall 1972 37). One is left with the uncomfortable feeling that such tokenism, resorted simply to deflect criticism, is neither here nor there. It also suggests that nationality, since Hall chose and introduced the British poets in *New Poets*, is less of a barrier to appreciation than race.

Hall regards his anthology primarily as a platform from which to announce the demise of an orthodoxy that derived its strength mainly from T. S. Eliot and the new critics. Interestingly, Eliot himself, in a lecture in the United States, had warned of precisely such a situation. In his "Function of Criticism" he says, "These last thirty years have been, I think, a brilliant period in literary criticism in both England and America. It may even seem, in retrospect, too brilliant. Who knows?" (Eliot 1965 103). In spite of the non-committal "who knows?" Eliot appears a little uncomfortable at the success of his own criticism. Thus, Marvin Mudrick, for example, regards Eliot as "the legitimate successor to Dryden, Johnson and Coleridge" (Mudrick 599). If this is true, the Eliotian orthodoxy has a long history indeed. Hall acknowledges that the orthodoxy of Eliot still produces many good poems and what aids its survival further is, in his opinion, the lack of appropriate replacements, since only the popular magazines and the Beats are the ones

to oppose it. In other words, Eliot's orthodoxy survives only by default. Hall perhaps thinks so because Eliot frequently privileged works that echoed his own brand of Universalism over the local, such as the one found in William Carlos Williams. In "American Literature and the American Language," for example, he praises Mark Twain for his "strong local flavour combined with unconscious universality" whose "symbolism is all the more powerful for being uncalculated and unconscious" (Eliot 1965 54). But, perhaps, Eliot would have denied Hall's charge because as he says in his lecture, "To Criticize the Critic" "... I do not believe that my own criticism has had, or could have had, any influence whatever apart from my own poems" (Eliot 1965 22). Eliot was probably suggesting that his criticism was designed to explain his own poetry or that it did have an effect in conjunction with it. Considering the centrality of his work to Modernism and the many imitators he had, Hall may have some substance in his allegation.

Demanding an eclectic attitude which is quite consistent with Modernism, Hall objects to the orthodoxy because it "prescribes the thinkable limits of variation" (Hall 1972 25). This is an implicit criticism of Allen's elaborate statements on poetics printed at the end of his anthology. In fact, Hall, as mentioned before, explicitly expresses fears over the possibility of Charles Olson's "Projective Verse" essay forming the core of a new orthodoxy. Hall, surprisingly, finds in Eliot an emphasis on the continuity of British and American poetry. Surprising because, in the lecture mentioned above, Eliot was clearly at pains to distinguish American literature from its relatively early beginnings in the nineteenth century. "... I assert that the term "American literature" has for me a

clear and distinct meaning . . ." (Eliot 1965 51). He found the concept indefinable except in a negative sense, and the differences between the two (British and American literatures) were truly vital to the development of both:

I do not think that a satisfactory statement of what constitutes the difference between an English and an American 'tradition' in poetry could be arrived at: because the moment you produce your definition, and the neater the definition is, the more surely some poet will turn up who doesn't fit into it all, but who is nevertheless definitely either English or American. And the tradition itself, as I have said long ago, is altered by every new writer of genius. The difference will remain undefined, but it will remain; and this is I think as it should be: for it is because they are different that English poetry and American poetry can help each other, and contribute towards renovation of both. (Eliot 1965 60)

Eliot's remarks show how early in the history of Modernism the two literatures came to diverge enough to require separate notices, a fact that goes against Allen Tate's assertion in the *Modern Verse in English* (1958) that "[t]he early reception in England of Robert Frost and the enormous international influence of Pound and Eliot and, later, of W. H. Auden, have at last produced an Anglo-American poetry that only by convention can be separated . . ." (Tate 1958 40). However, the fact that the two different anthologists had to share the editorial duties along national lines is witness to the enormity and diversity of the literatures.

It is thus surprising that Tuma should omit any references to the Cecil-Tate anthology and mark the separation of the two nations' literatures with the Hall-Pack anthology of 1962 when it had already been done in 1958. In fact, we could go back to the *New Poetry* of Harriet Monroe, who in the second edition (1927) writes: "In reading the poetry of the last ten years, we have become conscious of increasing divergences between the English product and that of the United States. This is, no doubt, inevitable and desirable—at least it is natural—that an anthology prepared in this country should follow with greater sympathy the American path in this divergence (Monroe 1927 1). If, as Tuma notes that Frost, in his Preface to the first edition of *New Poets* does not mention the British, it is perhaps because the anthology does not differentiate them, and perhaps his (Frost's) values are inflected in the same nationalist way as Monroe's. The latter further adds, "As American poetry ceases to be colonial, much of British poetry seems, by comparison, provincial" (Monroe 1927 li). Her statement is more enigmatic than epigrammatic. In the context of the American renaissance that her magazine predicted and propagated one wonders whether England itself has not become no more than the literary province of the United States. That thirty-five years later, American anthologists (Hall and Pack, for example) should still seek to embody this separation and that a critic (Tuma) should reassert it almost forty years further down, appears suspiciously like protesting too much. If Tuma thinks that modern British poetry is noticed only with something of a patronizing attitude by Americans, it is with a sense of *déjà vu* that British readers would recognize this approach. Conrad Aiken, who edited the *Twentieth-Century American Poetry* (1921), later remembered in his Preface to its second edition that his anthology "was primarily designed for publication in England, and in the pious hope of

enlightening that country, singularly uninformed about American literature, as to the state of contemporary American poetry" (Aiken 1944 xxi). Tuma, however, goes on to perpetrate another anachronism in locating the American independence of British poetry in Britain's Suez fiasco (Tuma 91), smacking of whimsicality. Actually America did not have to wait that long, as the Second World War had already altered the power structure in the world and even earlier in 1942, President F. D. Roosevelt was putting pressure on the British to change their colonial policy, basing his demands on the American help Britain had received. Even Untermeyer in his *Modern Poetry: Mid-Century Edition* (1950) separates the British and American writers. Tuma mentions Aiken's *Skepticisms* in his book, but, surprisingly, does not refer to his anthologies which had already addressed some of the issues that were to become the origins of the so-called "anthology wars." It would seem that by the Second World War, the two major streams of English poetry, far from merging themselves into the Anglo-American river of the standard literary histories, were esthetically diverging or perhaps even drying up. In the anthologies of both sides, we find an anxiety to reclaim the readers that poetry had lost.

The "anthology wars" were framed retrospectively by many critics through the black and white terms of Robert Lowell's famous division of poetry in 1960 into the "raw" and the "cooked." His distinction, again, was not a new one. Others like Robert Graves had recognized similar polarities, as mentioned before. So influential did the Lowell distinction become that Robert Pack, in the second edition of the *New Poets* devoted some space to its evaluation and effect. He found that both the terms were pejorative because they both implied a poetry that was intended to be consumed, and

hence, was lacking in genuine inspiration (*New Poets* 1962 178). The "raw" and the "cooked" were pejorative because they were written to a carefully made programme, and thus automatically suspect.

III

The earliest anthology in the war, the Hall-Pack-Simpson *New Poets of England and America* of 1957, printed only poets who were forty or less at the time of publication. It carried an Introduction by Robert Frost in which the poet, known for his desire to appeal to readers "of all sorts," sounds rather non-committal and even wary of the anthology. The puns and word-play in the Introduction are reminiscent more of Louis Untermeyer than of Frost himself. We remember the letter to this editor (Untermeyer) that Frost had written in an almost perfect parody of Untermeyer's epistolary style, and it would seem that the latter was too much with him as he wrote the Introduction. Choosing to focus on the youth of the contributors, Frost called his Introduction "Maturity No Object," a title that suggests more of a defensive than a positive attitude, and it is a defensiveness that is maintained rather studiously and determinedly throughout the essay. Frost inveighs against an "academic" poetry, and cannot help regretting what the term had come to mean in negative terms. The former schoolteacher, it seems, is conscious of what a school can do. But Frost cleverly fuses poetic schools with schools in the more usual sense, and the individualist in him can only bemoan the influence of bad coteries of poets. The poet from such a group is like Shakespeare's medlar, "rotten before it is ripe" (Hall et al. 1957 10). Frost's first target is the poetry that preaches and moralizes:

"Overdevelop the social conscience and make us all social meddlers" (Hall et al. 1957 10). Opposing knowledge to instinct, Frost asserts that the swingers of birches should not "rhyme trivia" but find a "depth in the lightsome blue depth of the air" and that they will have "struck their chord long before forty" (Hall 1957 11). These poets have already proved their worth and need only wait until they become famous. As for the readers, they will have to look for good poetry both inside and outside the school in both senses of the term, and knowing schools as he did, Frost suggests that it might be more outside than inside. Plainly echoing the editors' own preface, Frost declares that the reader is on trial, having to identify which poems were genuinely inspired and which were Parnassian, poems which had been produced deliberately. The implicit admission is that there are poems of both kinds in the anthology. And finally, he hopes that the anthology would reach the school as well as the general reader. Perhaps it is due to this non-committal tone (when it is not cheeky openly) that the editors have chosen to drop the Introduction altogether in their next edition, though they still included poets under forty and might well have maintained "Maturity no Object." Instead of letting the readers come to their own conclusions as they did in the first edition, they choose to guide them this time by writing two Introductions separately, one for the British poets (Hall), and the other for the Americans (Pack). While the burden of Hall's Introduction is the apathy of the British reader towards poetry, Pack pushes for an academy-based study.

On the editors' own admission, the war of the anthologies began even before the publication—each of the individual editors had an anthology in his own mind and the poems he wished included were sacrificed for a "composite judgment"—and in any case

the anthology was not the final pronouncement on poetry and poets since subsequent editions might include those excluded now. As for the English poets included in the anthology, the editors plead that they cannot "claim to be familiar with all the work being done in England today" (Hall et al. 1957 9), and are reminiscent of Yeats's apology in the *Oxford Book of Modern Verse* that he was unfamiliar with American poetry and so could not include it. Consequently, the British section of the anthology is not truly representative. Now the question may be legitimately asked as to why they were included at all. The answer can be found in the second edition where the editors say that the poets of England are doing good work, but are unknown to the Anglophobic Americans. Nor are many British readers themselves aware of this work. The anthology was thus implicitly meant to fill a gap in the knowledge of the reading public on both sides of the Atlantic.

The reviewers of these anthologies join the "war" in earnest. Discussing the origins of the two competing anthologies in a review (Simpson XVI 130), Louis Simpson, one of the co-editors of the first edition, reminisces somewhat inaccurately: "In the fifties appeared the university poets (*New Poets of England and America*) and the Beats (*The New American Poetry*).” (The latter appeared in 1960). Simpson continues, "The first group apparently came out of writing workshops taught by the Depression poets; the second merely expounded their neuroses. If the Depression poets were hardly aware of criticism, these were even less so. However, out of the university and Beat groups came the new poets we do have" (Simpson XVI 130). This Hegelian dialectic of thesis, antithesis and synthesis introduced into literary history appears vague if not

eccentric. It is also rather surprising that Simpson does not mention Hall's *Contemporary American Poets* (1962) even in passing, considering that it too was an anthology of "university poets" as it was based on much the same principles as the *New Poets*.

In all these comments, it is taken for granted that academic poetry is somehow bad and inferior, an idea echoed, ironically, by T. S. Eliot, the academic poet par excellence. "We cannot," he says, "relish the thought that our poems and plays and novels will, at best, be preserved only in texts heavily annotated by learned scholars, who will dispute the meaning of many passages and will be completely in the dark as to how our beautiful lines should be pronounced. Most of us, we know, have a pretty good chance of oblivion anyway; but to those of us who succeed in dying in advance of our reputations, the assurance of a time when our writings will be grappled with by two or three graduate students in Middle Anglo-American 42 B is very distasteful. As it would not have pleased a Latin poet in Southern Gaul to be told by a soothsayer that his language, over which he took so much trouble, would be in a few centuries be replaced by something more up-to-date" (Eliot 1965 49).

The New Poets was in the line of the tradition of anthologies which collected both American and British poets thus affirming a common tradition and character, begun by Harriet Monroe and Louis Untermeyer in the 1910s. Untermeyer's *Modern Poets of England and America: Mid-Century Edition* (1950) and David Cecil and Allen Tate's *Modern Poetry in English 1900-1950* (1958) were only two of the most important later anthologies in this series. The war of the anthologies began with the aggressively

nationalist Allen anthology, *The New American Poetry: 1945-1960*. While Hall and Pack saw a new renaissance in poetry arising in Europe (Hall 1957 21), Allen already claimed a great and prolific poetry existing in the United States. The latter stresses the *American* origins of the revolution that has come to be called Modernism, tracing it to Ezra Pound, H. D., William Carlos Williams, e e cummings, Marianne Moore, and Wallace Stevens. For Allen, American poetry is the more dominant one—the pendulum had swung to the other side of the Atlantic decisively. Allen, again, sees the richness of American poetry in its alliance with expressionist painting and jazz, which he declares, are acknowledged as the greatest achievements of modern America. Even as it is true that the anthologists locate the origin of the renaissance in English letters differently, they all agree that the renaissance itself is underway. As for the bases of the inclusions, Hall and Pack exclude the Irish poets, but include two Commonwealth poets, Dom Moraes of India, and Laurence Lerner of South Africa, since their criteria included not only nationality but also residence in London for a considerable time. In contrast to Allen, the European origins of the literary revolution were to be stressed again by Hall in his *Contemporary American Poets* (1962 and 1972) in which he asserts that American poetry was a part of the British tradition dating from the time of Queen Victoria up to his present. However, the publication of an exclusively American anthology marked for him the time when American poetry cut the apron strings and struck out on its own. Eliot had been even more direct. "I think it is just to say that the pioneers of the twentieth century poetry were more conspicuously the Americans than the English, both in number and in quality. Why this should have been must remain a matter of conjecture" (Eliot 1965 58).

Hall et al. and Allen include the younger poets in their anthologies suggesting that the new poetry was started by them. Yet, in both anthologies, one finds some very traditional poetry with such titles as "Ode to Joy" by Frank O'Hara (Allen 1960 250). Also present are archaisms and poeticisms in quite a few instances. This is not surprising because some of the most popular poetry of Pound and Eliot admitted such usages. Hall and Pack too have poems on conventional and mythical themes in keeping with the privileging of eclecticism. Even though didacticism is anathema, Allen includes philosophical poems like Charles Olson's "The Kingfishers." As recorders of literary history, Hall, in *Contemporary American Poets* spans three generations much like Allen. For both editors, the Pound-Eliot generation is the first one. Hall's second generation, aligning its loyalties to Walter Raleigh and John Dryden rather than to "Gerontion" and the *Cantos*, admired also John Donne, Andrew Marvell and Richard Herrick. These were Allen Tate, Yvor Winters, and John Crowe Ransom. Another group of poets appeared in the late thirties for whom W. H. Auden was the point of departure. The best of this group, according to Hall, were Karl Shapiro and John Fredrick Nims, and yet in their wit and formality, they were close to the orthodoxy. Allen's three generations were Pound, Williams, H.D., Marianne Moore, Wallace Stevens and E. E. Cummings. The notable difference is that Eliot is absent from Allen's canon. His second generation emerged in the thirties and forties. Prominent among these were Elizabeth Bishop, Edwin Denby, Robert Lowell, Kenneth Rexroth and Louis Zukofsky. Hall and Allen, as can be seen here, part ways in the second generation and the third generation is completely different and the "anthological war" appears to be raging fiercely. But such differences of opinion are expected and it seems an exaggeration to label these dissensions as wars.

Hall notes that the resident American poets of the time were already running a parallel movement in their native land with Alfred Kreymborg, Mina Loy, Stevens, Cummings, Marianne Moore, and Hart Crane in the vanguard. Allen and Hall's remarkably similar lists emphasize the convergence of views between the two editors. For Hall, these American poets were concerned more with what he called "experience" rather than with "civilization," and had to be subjective without being autobiographical. This privileging of experience shows how powerful the influence of *Understanding Poetry* was. It was a rejection of the past for a focus on the present, a turning to the subjective from the objective. It also repudiated the universal for the local, and a polyglot poetry for the colloquial. It is a telling example that Hall gives when he quotes the last lines of *The Waste Land* and declares that Eliot was never farther away from the colloquial which was adopted by Williams et al., than here. The poets drew their models from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth century writers such as Walter Raleigh and John Dryden and down played the influence of Pound and Eliot. Also significant were the influences of Andrew Marvel and Robert Herrick. It is perhaps a little ironic that the Metaphysical poets, especially John Donne, were popularized by Eliot himself. Hall identified the formal with the witty and the orthodox, and set them against the modern which he found to be very subjective in content and colloquial in diction. But unfortunately he does not elaborate on what the term formal signifies to him, though we can guess it. Hall indicates that if a poem is to be truly modern, it should not insist on irony and symmetry, but should be eclectic in approach and must always be well written (Hall 1962 20). It should also be subjective. Thus Hall attempted to free poetry from the limitations imposed by earlier, mostly Eurocentric writers who may have been

constrained to work within them for their own historical reasons. The valorization of the subjective in poetry was also noted earlier by David Cecil and Allen Tate in their 1958 anthology *Modern Verse in English 1900-1950*. This new importance of the subjective they saw as a response to the collapse of the beliefs and standards of taste that began at the end of the Augustan age.

Hall et al. and Allen aimed to attack the citadels of orthodoxy and in this they shared a common ground. Interestingly, they characterize the main trend of the age as expressionist—Allen traces the influences on his poets to an "abstract expressionist painting" (Allen 1960 xi). Hall too regards the expressionist influence as central to American poetry. But this common literary history resulted in different anthologies as the editors traced their formative influences to Europe (Hall) and resident Americans in their native land (Allen). But the main point of departure was the poetics each of the rival anthologists adopted.

In the Introduction to the American section of the anthology, Robert Pack makes a selection of American poets in a Yeatsian poetic as derived from Matthew Arnold and Walter Pater. He rejects the Beat Generation because they were mostly given to an indulgence in self-pity and self-indulgence (Hall-Pack 1962 181), much as Yeats rejected the War Poets. In fact, Pack quotes three lines from Yeats's poem "Adam's Curse" as a credo for all poets: "A line will take us hours maybe:/Yet if it does not seem a moment's thought/Our stitching and unstitching has been naught" (Hall-Pack 1962 180). These lines encapsulate perfectly the kind of poetry the editors were trying to take to the

readers: simple and colloquial in diction, rich in suggestion and including a pun or two for the reader to ponder over and unravel (the naught/knot word play, for example, blends seamlessly into Yeats's poetic fabric here). Hall, too, praised Richard Wilbur for his ability "shape an analogy, to perceive and develop comparisons, to display etymological wit, and to pun in six different ways" (Hall 1962 20). What is firmly rejected by both is the scholarly, esoteric poetry that the Modernists wrote. Hall and Allen place their trust squarely in the university, which, for them, provides the best opportunity to cultivate the love for poetry. Allen emphasizes the anti-academic verse his anthology enshrines, but he does not preclude the university as a hospitable place for poetry as can be seen in his biographies and bibliographies aimed at making poetry easy for the reader considering the novelty it claimed. Hall et al. reject the "literary cliques" who publish only in the "incestuous pages of little magazines" and cannot nourish any audience that is free from the vested interests they shared with the poets. The university "is alone the place where the past and the present live together. And one finds among one's students a genuine responsiveness, not yet spoiled, to art. They are there to give this response, to have it deepened through learning, and through sharing it, to have it encouraged that they may never lose their love for all forms of human knowledge and expression. Anyone who has had the privilege of teaching the young knows this is true. Of course there is pettiness, dryness, and reaction in the universities—as everywhere else—but the feeling which today draws so many poets to it is that here an audience may be cultivated which will be both passionate and detached, responsive and yet willing to judge" (Hall-Pack 1962, 182). Yeats, it will be remembered, valued the ordinary readers for their fresh approach to life, and continuing their Yeatsian view of poetry and its readers, Hall and Pack see in

the university students the peasants and the ordinary people whom Yeats looked to for an audience for his work.

Equally central to Hall et al. and Allen was the way the poetry of the times achieved its popularity. Hall was suspicious of a poetry that was canonized on the stilts of literary criticism as in the case of Eliot: "Probably his [Eliot's] influence was largely accomplished through his criticism" (Hall 1972 19). This subtle emphasis on a non-poetic source of influence is perhaps the most damning comment that can be made—it implicates both the reader and the poet. One wonders if Hall, by eschewing the word "popular" here, hints that Eliot was an ivory tower poet who disdained the masses and was consequently elitist and arcane. Michael Roberts, too, in *The Faber Book of Modern Verse* (1936), complains about poets who gratingly grind their axes by resorting to criticism in support of their poetry. However, for Allen, there are no problems with poets who directly elaborate their poetics and explain their works to the reading public. These are "interim reports" the poets send back from the areas they are engaged in and are relevant because in the end, they lead back to the poems. Thus they form valuable supplements and aids to the readers (Allen 1960 xiv). One might see in this an attempt to grant some autonomy to the readers and bring them into a direct relationship with the writers themselves making the teacher redundant. In Kenneth Koch's "Fresh Air," a fairly long exercise that is reminiscent of the boyish irreverence and mischievousness of Pound, we might recognize a poem that is not hospitable to academic discourse or interpretive activity. Many lines in the poem directly attack the icons of academic poetry such as Yeats, Eliot and Auden. He goes on to ask a rhetorical question after each poet's name

whether he is "of our time." The repetitive use of the words quoted makes the lines sound like some incantation or exorcism and the reader is somewhat mystified. This list smacks of an Anglophobic attitude and sure enough, in the next stanza, Koch bemoans the condition of American poets who are under this "baleful influence" (Allen 1960 231). The young American poets are "trembling in publishing houses and universities, /Above all they are trembling in universities, they are bathing the library steps with their spit" (Allen 1960 231). What seems to be under attack is the kind of erudite poetry with its literary historical roots in Europe. His plea appears to be for a poetry that is very native, even provincial and personal, and intense. For example, at the end of the poem, a barn girl comes in and the poet goes into rhapsodies about her, for she has brought in the much-needed "fresh air" into his work and life. The rural origins of the inspiration and the diction in the poem suggest that, perhaps, Dionysus has left the city. The issues that Koch raises are as puzzling as they are fundamental. If one has to read poets only "of our time" one wonders what precisely defines contemporaneity. Is it only temporal? Or is it based on the contemporary relevance of the work? "Fresh Air" is an interesting example of a poem that claims to be "Modern" with its literary past having been completely rejected and yet resorts to the simplest kinds of symbolism. In fact, quite a few Modernist writers themselves have raised many of the issues Koch addresses. The poet wants the reader to simply look at life around without searching for any symbolic meanings when, for example, he says, "I am afraid you have never smiled at the hibernation/Of bear cubs except that you saw some deep relation/To human suffering and wishes" (Allen 1960 229). This is not very different from Gertrude Stein's famous "A rose is a rose is a rose." Nor is Koch averse to the use of poeticisms like "visage" (Allen 1960 229). The point is

that while the poet does raise important issues, he is neither the first nor surely will he be the last to oppose such formulaic poetry. In fact, we can see this poem as a narrative in which there is a struggle between the "reactionaries" and the "liberals" for the liberation of poetry and the struggle ends happily with the victory of the latter, thanks to the barn girl and the headlong flight of the "professors" enabling the five or six true poets to take over the "Poem Club." To continue with Koch's Poem Society, which, at the beginning of his poem might be reminiscent of a Phi Beta-like organization cast in the mould of the PMLA, is yet the place where a poem "though influenced by Mallarmé, Shelley, Byron and Whitman, /Plus a million other poets, is still entirely original" (Allen 1960 230), is composed, that is, it is steeped in literary history. "And it is so exciting that it cannot be here repeated/You must go to the Poem Society and wait for it to happen" (Allen 1960 231). Clearly, what is being advocated here is a *reformation* not a *revolution*, for, the Poem Society is merely undergoing a purge, and even more remarkably, it is a reformation from within, for some members who have been admitted to the Society remain to provide a continuing link with the past.

The basic premises for the attacks on the academy and academically oriented anthologies (Hall-Pack-Simpson), apart from the "baleful influence" of the British and European poets was the idea that the younger poets selected were capable of a much larger variety of verse and the editors' selections were attenuated or stunted. Louise Bogan, for example, complains that the poets of the Hall-Pack anthology were satirists on occasion. And yet this is exactly the kind of poems we can also find in their collection. Thus in the second edition of the *New Poets* (1962) we find John Wain's "Aux Jardin Des

Plantes" (170) with its hilarious parody of Rainer Maria Rilke's "Der Panther: Jardin Des Plantes." While Rilke's poem, by setting up the panther as a symbol of the mind celebrates in Sisyphean terms the restless and unending human search for perfection, Wain deflates the idea in a lazy gorilla with some clever and delightful onomatopoeia. Reed Whittemore's rollicking "A Day with the Foreign Legion" (Hall 1972 70-72), which mocks at war and army life, is another wonderful satire. Within the selections of the Allen anthology we find a dazzling variety. Koch's "Fresh Air" that fumes at "Yeats of the baleful influence" is printed in the same anthology as Charles Olson's "Song 4," the first line of which is "I know a house made of clay and wattles" (Allen 1960 13) with its obvious Yeatsian allusion. Olson's own long poem, "The Kingfishers" is a philosophical meditation, not just an effusion of emotions along Confessional lines. One cannot but feel a blurring of poetics as these poems appear together. Probably the critics, except for a few, erred in thinking that each anthology was a final pronouncement and reflected the unchanging opinions of the editors that were thought to be in black and white. One may, again, suspect a situation in which the views of reviewer and editor dovetail neatly into each other. For instance, in a *Poetry* review of Allen's anthology in April 1961, X. J. Kennedy, after praising the few poems that he liked, writes, "What saddens one . . . is the stodginess of most of the rest of the book—so much of it in a language like instant mashed potatoes. And served in a comparable shape. Oh, the instant product must save toil, all right" (Kennedy 243). And so we find Pack, in his Introduction to the American poets in the second edition (1962), write, "The idea of a raw, unaffected, or spontaneous poetry misleads the reader as to what is expected of him. He too can be spontaneous, just sit back and respond" (Hall-Pack 1957 178). Rasula notices a similar

probable collusion between reviewer and anthologist: "Possibly cued by Allen or some of his poets, [Thomas] Parkinson evoked [in his review of *New Poets of England and America*] the precise terrain shortly to be mapped in *The New American Poetry* . . . The opposing forces were being arrayed . . ." (Rasula 231). The whole episode for Rasula smacks of a crude kind of manipulation.

IV

An unsigned review of *Contemporary American Poets* (1962) in the *Times Literary Supplement* queers the pitch even before it begins by quoting Gerardo Diego: "An anthology is always an error" and faults Hall for bringing out a "lay-it-safe" anthology because he is an academic (1963). The reviewer mentions Edgar Bowers, Donald Justice, Robert Bly, W. D. Snodgrass and W. S. Merwin as names to watch. These writers "have in common a *vitalist* attitude towards life and poetry. They are not afraid of feeling and its communication, and overcome the significance of the self which produces so much sentimental poetry in American poetry" (Hall 1963; emphasis). This particular reviewer seems to be hostile to confessional poetry. Even at this early date, Allen's classification of poets seems to have taken root as the reviewer uses the terms "Black Mountain" and "San Francisco axis" to divide the poets. Hall's introduction is criticized for being unfair to John Ashberry whose poem "Homage to Mistress Bradstreet" the editor had described as a "failure" (Hall 1962 20). The reviewer hopes that Hall would follow up his anthology with sequels since it "dilutes the robust beauty" of American verse (Hall 1962 20). He concludes by quoting William Stafford's lines

"Talking along in this not quite prose way/we all know it is not quite prose we speak" (Hall 1962 20). This again harps back to the old question of the difference between prose and poetry.

A similar confusion hovers around the Allen anthology for Cecil Hemley who, writing in the *Hudson Review*, clearly has a rather low opinion of the editor. He does not trust him to select the best from the poets and finds that he "inevitably begins discussing [the anthology] in inappropriate terms . . . It represents Mr. Allen's private view . . ." (Hemley 627). The poets appear to be mere pawns in the anthological gambit. Ironically, Hemley condemns Allen in precisely those terms that Riding and Graves use to condemn an arch academic anthology. The latter, in their assessment of F. T. Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* (1861), write, "The *Treasury* is a usurping private anthology" (Riding and Graves 1928 44). Considering this limited range of comments, one feels that the reviewers were bound to collide with each other.

Again, Katherine Garrison Chapin shrewdly notes in her review of Donald Allen in the *New Republic* (January 1961) that the rebellion of the poets collected is itself a part of the tradition when she says, "To break away from the forms of art that have grown sterile or confining is a process which takes place continually, on a large or small scale throughout the history of English poetry . . ." (Chapin 26). However, she is unhappy with the kind of break they make with literary history. Quoting Kenneth Koch's "Fresh Air" in which he regards Yeats, Auden and Eliot among others as poets of "the baleful influence," she asks with a dismissive tone, "Behind this bombast, what else is at work?"

Her answer to her own question is that there is nothing. Chapin is disappointed that apart from unconventional ideas and verse forms, there is no "creative impulse in poetry" visible in the anthology. The poets, in borrowing from various sources such as painting and foreign poetry, have only amplified their own already extant feelings and ideas. Allen's most famous contribution to literary history, his division of the poets on the bases of geographic affiliations, Chapin thinks, is not very helpful since they are not "regional" poets "in any sense of the word" (Chapin 26). Most of the Beat poets for her do not even have shock value and are in fact, quite "tiresome" and fit into Lowell's poems for "midnight listeners" (Chapin 26). One cannot help feeling that if the "tiresome" is the "raw," Robert Pack is right in pointing out that Lowell's distinction between the two kinds of poetry has only served to obscure the difference between the "good and bad, honest and pretentious writing" (Hall-Pack 1962 177). The use of old terminology reattired in new terms is indicative of the fact that the "wars" were nothing new in literary history and their intensity and influence in the 50s and 60s have been exaggerated.

The main issues in the "war" revolved around such ideas as nationality and the legitimacy of poetics. American poetry had become a contested site on which critics differed in tracing homegrown or European influences and trends. The anthologists make the issues more pronounced by aligning themselves on the grounds of nationalism and definitions of poetry. But probably the issues themselves cannot be resolved as at least reviewer discovered. Louise Bogan, in her review of Allen's anthology in the *New Yorker* (October 1960) says, "The collection brings up ... the perhaps unanswerable query: What degree of anarchy can be projected in poetry? For when its principal tenets and

accepted formal procedures are assaulted with utter vigor, this art of language does not merely change, it totally disappears" (Bogan 200). While the degree of anarchy may be debatable, anarchy itself is preferred even by the academicians with Hall writing, "In modern art, anarchy has proved preferable to the restrictions of a benevolent tyranny" (Hall 1962 25). The differences between the anthologies thus come down to a question of "degree" within or without the academy.

It is beyond doubt that the anthologies discussed here influenced at least some poets to write the kind of poetry each of them privileged. Jed Rasula remarks that the poets included in the Hall-Pack anthology soon changed their styles as they found the academic poetry they were engaged in stifling, though we might attribute some of it to the poets' own growth over time. It is debatable whether we ought to couch this success or failure in the language of belligerence or armed conflict as the phrase "Anthology Wars" suggests¹. The impression of decade-long wars fought through anthologies was probably created by Anglo-American reviews and reviewers.

The interesting point about these rival anthologies is that both were transmitters of an Anglo-American cultural tradition. Allen, of course, might claim a marginal advance in the matter of knowledge. To him we owe our first acquaintance of Black Mountain poets, the San Francisco Renaissance and a small number of open declaimers and balladeers. While Hall-Pack-Simpson could only confirm the *textual* poetics of Brooks and Warren, Allen advanced our awareness of *vocal* poetics. Writing on Lawrence Ferlinghetti in his "Preface," Allen alerts us to the still abiding influence of "a popular

oral poetry . . . since Vachel Lindsay" (Allen 1960 xii). Allen was also responsible for introducing the Beat poets in a fascinating package. No wonder Allen, rather than Hall-Pack-Simpson, is widely used and drawn upon by contemporary experimental schools of poetry in North America. Viewed in this light, neither Hall-Pack-Simpson nor Allen created anything "new." Both parties were equally transmitters, while Allen may justifiably claim to have produced new knowledge of poetic orality. In other words, the rebels and conformists of the '60s and the '70s came from the academy and any war as such was of an internecine nature.

V

A virtual blueprint for a future anthology or a prolegomenon to the future Anglo-American anthologies had to wait until 1989 when Cary Nelson published his *Repression and Recovery: Modern American Poetry and the Politics of Cultural Memory, 1910 - 1945*. Nelson's list forms the Contents page of an anthology *manqué*, for the poets of Nelson had as much claim to be anthologized as anybody else; and yet, he can only "provide," he admits, "provisional answers to questions that cannot actually be settled" (Nelson 3) because "most of us . . . do not know that the knowledge [of the history of poetry of the first half of the Twentieth century] is gone" (Nelson 4). He recognizes, however, that the classroom is where that memory is born and sometimes continued. We make anthologies because we want to see our best poems together at one place. Anthologies are our memory-banks. We return to them because something we love cannot be forgotten, or because something has, indeed, been forgotten. "If I were putting

together a list for a course on modern poetry," remarks Nelson, "I would have some poems in mind as essential reading . . . I would not be willing to compile a list of the best American poems, but there would be poems I would defend and want to share with others" (Nelson 56-57). He goes on to assert that the "essential" is "contingent and temporary" and is a function of the current political circumstances. He aims at a course that is as much a reflection of the literary history of the times as it would be an introduction to some of the best work of Modern poetry. In any case, he will not impose his conception of the best on the student, as this might be a personal view. This is of a piece with Nelson's assertion that we ought to preserve all literature, even the one we think is trivial or irrelevant, and let posterity decide, based, as he would have said, on their own political commitments and circumstances. They would provide valuable perspectives and contrasts to mainstream Modernist poets and poetry. Thus, Nelson's own choices would retrieve long forgotten or ignored poets who are outside the mainstream of Modernism because they produced an ideologically committed poetry. Many of these writers were often women or from the minority communities. A study of the poets Nelson tries to recover reveals that they are distinguished by their ability to compose works that destabilized the accepted meanings of words and reflected a political commitment along with a keen sense of history, providing a countervailing influence to the canonical poets. Quoting Paul Lauter, Nelson suggests that "the main issue [for the profession] is not assimilating some long-forgotten works of authors into the existing categories; rather, it is reconstructing historical understanding to make it inclusive and explanatory instead of narrow and arbitrary" (Nelson 22). Most of these poets are ignored because they do not "display the surface indecision and ambivalence that many critics

since the 1950s have deemed a transcendent, unquestionable literary and cultural value" (Nelson 44). And yet Nelson finds a significant body of neglected or forgotten work that shares a common genesis and kinship, both in production and publication, with the Modernist canonical writers. Both, the marginal as well as the canonical writers, were convinced of the primary role that poetry would play in civilization and society. If the white Modernist poets published a variety of texts in formats like the anthology, the professional magazine, the pamphlet and the broadside, the marginalized writers had their own parallel movements that matched the former in each of these initiatives and enterprises, and with a commitment that was no less. If anything, the forgotten poets, in Nelson's view, were even more extreme and daring in their literary experiments than many of the recognized Modernists were. Some examples that Nelson suggests are H. D. and the Baroness Else von Freytag-Loringhoven. In a surprising analysis, he claims the former's "Oread" to be a very un-Imagistic poem due to its psychological and linguistic suggestiveness though Pound had printed the poem in his Imagist anthology and often claimed it to be all that he wanted Modern poetry to be. The baroness's work was a confluence of the visual and graphic arts with allegiances to Dada and other revolutionary art forms. This is exactly what the Modernists too were doing when they developed their epistolary camaraderie. The exploration of the similarities and differences between the canonized and the marginalized is a main motif of *Repression and Recovery*.

Nelson's book has roughly three sections, the first one surveying some influential literary histories and foregrounding the poetics on which Modernism constitutes itself in these accounts of literature. The second has a fairly detailed analysis of the poetry that he

feels had been neglected, with selected poets analysed at some length by way of illustrations. This is the potential anthology that Nelson proposes, in our categorization, as a transmitter of knowledge. "We should . . . take it as axiomatic that texts that were widely read or influential need to retain an active place in our sense of literary history, whether or not we happen, at present, to judge them to be of high quality" (Nelson 50). Finally, Nelson discusses the enrichment of literature consequent upon the inclusion of these currently marginalized poets in the canon. But the mere extension of the canon is only a partial and incidental aim of this writer. Nelson wants nothing less than a change in the way we read poetry, and the poetics we privilege as readers and students. There is an imminent danger of simply adding names from minorities and women to the canon that would end up in a self-congratulatory appearance of liberalism. This is at least as dangerous as a narrow canon because the privileged marginalized writers would be read at the price of the neglect of others from the same group. A literary history that is merely a background to some major texts closes the canon to "minor works" that are rooted in the "productive literary and social relations" (Nelson 38) in the past. This limited canon colonizes a potentially infinite literary history to validate and perpetuate itself. The canon in turn provides literary history with a neat, linear and monolithic narrative that makes the latter elegant and readable. For Nelson, the problem seems to be the obsession of the academy with its own narrow poetics that it holds rather dogmatically and defends against all attacks. The academy will awaken into a new vigor if it gives up the valorization of poetry simply because it does not make any political commitment, a poetry that hangs in a limbo "in an uneasy internal anguish and external inaction" (Nelson 44). The academy, in other words, should become the battleground for the war

between literary history and the canon, the one providing intellectual challenges to the other, replacing their collusion with an invigorating collaboration.

Nelson provides us with new insights into the reasons for the repression of the poets that he lists when he tells us that Modernism privileged a poetry that was politically uncommitted if non-committal and thematically ambiguous, such as W. H. Auden's *Spain*. In the course of his disquisition, other explanations emerge. For example, discussing the poems published by the Industrial Workers of the World, he chronicles how the poets appropriated popular tunes to their songs in an attempt to reach readers who would be unfamiliar with music and also to empty the original tune of its meaning to make way for their own ideology. Perhaps this appropriation of popular tunes made them suspect for the elitist Modernists for whom "a new cadence meant a new idea," where the idea by itself was not enough. A cursory look at Nelson's list of journals and anthologies of the marginalized poets makes it obvious that they were all aimed more at a political agenda with many Leftist leanings (the book has a dark red cover) and were not dedicated exclusively to "making it new" or a cleansing of the genteel. This diffusion of the poetic aim, as the Modernists would have seen it, is perhaps another reason why these poets were ignored—in other words, Nelson accuses the academy of being unable to recognize good poetry outside the sites where poetry traditionally appeared. By according this poetry its rightful place, the academy would enlarge its canon and step out of the ivory tower it is accused of living in.

Working back from Nelson's potential anthology, we can further examine the reasons the relatively narrow canon that Modernism has. A committed poetry subscribes to chiliastic or melioristic ideas and, often, the solutions suggested to the problems are panaceas. Thus poets like H. H. Lewis who thought of Soviet Russia as a model for the ills of a capitalist society would appear to be taking the easy way out of a very complex situation that, in the existential *angst* of the World Wars and Depression, would seem very simplistic. Moreover, if Modernism is seen to have turned its back on nature's beauty, the frequent harking back to this theme by the marginalized poets does not help the situation. One poet, Angelina Weld Grimke, describes her erotic experiences in just such terms: "maiden trees kissed aflame by/the mouth of Spring" (Nelson 98). We remember that spring had become passé as a subject for poetry for quite some time and its repetition expectedly aroused indifference. Amy Lowell, to take the example of another of Nelson's poets, describes her own love in relation to nature again, and while she foreshadows the "deep image poetry" of the 1960s, (Nelson 101), a blasé Modernism could not care less. One cannot also help wondering how consistent Lowell's imagery is, because, if the leaves she strips the lover of symbolize such things as hypocrisy, they are also nourishing for the plant, and the white flower that love or the lover is identified as is merely a clichéd symbol of purity, ephemerality and innocence. But by perceiving and highlighting the trends that poets like Lowell anticipated, Nelson can claim to be putting history in perspective.

The stable canon of the Modernists is matched by a fixed poetics and their poetry presented uncertainty as an ideology and regarded such representation as honesty and

truthfulness. This poetry in psychological terms, aims to come to grips with a difficult situation by reverting to it and confronting it repeatedly, much as shell-shocked soldiers dream about their experiences. It conforms to the Yeats-Arnold theory of "active suffering" without self-pity. By limiting the discursive abilities of poetry to voice the suffering of the workers and ordinary masses, these poets made it merely incidental and not the primary focus of their efforts. In places, Nelson finds the marginalized poets in the tradition of the poetics in just that situation which Yeats rejected. Wilfred Owen, a poet excluded by Yeats from his 1936 anthology, talks about how his poetry is in "no sense consolatory" and Claude McKay uses the sonnet form, in Nelson's interpretation, to empty it of the "consolations" it offered the dominant culture (Nelson 89). Meanwhile, Nelson relies on what he calls "compensatory anthologies" that keep the marginalized poetry alive, awaiting a time when it will reclaim its rightful position.

As the title suggests, *culture* is a key word in Nelson's project and the writer endows the term with a rich variety of implications, which sometimes, cloud its meaning. In the title, the word stands for the culture as a whole of which literature in general and poetry in particular, are parts. They are its products and mirrors making them especially worthy of attention as the records of the past and also as offering new ways of problematizing the present even as they suggest their own solutions. Within the broad rubric of culture, Nelson recognizes many sub-cultures, the most important of which is the "culture" of the Left (Nelson 24) with a world-view of their own. The writer implies that this culture had its own unique space that was a challenge and an alternative to the mainstream culture and the latter tried to ignore it out of existence mainly with a

conservative canon. This was made easier by the failure of communism in the United States. But for Nelson, these failures of the writers too are valuable because they are a part of history and throw a contrastive light on our own times: they are "acts of witness" (Nelson 165). The refusal of the academy to see itself in this mirror is the main problem with it, leading it to suppress a literature that does not flatter it. The academy does this by artificially dividing literature into categories such as "Confessional" poetry and deflecting its implications as the peculiar problems of the writer in question. In other words, its solipsistic view refuses to countenance any accusative perspectives. Nelson believes that even the failed movements still offer us "the poetic vision of a revolutionary working class" which might be a valuable contribution in itself (Nelson 167).

Nelson decries the tendency of the academy to look for universals and to belittle the significance of the present. " To argue that . . . provisional knowledge of our own time . . . is trivial or contaminating, preferably to be rejected in favor of some more permanent truth, is, curiously to deny any significance to our own historical moment or our lives within it" (Nelson 11). He argues that the desire to recover forgotten documents of literary history is itself symptomatic of our times and is the "embedded in the productive relations in our history" (Nelson 11). This significant but ignored and forgotten corpus of literature can reveal the true richness of the culture of the United States. In fact, an effort at such recovery need not entail any war among the anthologies. As Nelson again writes, "The strong, common political commitments in this poetry turn the coexisting traditional and experimental forms published in journals and anthologies into a dialogue rather than a competition to be won" (Nelson 25). As preservers and

transmitters of knowledge, every anthology has a valuable contribution in a collaborative and yet competing project.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the canon is its drive to perpetuate itself due to which it resists the inclusion of writers who do not conform to its own themes, irrespective of the poetic abilities of the marginalized. Thus even white American writers such as William Carlos Williams were for a long time marginalized and entered the canon late. They were forever, in the minds of Nelson's generation, associated with the neglected. Amy Lowell's reputation and stature grew from being just one more Imagist writer to that of a poet far ahead of her times and also as a "literary statesman" (Nelson 18). Vachel Lindsay is viewed as a failure, but as a significant failure whose works are effective when he sings himself to lived experience of the ordinary people and did not lose himself in unachievable idealisms which made his poetry vague and irrelevant. Carl Sandburg is praised for his commitment to the working classes by representing whom he enlarged the discursive scope of poetry and drew an ivory tower art into an engagement with social responsibilities and with life itself. Sandburg may have lost an opportunity to etch cameo images of individual workers, but by portraying a class of people, he added a new dimension to Modernism, showing that it could be conscience keeper and a force for revolution. Abraham Lincoln Gillespie, another poet who was forgotten until recently, anticipates Postmodernism through his experimental writing combining clichés into self-conscious words (Nelson 74), a project the Modernists shared when they wanted to write in a language that was fresh and simple with the hardness of granite. Yet, not all forays by white writers into the marginalized worlds were successful, as the case of e e

cummings illustrates. Nelson finds his (cummings's) efforts at capturing African-American dialects in his poetry "nothing other than despicable" (Nelson 118) and this poet was unimpressed by the communism in the Soviet Union. This is perhaps a serious fault cummings had, in Nelson's view, since the latter assigns a considerable place to Leftist writers. The point is that each section of American society had a unique *Zeitgeist* of its own and had developed sophisticated artistic techniques to express itself, something any other section could not. Without putting all these cultures and sub-cultures together, we cannot arrive at truer and a more complete understanding of American poetry.

One of the gravest injustices of the canon is to be found, according to Nelson, in its treatment of the radical movements and writers who in turn poured scorn on the mainstream Modernists as a bourgeois group engaged in idle obsession with language and other linguistic experiments. Instead, they tended to explore the contributions that poetry could make to society. W. C. Williams makes the point clearly in connection with H. H. Lewis. "Without saying that Lewis is important as a poet," he writes, "I will say that he is tremendously important as an instigator to thought about what poetry can and cannot do for us today" (quoted in Nelson 49). The erasure of Lewis from literary history, Nelson concludes, can only "flatten and homogenize the past," depriving us "of some of its constitutive tensions and possibilities" and trapping us in an "impoverished and restricted present" (Nelson 49). If the canonical Modernists sometimes insisted on being true to life, so did the writers on the Left. Mike Gold, one such poet says, "Proletarian realism deals with the *real* conflicts of men and women who work for a living ... No straining or melodrama or other effects" (Nelson 105-106). With the aid of poetry, the

worker's letters "become representative cultural texts" (Nelson 106). The bewildering variety of literary innovation that characterizes the times is the glory of American literature of the times, more so because it originated among writers who apparently had no formal training in poetry. One such poet, Anna Louise Strong, who wrote under the pen name of Anise, uses asterisks and dollar signs after every line, thus effectively isolating and marking it out for a special and fresh consideration, much as Walter Pater would write every line on a fresh page to be able to see it in isolation.

In the writings of many women poets, two forms of neglect, one based on a sexist attitude and another on political commitment, merge together. Ignored as women and for their ideology, these writers nevertheless share an innovative spirit and highlight the woes of half of humanity. Very often they address themselves, encouraging and enlightening kindred spirits. Tillie Olsen's "I want You Women Up North to Know" graphically describes how the exploitation of fellow-women is the source of some of the fineries that other women enjoy, and "are dyed in blood" (Nelson 105). Welding and collating her lines from letters written by ordinary people, Olsen is reminiscent of Eliot's "mythic method" in *The Waste Land*.

Such outrage and anger are also the themes of African-American writers who use all means available to them, whether they are accepted literary genres like the sonnet or jazz forms. Countee Cullen and Richard Wright are two writers who illustrate the use of the conventional and the new in their poetry while tracing a history of racism. The use of dialect brings a ring of authenticity which is augmented by the references to the African-

American beliefs, as in the case of Sterling A. Brown in "Scotty Has His Say": "Whuh folks, whuh folks, don' wuk muh brown too hahd!" and he threatens to "sprinkle goofy dus'/In yo' soup tureen" (Quoted in Nelson 99). This oppression also draws together the anti-racist white poets like John Beecher who in a poem "Beaufort Tides" writes, "What future tides will free/these captives of their history?" (Nelson 108).

The attempt to establish a memory bank finally materialised in Cary Nelson's *Anthology of Modern American Poetry* (2000), 1250-page tome that, by its sheer size, is a promise of comprehensiveness and a record for the future. Like many anthologies on modern poetry, the Oxford collection begins with Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson, but includes Twentieth century British poets as well, a notable departure from the tendency of anthologists to edit poetry on nationalist lines. As is bound to happen in an anthology of this size, the poets are of varying merit. The results are pretty ironic. In her review of the book, Marjorie Perloff asks why, if lineation is the only criterion for inclusion, greeting-card does not find a place in the anthology. Nelson too had asked the professors to explain why "the poetry sung by striking coal miners in the 1920s is so much less important than the appearance of *The Waste Land* in *The Dial* in 1922" (Nelson 68). Nelson's head notes to poets indicate their allegiance to the communist causes and the Soviet Union until the collapse of communism turns them towards a "straightforward identity politics" (Perloff 3) of oppressed peoples. It is as if the badge of suffering were a guarantee of good poetry. Perhaps, Nelson intended his anthology to be a faithful literary history, recording the trends of the times as reflected in poetry. But he also includes the canonical poets, and thus appears to edit what Laura Riding and Robert

Graves called a "trade anthology," which is also Perloff's complaint (Perloff 3). Many of the selections she finds are indicative of an academic anthology like the Norton and Prentice-Hall publications. Nelson's attempts to explain away these repetitions to put the student-reader on familiar terrain are disingenuous because they merely mask an intent to succeed commercially by toeing a line that has yielded results in the past. To sum up, the poetry in Nelson's anthology is marked by sheer indifference in quality and the anthology fails badly in measuring up to its promise of collecting the "major" poets. The journalistic phraseology and ideas put paid to these aims. Even more shocking are the typographical errors of which Perloff mentions at least one. The conclusion is that the student-reader is bound to be confused by the varying qualities of the poems and the anthology is not a significant source of help in recognizing even such elementary concepts as what constitute major and minor poetry and indeed what constitutes poetry itself. If there is a sense of *déjà vu* here after the anthology wars of the 50s and 60s, it is only indicative of the growing influence of the anthology.

Notes

¹ This phrase appears as a subheading in Jed Rasula's *The American Poetry Wax Museum* (p. 223). Rasula dwindle wars into battles and mentions the main parties involved in them viz. Donald Allen's anthology on the one hand and the Hall-Pack-Simpson anthology as two editions on the other. "The habitual and often gratuitous mention of this 'battle' has permeated the study of American poetry in the past thirty years" observes Rasula and adds that "so much so ... it would be fair to think of it as a perpetual *rerun* much like a syndicated television program" (p 227).

Chapter VI
CONCLUSION

This study has maintained that a literary historical account of Modernist poetry will benefit considerably by reading the anthologies. Such a reading, I have assumed, will not only help us reconsider the name and nature of this movement, but also will let us see for ourselves how the literary and theoretical methods for reading "new" Anglo-American poetry came into being in the first place, and subsequently, were entrenched in the popular academic mind as "New Critical." The anthologies studied here show us that the assumptions underlying literary studies, chiefly those based upon the impersonality of poets (and the critics who read them) and the supposed autonomy of the textual objects are not wholly true. (The anthology, I argue, advances the "personal" and undermines the autonomy of the texts it collects, and presents after its fashion.) These assumptions are not true, or true enough to warrant the "Modernist" tag, because the movement so designated is more of an academic invention, a retrospective labelling that enabled historians to view Modernism as a fine story with an Aristotelian plot that resolved itself by the Second World War.

The first anthologies of Anglo-American poetry were, in fact, preparations and rehearsals that needed no name or postal address, except certain "programme" sheets and manuals, which came to be called *manifestos*. These manifestos made movements, all avant-garde, whose spirit was described variously as "Georgian," "Edwardian" "Blast," *vers libre*, "Futurist," anarchist, etc. That every anthology was, at the time of its birth, an experimental exercise, and much of what we call "Modernist" is only an *ex post facto* attribution of methods and values we see as central to such a movement, is an important idea for students of literary history to remember. This idea is best endorsed by Peter

Nicholls's *Modernisms: A Literary Guide* that surveys the whole gamut of competing experimental initiatives and energies that fill the period between 1909 and 1922.

Nicholls, of course, modestly claims that his book provides only "a conceptual map of different Modernist tendencies" (Nicholls viii).

While the story of the making of big reputations and landmark publications of Modernism and its continuities has often been told, we haven't quite heard the other story of how the early samples of Modernist poetry were read and discussed by the poets themselves and their charmed circle of collaborators and critics. This study has engaged with both the makers and readers of anthologies. The advantage I have found in this approach is that the readers now could be seen in a continuum, the readers as forming a family of reading relations. This was, indeed, the sense of literary history which the poets themselves propagated. The poetry, they believed, emanated from such relations of readers and readership, of publishers and publications. This study, therefore, has tried to construct an "interpretive community" from within the Modernist reading relations, *unlike* the interpretive communities constructed and imposed from without by literary historians and critics. In other words, I have sought to read the anthologies themselves as making and remaking such communities of readership in their pages. The poets themselves and their "first" readers before their poems reached the magazine pages, viz., their fellow-poets, were not quite inimical to popular tastes and audiences as they are sometimes made out to be. In other words, the anthologies I have looked at persuade me to believe that Modernism's antagonism towards less scholarly audiences—the readers of newspapers and magazines, such non-specialist readers as factory or clerical labour—is

more imagined than real. The Modernist anthology was the first and the last compromise the poets were willing to make, for they knew much more than their editors the power of an anthology to secure or alter their place in literary history. (A more detailed and persuasive argument than mine regarding Modernism's flirtations with popular audiences has recently been advanced by a large number of studies, the most representative of which are Andreas Huyssen's *After the Great Divide*, Michael C. Fitzgerald's *Making Modernism*, Joyce P. Wexler's *Who Paid for Modernism?* and Laurence Rainey's *Institutions of Modernism*.)

Now we know that the "Modernisms" of Nicholls have contributed significantly to future anthologies and the future of anthologies. In Chapter II, therefore, I have made the little magazine the subject of an extended essay. Although the little magazine itself has received scholarly attention in the past, I have studied the magazines as anthologies *manqué* or work-in-progress-collections. In fact, many little magazines and reviews of the period evolved along a series of other initiatives to make poetry new. They not only brought poets, but readers of various persuasions together. As evidence of their fellowship and devotion to a common cause, I have offered small summaries of select letters exchanged between such poets as Ezra Pound, Harriet Monroe, and D. H. Lawrence; literary prizes for the best creative work; manifestos published in magazines and the working of the Poetry Recital Society of London. In sum, the anthology seemed to have been at the back of every enterprising poet-editor's mind.

The number and frequency with which the poets themselves edited anthologies are truly remarkable during the early phase of what we now call "Modernism." Not surprisingly, the anthology came to be regarded as the maker and marker of tastes and preferences. Ezra Pound, for example, regarded his *Des Imagistes* (1914) and *Profile: An Anthology* (1930) as milestones to measure how far their contributors had progressed in the sixteen years between them. Chapter III, "Anthologies in the Making: English Modernism 1912-1936," surveys the revolutionary uses poets and editors made of the anthology, stretching its devices to the limit and anticipating the later academic anthologies in providing introductions and bibliographies. These poets appeared in such varied collections as Edward Marsh's *Georgian Poetry, Some Imagist Poets* (1915, 1916 and 1917), Harriet Monroe's *The New Poetry* (1917), Alfred Kreyemborg's *Others* (1917) and Louis Untermeyer's *Modern American Poetry* (1919) and *This Singing World* (1923). The responses of the poets to contemporary collections and the advantages they found in them prompt us to conclude that the anthology had, by then, indeed emerged as the single most important aid in their attempt to resuscitate poetry and the arts. Aiming to effect a revolution in the way poetry was produced and consumed, the poets found in the anthology a radical form that suited every need, whether as preserver or selector. Their aim to facilitate discussion and through it a better awareness of poetry was an unqualified success. Entire movements were inaugurated, sustained, and kept in the reading public's notice primarily on the number and strength of the anthologies they published. In the introductions that these anthologies sometimes occasioned, the poets, against their grain, directly addressed the readers in an attempt to expound their poetics. Working within ideologically avowed and distinct traditions, Ezra Pound and Amy Lowell, for example,

attempted to challenge an older tradition or enlarge, revise and even remake traditions of their own. Often the older tradition itself was represented by an anthology that enjoyed a canonical status such as F. T. Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* (1861), which Ezra Pound sought to replace with yet another anthology of his own. Beginning with the five editions of *Georgian Poetry*, I have traced, through a study of a few more select anthologies, the bewildering variety of diction, themes and styles that Modernism lends its name to. The "Georgian" Anthologies have been routinely and somewhat unfairly accused by many hostile critics of purveying an outdated poetry. The central and common aims and methods of the Georgians were sometimes the same as those of the Modernists, such as the emphasis they placed on concision in expression, and the avoidance of adjectives that served no purpose. Marsh's anthologies enjoyed a long life even after he stopped publication, as witnessed by the influence they have had on both sides of the Atlantic, and through the lessons and hopes that some of their contributors and denigrators have drawn from them. I have also attempted to sketch the amazingly wide and varied areas contemporary anthologies came to encompass, from preserving to popularising poetry—anthologies that were programmatically elitist, like *Some Imagist Poets*, to frankly populist ones such as Louis Untermeyer's *Modern American Poetry*. Here, I have also examined collections like *Some Imagist Poets*, whose studied silence, in a disdain of introductions and prefaces, at least in their first edition, left the readers to deduce for themselves the poetics and the themes behind the poems. There are yet other anthologies like Harriet Monroe's *New Poetry* that were engaged, in all their multiple editions, in "educating" apathetic readers to turn them into the "great" audiences necessary for the survival of poetry. Towards this end, they wrote detailed introductions addressing the

concerns and problems of the ordinary reader which they had learned about through letters to their magazines, meetings, and poetry readings. We need to revise our opinion that the Modernists were uncompromisingly elitist in their choice of readership, for like the Poetry Societies, the little magazines and anthologies were meant as much for the ordinary reader as for the highly educated. As Harold Monroe put it, "Poetry is said to be unpopular—generally by those who dislike it themselves. Good poetry is as much read now as at any time since the invention of printing, and bad poetry is certainly read a great deal too much" (Quoted in Morrisson 8). His magazine was explicitly aimed at "dispelling this illusion" (Quoted in Morrisson 8).

Two anthologies of note that occupied centre-stage between 1936 and 1957 and continued to influence readers from all walks much later are W. B. Yeats's *Oxford Book of Modern Verse* and Michael Roberts's *Faber Book of Modern Verse*, both of which appeared in 1936. Chapter IV considers these as the first anthologies that appeared after "Modernism" was consolidated and confirmed as an "age" in the histories of literature. In their own different styles, both editors were concerned with literary history, differently, if polemically surveyed. Roberts was more sympathetic to the common reader designing his Introduction to accommodate detailed explanations of the methods and themes of modern writers, with some attention to literary history. Yeats, in contrast, provided a very personal view of the themes and trends in the history of literature with choices that reflected his poetics and temperament. His view of the anthology included a conviction that it could begin a renaissance not only in English but in European letters, and thus have an impact that is inestimable. Hence I have attempted to survey his ideas and beliefs

in the context of his anthologies, especially the *Oxford Book of Modern Verse*. The controversies the Oxford anthology aroused at the time of its publication gave great pleasure to Yeats. They are sufficient evidence that the anthology served its purpose of arousing the interest of the reading public. The fact that literary historians still quote his Introduction with respect, and analyse his inclusions and exclusions polemically, attests to the enduring significance of this collection. This Chapter has tried to study in some detail the influential anthologies of these two editors who were also poets themselves. What is more, three major poets, Laura Riding, Robert Graves and T. S. Eliot, albeit in an advisory capacity, were involved in making the Faber anthology. Dorothy Wellesley and Eliot, again, to a lesser extent, influenced Yeats's anthology which, however, is the Yeatsian world-view gathered in one book. I have briefly traced the planning and execution of these anthologies and examined the two anthologists' views of "Modernism." Roberts, for example, saw poetry as inevitably being concerned with social and political issues, issues that Yeats regarded as "impurities" (Yeats 1936 xii). The examination of their conflicting ideas again enables us to arrive at a better understanding of the varieties and forms of Modernism. While Yeats was interested in a poetry that was not merely technically innovative, but also was thematically heroic, Roberts saw the prospects of poetry that was engaged with the possibilities imagining and remaking the language. With Yeats's and Roberts's collections, we can realize, for the first time, the growing power of the anthology to make or unmake poetic reputations or at least delay the canonization of writers whom the editors neglected, as Wilfred Owen's eclipse through the fifties, thanks to Yeats's *Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, proves. The importance of these collections also lies in their anticipation of future trends in poetry and

literary history, including the "Anthology Wars" more than two decades later. Partly designed with the classroom in mind, they played a crucial role in forming the tastes of many generations of readers of English Poetry-

Two related questions I ought to have considered, but have not, are: T.S. Eliot's stature as a proxy-anthologist, and Philip Larkin's "alternative" to Yeats's *Oxford Book*. Eliot's whole career may be seen as that of a poet disguising himself as an unofficial chronicler of English verses, assembling fragments and formats for an anthology for future use. His exercises were guided by his sense of literary history being shaped by anthology pieces of the mind (where presumably his "historical sense" coheres) *and* by his faith that "tradition" itself is an imagined anthology *par excellence*. Philip Larkin's *Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse* (1973), set beside Yeats's, would have yielded other interesting insights. How a poet's own work figured/featured among other poets of his generation—Yeats *among* his precursors, peers and progeny for example—matters more as a tradition-and-talent question than as a personal curiosity the poet perhaps wanted to explore. The Eliot-Yeats-Larkin anthologies—two published, the other to be gathered from a *live* tradition—are fascinating subjects for future research.

From the earliest phases of twentieth-century poetry, there has been the recognition of the primacy of the classroom in developing attitudes and skills that would lead towards *understanding* poetry. The anthology came to be seen sometimes as a generator *or* transmitter of poetry, though teachers have mercifully used it for both purposes. In Chapter V, "The Classroom Anthology and the Anthology Wars/Walls," I

have sought to examine Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren's *Understanding Poetry: An Anthology for College Students* in all its editions beginning in 1938. We ought to note that in spite of its declared claim to be an anthology, it is more in the mould of a textbook with its elaborate notes and explanations and the direct addresses to the teachers and readers it includes. Its primacy in the academic curriculum engendered a "teachable" poetry according to some critics, a poetry that invited interpretations that could be ideal for a fifty-minute session in the classroom. Brooks and Warren were the first editors to produce an anthology based on their classroom experiences and continuously revise it over a period of forty years. Their notes and introductions to the poems they collected raise important questions about the extent of help which might be legitimately offered to the student. With the introduction of the idea of the "speaker," or "sayer" in the editors' terms, a revolutionary change was introduced into the manner the poem was read and the way the poet was now perceived. In other words, the poem came to resemble a "dramatic" situation. The overwhelming influence of the anthology led to many clones such as Lawrence Perrine's *Sound and Sense: An Introduction to Poetry* (1956) that, like *Understanding Poetry*, took experience to be the subject of poetry written strictly in a formal pattern. Brooks and Warren were innovators in the introduction of a few ideas that we associate with New Criticism: the uncompromising focus on the text itself, the close attention to form and the stress on experience which led them to look at every poem as a dramatic event and regard the poet as a "speaker." I have also highlighted here the unique methods that the editors used to teach a poetry they considered "good," and the carefully graded selections that were intended to help the student-reader graduate to more difficult forms until, in the exercise of a democratic spirit, they favoured, Brooks and Warren left

some modern poems completely unmediated. These were ideas of revolutionary significance and *Understanding Poetry* seemed to sweep away everything before it. The revolt against Brooks and Warren that followed seems inevitable in retrospect. These "Anthology Wars," were sparked off by the rival parties in an attempt to broaden the canon in the academy. Donald M. Allen's *New American Poetry* (1960) and Donald Hall's *Contemporary American Poetry* (1962) formed the vanguard. These editors valued a poetry that was less concerned with what was perceived to be an obsession with a constraining form, and was more committed to the authenticity and individuality that the early Modernists recognised as central to the art. The editors from both groups were, again, clearly concerned with the classroom. The separation of American poetry from its British counterpart is a turning point in literary history and it is nowhere more clearly evident than in these anthologies. First effected in David Cecil and Allen Tate's anthology, *Modern Verse 1900-1950* (1958), the separation entailed two different introductions. The story becomes more complicated when we read in Donald Hall that the white editor cannot feel at home in African-American poetry which he explicitly recognizes as "alien." What needs to be noted here is that the anthology is the occasion for the parties involved to array themselves along their ideological lines. In Chapter V the polemical poetics of these anthologies have engaged my attention. A third view, from the perspective of non-mainstream poets, is offered by Cary Nelson's *Repression and Recovery: Modern American Poetry and the Politics of Cultural Memory 1910-1945* (1989). The repression of these poets is a continuing process in spite of the good intentions of those in charge of literature and literary history. Nelson's project is situated in the context of the changes in literary history and theory that have occurred in the mid-

and late eighties of the twentieth century. He identifies and emphasises the harm that can be caused by "an unqualified devotion to a single master narrative" (Nelson 7), the implied suggestion being that literary history has many perspectives and is more credible in an anthological format. Following this, it is no surprise that the writer should suggest we go back to the little magazines, pamphlets, broadsides and other publications of the writers he wants to recover in all their "diversity" (Nelson 8), a project that is in no way at odds with canonical Modernism whose writers too went back to the little magazines and other non-mainstream publications of *their* time. In fact, such an enterprise, in a world caught up in the aftermath of inexpressible events like the Holocaust and Hiroshima, affords us newer perspectives, and a fresher language developed by the forgotten poets that is uncontaminated by ordinary use to try to understand these events. These poets were committed to a cause, whether it was feminism or communism, and carrying on from here, he attempts "to propose a general reconsideration of the relations between poetry and the rest of social life" (Nelson 19). In sum, he wants a canon that is actively and continuously revisionist in a way that reflects an awareness of present needs and the pressures of the past especially in an academy that is addicted to an exaggerated form of New Criticism that has come to deny the validity of history in literary studies. Nelson does not name the anthology, but he turns instinctively towards it in its role as a preserver when he declares, "We can never be certain what kinds of texts should be included within or excluded from "literary history," let alone what their number might be" (Nelson 6). This project materialised in his *Anthology of Modern American Poetry* (2000), published by Oxford.

I have presented his view not only because Nelson's is a highly judicious and brilliantly presented survey of poetry and poetics which standard literary histories have forgotten or wilfully ignored. The poets championed by Nelson were either non-white and non-American or the labour class. Nelson's survey lists and illustrates vibrant tendencies from the other side of Modernism, especially the Depression years. Nelson's work is interesting to me because he puts very minor and marginal literary magazines and anthologies in the constitution of a usable past, for long deemed unusable by mainstream literary historians.



Seven years ago, when this study was proposed to the Department of English at the University of Hyderabad, my intention was mainly to look at two related phenomena: 1) the making of Anglo-American poetry by the makers themselves; and 2) the making of readers (chiefly, their classes and tastes) by the makers of the new poetry. I should think that this modest study has achieved much of what I have set out to do besides noticing *inter alia* some activities on the rear and fringes of anthology-making, and the reading relations they foster. For fear of losing the focus and integration I have given this study, I have not taken other roads although they seemed less travelled and therefore worth exploring. One such is the study of anthology types and kinds variously known to scholars as "sequences," "cycles," "collections," "selections," and the Collected/Complete works of poets. Contributions to each of these kinds are not difficult to find in twentieth-century English poetry, but I have not studied the fascinating

phenomenon of 'gathering' itself or the sleight of gathering hand. The Poem-in-place or the status of the *collected* and *selected* poem, or its possible influence on public reception is, however, an interesting subject in itself.

Where and *how* poems appear, for example, are important considerations for the poets themselves. While I have indicated this in the study on a number of times, how important this might be for the readers might be shown in another study bearing another focus. It would be rewarding to examine, for example, a much anthologised poem like "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" or "Birches" in a variety of anthologies edited by several hands, or how a lyric-portrait of a Prufrock or a Crazy Jane might appear within the folds of an anthologist's portraits of Modernist characters or types, all of whom seem exiles from their makers' first collections. Other related, but equally important, considerations include the reading contexts of posthumous publications, and poems transferred from authorized collections to anthologies. Readers have sometimes frowned at the dislocation of poetry cycles and sequences that are sometimes broken and reclassified in the anthologies with no ideological concerns of their poets. Excerpts from long poems often project their editor's/complier's preferences and concerns rather than their poets'.

Through the seven years this study has been in progress, two significant books on the anthology were published; Jed Rasula's *The American Poetry Wax Museum* (1995) and Anne Ferry's *Tradition and the Individual Poem: An Inquiry into Anthologies* (2001). Ferry has examined at length the influence of anthologies on practicing poets, a subject still open for another detailed examination with Modernist poets and their

precursors as the immediate context. The early anthologies of modernism and those that came after them, as we have seen, were exemplary in not only drawing the English line clear, but in keeping it straight. Jed Rasula's book has virtually made another look at post-War anthologies largely superfluous, but British and Commonwealth anthologies and market of the same period still await detailed study. And so do "group" anthologies of the 1950s like *New Lines*, serial-turned-anthologies like *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E*, as well as those published by ethnic/minority/gender/nation groups. All these studies, when undertaken, are likely to tell us more about Anglo-American verse culture, official and other, about which readers often know very little. If poets are the best imaginative creatures, their readers often *imagine* traditions. Anthologies tell us how traditions are made and unmade by compulsions of the market and public culture.

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