Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

I

The origin(s) of English poetry publication in India is historically well documented. On 29 January 1780, eccentric Irishman James Augustus Hicky started the first newspaper in India called the *Bengal Gazette*. Beginning with the first issue, Hicky dedicated a section of the final page for the publication of amateur verse and called it "Poet's Corner" (Johar). The first English poem featured was titled "The Seasons" – a poem which unsurprisingly described the English seasons, and the first poem concerning India appeared a few months later in the weekly issue dated 19 August 1780 titled "A Description of India" (Chaudhuri 1). It is a poem of European nostalgia written by a Brit in India. Author Andrew Otis, in his recent book *Hicky's Bengal Gazette: The Untold Story of India's First Newspaper* (2018) focuses on the life and work of Hicky and his provocative journalism argues that Hicky "likely wrote it himself as no name is ascribed to the poem" (Otis). The poem opens with gilded sentimentality characteristic of the literature of the time:

> WHILE faithful memory Love
>
> to trace
>
> Each clime society and Place
>
> Where we have been before
>
> Whether on Britain's happier Coast
>
> Which every charm of life can boast
>
> Or soft Italia's shore (qtd. in Otis, lines 1-7)

It was only in 1827 that a young Calcutta-born Henry Louis Vivian Derozio emerged and announced his quest for "poetic fame," becoming the first published Indian poet who wrote in English. For Derozio, achieving poetic fame meant a transcendental existence, which would elevate him beyond the context of his specific cultural field. It must be argued that it was a very Romantic notion. His enthusiasm was partly fueled by reviewers of a mid-1827 issue of *Quarterly Oriental Magazine* who put the spotlight on him as the first "national poet" and the "beginning of a new literary era" (qtd. in Chander 21). When Derozio published his first volume titled *Poems* in 1827, he declared in his preface, "Born and educated in India, and at the age of eighteen, he ventures to present himself as a candidate for poetic fame; and begs leave to premise …" (Derozio).

It is an irony of Indian history that Derozio's English poems pre-date Thomas Babington Macaulay's *Minutes* of 1835 (Full title: Indian Education: Minute of the 2nd of February, 1835) where he officially declared the need to mobilize English language education to reconstruct the colony along English sensibilities. In it, Macaulay proposed, "We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect" (qtd. in Patke 57). It can be argued that Macaulay's *Minutes* had an impact on the kind of literature which was produced in the Indian subcontinent and studied in institutions in the decades that followed.

Indian English poetry has been regularly published since the time of Hicky's *Bengal Gazette*. Many periodicals which followed Hicky's had steady publication of both poetry and poetic discourses. Mention may be made of periodicals such as *Oriental Magazine and Calcutta Review* (estd. 1823), *Calcutta Review* (estd. 1844), and *Bombay Quarterly Magazine and Review* (estd. 1850) which were actively publishing poetry and running articles like "The Quality of Modern Poetry" ("The Quality" 339-376) and "On the Absence of the Dramatic Spirit from Modern English Poetry" ("On the Absence" 125-142) in the middle of the 19th century. However, along with the periodicals, many serious anthologies also came into existence following Macaulay's *Minutes.*

In this regard, scholar Harpreet Bali makes an argument in his 2013 thesis titled "Pedagogy, Politics and the Market: A Critique of Selected Anthologies in Postcolonial India". He argues:

> Evidently the origin of anthologies in English right from the colonial to the postcolonial period traces its growth primarily in the language, in which it was introduced and consolidated, primarily for pedagogical use. There would not have been a need to publish anthologies in English if the mode of education would have remained in the vernacular languages. Anthology was a readily embraced form that was recognized and fostered by enterprising people who promoted liberal education and new learning. (41)

In 1840, five years after Macaulay's *Minutes* became a policy, an anthology titled *Selections from the British Poets* was published for academic purposes by David Lester Richardson, who was serving as the principal of the Hindu College in Calcutta. Although

the anthology primarily focused on British-Indian poetry, works of Indian authors who wrote in English were also included (Bali 42). It is through this anthology that Henry Derozio finally found his "poetic fame" among the company of Chaucer and Tennyson, and was embraced by the young learners of Hindu College for his rather Byronic charm.

More poetry anthologies appeared with the onset of the 20th century. Mention may be made of some significant anthologies including *India in Songs: Eastern Themes in English Verse by British and Indian Poets* (1918), *The Bengali Book of English Verse* (1918), and *Poets of John Company* (1921), all edited by Theodore Douglas Dunn, a Scottish oriental scholar of the time. In his introduction to *The Bengali Book*, an awareness of the arrival of change vis-à-vis modernism is visible. Dunn writes:

> It may well be asked what is the value of the poetry produced by these writers. That they were devoted disciples of the art of letters is clear enough; but more than disciples they were not. To the student of Indian educational history their work must be of abiding interest; but in the larger world of literature, it can hold no distinctive place. Such poetry as they produced was Indian in so far as it was written in Bengal, and was the result of education received therein; and it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that here its oriental character begins and ends. (Introduction xxi-xxii)

Dunn was criticizing the English verse produced by the Bengali writers in the first half of the 19th century. By "these writers" he was referring to Kasiprasad Ghose, Rajnarain Dutt, and Michael Madhusudan Dutt, who each produced *Minstrel* (1830), *Osmyn, an Arabian Tale* (1841), and *Captive Land* (1841) respectively; all three works which were considered extremely derivative. However, Dunn having criticized their ambitious poetic outputs also included selected poems of all three in his 1918 anthology as a form of recovery work. When English editor Gwendoline Goodwin published her volume titled *An Anthology of Modern Indian Poetry* in 1927, change had come, at least in the eyes of the West.

The criticism against 19th century Indian poetry in English has existed as a long-standing tradition both in the West and among the Indian writers of 20th century as well. Author Rajeev Patke succinctly argues in *Postcolonial Poetry in English* (2009) that the 19th century Indian poetry in English was "diligently imitative" (59). Both Derozio and

the talented but short-lived Toru Dutt (b.1856 – d.1877) wrote verses which were modelled after the Romantics in diction and tone and mixed with indigenous motifs. In the introduction to his 1980 anthology, *Two Decades of Indian Poetry, 1960 – 1980,* Indian poet Keki N. Daruwalla collectively critiques the pre-independence Indian poetic tendencies. He observes, "Unfortunately, the Indian poets …thought that if they switched from Hellenisms to their own myths, exchanging naiads and nymphs for *apsaras*, or Orpheus and Eurydice for Satyavan and Savitri, they had done their job" (Introduction xvi).

It is a curious irony that modern Indian poetry in English has a very contentious relationship with its own past. There have been multiple attempts made to define it throughout the 20th century, but no consensus has been reached. Poet Rajagopal Parthasarathy (b.1934) came closest to articulating a rounded understanding of modern Indian poetry in his introduction to his controversial anthology *Ten Twentieth-Century Indian Poets* (1976) which was published by Oxford University Press. He writes:

> In examining the phenomenon of Indian verse in English, one comes up, first of all, against the paradox that it did not seriously begin to exist till after the withdrawal of the British from India. An important characteristic of Indian verse in English in the mid-twentieth century has been its emergence from the mainstream of English literature and its appearance as part of Indian literature. It has been said that it is Indian in sensibility and content, and English in language. It is rooted in and stems from the Indian environment, and reflects its mores, often ironically. (Introduction 3)

During the 20th century, the Indian poetry anthology's purpose evolved from being a space of collection into a more specified space for establishing literary narratives. Through a retrospective examination of the anthologies which is presented in Chapter 2, it may be argued that the magnitude of these anthologies and their ambition and their attempts to establish new directions of poetic modernity and new canons has only intensified over the years and often problematic.

<div align="center">II</div>

What is a modern Indian poem? If one were to pick up any random poetry anthology volume published in the last twenty years and read any poem within it, should that poem

be identified as a *modern* poem? Or is it a *contemporary* poem? Are some poems inherently *modern*? Or is the modernist identity of poems created with the help of certain external agencies? These are some of the fundamental questions that directed this research. Many of these questions frequently appear in the introductory matters of anthologies but because of their slippery nature they have never been addressed concretely. Moreover, Indian English poetry and its relation to language and history have always given it a double-edged identity, compounding the difficulty of defining it in absolute terms.

Like archives, anthologies document a specific kind of cultural expression which reveals the working and construction of literary modernism. Since 1950, more than 220 anthologies of Indian poetry in English have been published (Appendix 1), yet many of them still exist in a grey zone where they are struggling to belong to a category. It is for this reason that modern anthologies still exist as a "problematic archive" because "they do not form a prestigious group" (Diepeveen 141).

In the West, criticism against this cycle of "excess" anthology publication began in the early 20th century. At the peak of the Western modernist movement, poets Laura Ridding and Robert Graves subsequently published two of the most convincing literary assessments of their time – *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* (1927), and *A Pamphlet Against Anthologies* (1928) where they argue "long and hard" on how the "serious nature of poets and poetry is trivialized, and even actively destroyed, by anthologists arbitrarily cutting up poetry into blibs and blobs" (Jacobs 170). T. S. Eliot and Robert Graves are also recorded to have complained in *The Times Literary Supplement (TLS)* concerning the emerging oversaturation of anthologies in the marketplace as early as 1921. In a letter to the editor of *TLS*, dated 24 November 1921, Eliot expressed his frustration with his poetry being published without prior information in an anthology and also expressed his overall sentiment on the subject of poetry anthologies:

> In your last issue I have read a review of an anthology of *Modern American Poetry*; from this review I gather that certain of my verses appear therein. I should be grateful to you if you would make public the fact that I had no knowledge that any of my verse was to be used in this way; that I was not consulted in the choice; and that, in short, the whole production is a surprise to me.

This statement in itself may interest but few of your readers. But I should like to remark that I should have much preferred *not* being included in this anthology. On previous occasions, when compilers of such works have asked my consent, there have always been personal reasons for my willing compliance: here there would have been none.

Some months ago I discussed the general question of anthologies with a poet (of a very different school and tradition from mine) whose name is much more widely known than mine is. We agreed that the work of any poet who has already published a book of verse is likely to be more damaged than aided by anthologies. I hope that other writers may be encouraged to express their opinions. (Eliot, "Poets and Anthologies")

In response to these accusations made by Eliot concerning the work of a poet being damaged by anthologies rather than assisting their craft, anthologist Adam Gowans counters by making an argument that anthologies make poetry available to "most poetry lovers of moderate means" (qtd. in Diepeveen 142). There is a clear underlying concern of capital, market, and readership in the world of anthology publishing, and Gowan's argument, although simple, remains the primary driver of the modern anthology market.

For Indian poetry in English, the medium of anthology has long functioned as its primary archival space, as opposed to individual collections which have limited run and become out of print in a short duration, possibly never to see a second reprint. On the other hand, the editing and publication of a new anthology involves curation work and the final act of preservation on paper. Within the pages of an anthology, a poem thus becomes much like a record – of a personal moment or emotion, an interaction with external stimuli, a fantasia, a record of a social milieu; and gathered "records" become archives. In their 2018 study "Bureaucracy, archive files, and the making of knowledge," Barbara Brookes and James Dunk make a strong argument concerning archives and their bounded nature. They argue that archives are "repositories which house not what is left but what has been *kept*, and organise these calcified writings into hierarchical families which limit and shape the range of possible interpretations" (281). Therefore, the anthology, with its inbuilt agendas, acts much like a bureaucratic system where papers are used to "create order and control" (Brookes and Dunk 282). Anthologies have thus become archives that control the making of knowledge.

On the literary side, there is, and always has been a continued attempt to expand existing canon or create new canons within the modern poetry anthology. While conducting a retrospective survey, a systematic trend in the nomenclature of anthology titles is found which reveals a visceral attempt to define new knowledge, new poetic trends, and attempts to define what is *contemporary* or what is *modern*. The titles of these anthologies are riddled with repetitions (Appendix 1). Almost every decade several anthologies with the words "modern" or "new" in the title are published. It began with Gwendoline Goodwin's orientalist volume *An Anthology of Modern Indian Poetry* first published by John Murray in London in 1927. The true post-independence project of building a national literary identity came in the 1950s with the publication *Modern Indian Poetry: An Anthology* (1958) edited by A.V. Rajeswara Rau, and *Modern Indo-Anglian Poetry* (1959) edited by P.Lal and K.R. Rao, both published by Kavita Books in New Delhi. The momentum of thought that started during the 1950s decade continued not only through the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s, but has persisted into the 21st century with anthologies such as Gopi Krishnan Kottoor's anthology *A New Book of Indian Poems in English* (2000), and Jayanta Mahapatra's anthology *Ten: New Indian Poets* (2012) still in print today.

The watershed moment of the Indian independence of 1947 made its impact on the literature published during the time and after. The sudden arrival of a demarcated existence – colonial India and independent India – also demanded the poets to question their "relationship to and alienation from the realities of their society" (King 1). Naturally, a sense of liberation and a sense of departure from the "old world" began to be reflected in the poetry. It is visible in the adoption of *vers libre* in the Indian English poetry that came out post-1950. Nissim Ezekiel, Keshav Malik, and Dom Moraes all published their first collections during the 1950s. Ezekiel's first collection of poetry *A Time to Change* (1952), Moraes' first collection *A Beginning* (1957), and Malik's first collection *The Lake Surface and Other Poems* (1959) all contained a new breed of poetry which was "part of the process of modernization" (King 3).

It was also during the post-independence euphoria of the 1950s that anthologies of Indian poetry edited by Indians emerged. While Ezekiel, Malik, and Moraes' poetry collections have been long out of print, the poetry anthologies which include their works have survived in some form – in libraries around the world and as digital archives.

Author Jeffrey Di Leo argues in his seminal study *On Anthologies* (2004) that "While titles, contents, and authors blur into oblivion over time, the name of the anthology does not" (1). Both Ezekiel and Moraes' poetry appear in *Modern Indo-Anglian Poetry* (1959), and how we consume their poetry is entirely dependent on how the narrative of the anthology has been constructed. It is because of this very character that the anthology has become an important as well as problematic archive. It can accommodate old texts without reservations, and announce an entirely new idea at the same time. The newer anthologies that emerged during the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s plunge even deeper into problematic territories as they become engaged in a retrospective attempt to define modernity.

As institutional contexts including editorial ambition, publishers' ambition, the classroom requirement, marketplace dynamics, literary culture(s), and questions of national language and national identity pile up within the anthology, it becomes a layered and dense form of archive. And it is for this very shape that the anthology has been considered as an important area of study. The anthology as a literary medium may be understood as a confluence point of multiple cultural tangents. Any attempts at understanding the anthology demand the investigation of specific individual areas of study covering both the historical and political context of textual production. Therefore, this thesis may be taken as many studies in one – as an archival study and recovery work, as a book history analysis, and as an examination of literary culture.

III

An anthology first and foremost is a book. Just as there exists a domain of study that focuses on the history of science(s) and the history of art(s), the "history of books" or *historie du livre* as it is referred to in French has emerged as an important new discipline of study of our times. By studying anthologies, we are, in fact engaging in the study of history, and the history of books can be studied as the "social and cultural history of communication by print" (Darnton 65). The examination of anthologies can reveal the intricacies of literary cultures, social prerogatives, and ideological currents during the time of their publication. In his preface to *The Random House Book of Twentieth-Century French Poetry*, the novelist Paul Auster writes "One must resist the notion of treating an anthology as the last word on its subject. It is no more than a first word, a threshold opening to a new space" (qtd. in Di Leo 2). Through engagement and analysis

of multiple anthologies within a given period, we can construct a bird's eye view of the movements of specific literary cultures and illuminate the existence of intersectional conflicts among these cultures.

Poetry anthologies, when taken into account along with the historicity contained in every volume – the context of the poems, the history of editing, and the social and publishing milieu – become a dynamic field of intertextual study. Every poem contained in a poetry anthology becomes more interesting as it struggles to enforce its integrity within an assortment of other poems, oftentimes creating a dialogue among the texts. A secondary dialogue also emerges between the texts/poems and the editor's intent as well. This is a fundamental characteristic of poetry anthologies and one that is absent in individual poetry collections. William Germano, who served as editorial director at Columbia University Press and Routledge, formulates a fundamental distinction between "collections" and "anthologies" in his book *Getting It Published* (2008). Germano defines a collection as "a gathering of new or mostly new writing," and an anthology as "a gathering of previously published, or mostly previously published work" (118). "A collection," Germano further argues, "aims to present the newest research or thought; an anthology aims to present the best of what has been thought and said – and already published" (118).

Coming from an industry insider, Germano's classifications are important as they essentially demarcate a collection as "forward-looking" and an anthology, on the contrary, as a backwards-gazing publication "preserving valued texts" (Di Leo 4). For instance, the first authoritative Victorian anthology, *A Victorian Anthology 1837-1895* edited by Edmund Clarence Stedman appeared only in 1895, and the first authoritative Romantic anthology edited by George Benjamin Woods titled *English Poetry and Prose of the Romantic Movement* was published as late as 1916. These are two exceptionally historicized anthology specimens of the Western canon that adopted a more scholarly and ideologically unified approach. In a sense, they were serious volumes and did not exist merely to delight.

However, the value of poetry anthology – and anthologies in general – have been belligerently questioned from time to time. In his revelatory work *Book Bussiness* (2001), Jason Epstein, former editorial director of Random House, accused the whole enterprise as something with "little value in themselves….They serve no literary

purpose, usually find few readers and quickly go out of print" (139-140). Epstein's stance is a reflection of the long-standing bias against anthologies as "second-class citizens" of the book world (Di Leo 9). On the other hand, Germano's attitude towards the medium as the preserver of "valued texts" corresponds more towards Matthew Arnold's "propagate the best that is known and thought" ideologic stance in *Culture and Anarchy* (Willey). Even among industry insiders, the anthology medium has been a bone of contention. Nonetheless, these discourses reveal the material culture of the book and the problems of intellectual production.

There are categorical elements in the anthology that makes it a powerful medium for the consolidation of literature. It inherently demands some form of structure, and structure in turn shapes reading practices. Through an assemblage of texts, anthologies are capable of creating narratives to persuade readers. Anthologies are also capable of creating or destroying literary reputations and dismantling canons. They have become a critical apparatus with which readers can interact with a text with analytical detachment. In short, the presence of a text in an anthology is often consequential. For instance, in his introductory notes to Sarojini Naidu's poem "The Old Woman," Arvind Krishna Mehrotra, editor of the Oxford anthology *Twenty Indian Poems* (1990) writes: "Sarojini Naidu's poem is an example of everything a poem should not be. It is included here because students should know what a bad poem looks like if they are to recognize a good one when they see it" (14). The poem deals with the subject of old-age loneliness, a state of involuntary reclusiveness, juxtaposed against the changing world around her and with it the changing nature of human activities of the outside. It opens thus:

> A lonely old woman sits out in the street
> 'Neath the boughs of a banyan tree,
> And hears the bright echo of hurrying feet,
> The pageant of life going blithely and fleet
> To the feast of eternity. (lines 1-5)

According to Mehrotra's headnotes, it is "forced," "clichéd," and lacks "observation." An introduction such as this, especially in a poetry anthology targeted towards undergraduate students carries consequences. It influences the reception of the poem by the readers, and to a greater extent transforms the readers into secondhand consumers of texts.

There is a moment in A. S. Byatt's novel *Still Life* where a woman sits in a library, her first time away from her newborn child, reading Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode" and she engages in this activity because she wants to gain back "thinking-time" that she took for granted when she was younger. Because in the present she has responsibilities: a child, a husband, worries, and little time. In his Oxford companion *Reading and the Reader* (2013), Philip Davis argues that the act of reading is a practice of finding "access" to one's "own thoughts" (1). Considering the nature in which anthologies enable the editors, and what Mehrotra has done with his anthology in particular, is that the readers' access to their "own thoughts" is highjacked so that readers may consume the texts/poems as they are presented to them not as they are. It is understood that part of the job of an anthologist is to relieve the reader of the labour of going through texts that are of inconsequential literary merit, but some cases happen to be more extreme than others.

The anthology itself has never been a popular subject for study, although people – and culture at large – have been depending on its utilitarian value for many generations. Despite as the backbone of the academic world they are often overlooked and hardly given a sustained examination within the academia itself or by the public. However, this lacuna was broken with the publication of a few pioneering works in recent years. The few substantial publications are: Barbara M. Benedict's *Making the Modern Reader: Cultural Meditation in Early Modern Literary Anthologies* (1996), Leah Price's *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel: From Richardson to George Eliot* (2000), Anne Ferry's *Tradition and the Individual Poem: An Inquiry into Anthologies* (2001), and Jeffrey Di Leo's *On Anthologies: Politics and Pedagogy* (2004).

Secondarily, Paul Lauter's *Canon and Contexts* (1991), and John Guillory's *Cultural Capital: The Problems of Literary Canon Formations* (1993) both investigate the anthology and its relation to canon formation. William Germano's *Getting It Published: A Guide for Scholars and Anyone Else Serious about Serious Books* (2008), and Jason Epstein's *Book Business: Publishing Past, Present and Future* (2001) also make sociological commentaries on the anthology's value within the context of the larger intellectual and printing industry. Eric Nebeker, Katherine Gutzwiler, Christopher M. Kuipers, Leonard Diepeveen, Jahan Ramazani, Bartholomew Brinkman, David

Hopkins, Lilian Chaitas, and Karen Kilkup have also made important contributions concerning the anthology as well.

The discourse around anthologies is not popular, but it is not absent either. Sarah Lawall, editor of *The Norton Anthology of World Literature* (2001), considers "anthologies as a theoretically interesting form whose potential for opening up discourse has yet to be sufficiently explored" (qtd. in Di Leo 9). Jahan Ramazani, editor of *The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry* (2003) also made a somewhat definitive argument on the entire enterprise when he said "anthology could incarnate such critical views, enact theory as practice, weld into place, in a series of interlocking texts, headnotes, and period introductions, reconceptualized contours of modern and contemporary poetic history" (276). In his book *Discourse Networks 1800-1900* (1990), Friedrich A. Kittler makes the ultimate case that anthologies became so powerful that they replaced the Bible as the text that unified cultures in late 18th century Germany (144-149).

The patterns of literature that anthology generates through establishing standards and conventions help in creating new contexts for the texts. A reader's experience of a text is often guided by its form, thus reading a work in its original isolated form and reading it within the pages of an anthology can evoke distinctly different experiences. Anthologies, during the 20th century, have been more or less responsible for drawing the academy into the public sphere (Di Leo 5). The structures and patterns invented within the pages of an anthology ultimately translate into an experience for the readers, and they are always consequential.

IV

Rationale of the Study

There have been several minor studies of Indian poetry in English in the second half of the 20th century, but the majority of them have concentrated on the "postcolonial identity" of Indian English poetry. There have been very few substantial works on Indian English poetry in the last seventy years. The only critical work that has dealt with the subject on a sweeping scale is Bruce King's *Modern Indian Poetry in English* (2004) first published by OUP in 1987. King covers the vast literary milieu of Indian poetry while giving attention to the social background of the poets, publishing circles, the

market, and the readers. Furthermore, King succeeds in locating his analysis of Indian poetry in English within the "continuing conflict" of "cultural conservatives, nationalists and political radicals" (1). Another critical volume Sudesh Mishra's *Preparing Faces: Modernism and Indian Poetry in English* (1995) "identifies modernism as the dominant discourse of post-Independence Indian English poetry" (S. Narayan 53). M. K. Naik's two critical studies: *Perspectives on Indian Poetry in English* (1984), and *Indian English Poetry: From the Beginning upto 2000* (2006) are exceptions, as they, in his own words try "to adopt a holistic and integrated view of Indian English poetry" (Foreword i). The most recent critical offering is Rosinka Chaudhuri's edited volume *A History of Indian Poetry in English* (2016) from Cambridge University Press. It is a retrospective assessment of the history of Indian English poetry demarcated into five distinct sections. It explores the continuity of Indian English poetry, first championed by Henry Derozio in the 19th century and its gradual progression into an introspective genre as the poets' relationship with the language evolved in the new millennium (V. Narayan 407).

Dealing more tangentially with the subject of Indian poetic modernism is Rajeev S. Patke's critical study *Postcolonial Poetry in English* (2009) where he critically engages the link that exists between "historical preoccupations and linguistic strategies" in the making of postcolonial poetry (3). But his dealing with Indian poetry is brief as it occupies only a sub-section in his third chapter "South Asia and Southeast Asia". Anjali Nerlekar's critical study *Bombay Modern: Arun Kolatkar and Bilingual Literary Culture* (2016) concentrates on the Bombay poetry culture during the *sathottari* years (post-1960) and is accompanied by a comprehensive close reading of Arun Kolatkar's poetry. Again, Nerlekar's work is a specialized volume concerning only with the locality of the beginnings of modernism within Bombay. Finally, Indian modernism scholar Laetitia Zecchini's recent critical work *Arun Kolatkar and Literary Modernism in India* (2016) deals with Indian modernism but keeps Kolatkar and his poetry as the epicentre.

Neelam Srivastava's 2010 article "Anthologizing the nation: Literature anthologies and the idea of India" published in the *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* is perhaps the most significant precursor for this current study. Srivastava looks beyond the anthology's "central importance for teaching" (151) and attempts to establish it as a lierary "meta-genre" or a vehicle that "fills the gaps between readers and literary works" through a "narrative" (151). Her work, although significant, looks at writings between

1970s, and therefore, like Patke's 2009 study falls into an investigation of postcolonial canon politics.

Other research work(s) concerning Indian poetry in English include the efforts of Bangladeshi poet and scholar Rubana Huq, whose research area is concentrated on the life and work(s) of P. Lal and the Writers Workshop circle (Hussain). Zecchini, who is a tenured research fellow at CNRS, Paris has also continued with scholarship work on contemporary Indian poetry. Her continued research work is localized on Bombay poets and includes a 2022 article titled "Archives of Minority: 'Little' Publications and the Politics of Friendship in Post-Colonial Bombay" (Laetitia). In 2011, poet and novelist Jerry Pinto became appointed as the custodian of all the archives of correspondence relating to Clearing House by Adil Jussawalla. Pinto's research engagement has concentrated on the Clearing House publishing circle in the 1970s with a focus on exploring the literary dynamics between the poets of the time – Adil Jussawalla, Arvind Krishna Mehrotra, Gieve Patel, and Arun Kolatkar (Pinto 233). Nerlekar, in the meantime, has continued to investigate the world of modern Indian poetry with her recent engagement with The Cornell Bombay Poets Archive at the Cornell University Library. One of her most recent publications includes an article titled "The Ecology of the Archive in Adil Jussawalla's 'Date Book' for a Missing Novel" (2022) which is a pure descriptive archival analysis ("Anjali Nerlekar").

On the academic front, there have been just three doctoral theses concerning anthologies that have been submitted in India as of 2022. They are *Modern Poetry in the Making: A Critical and Pedagogical Study of Anthologies* (2004) submitted by M. E. Veda Sharan (University of Hyderabad, India), *Pedagogy, Politics and the Market: A Critique of Select Anthologies in Postcolonial India* (2013) submitted by Harpreet Bali (Panjab University), and *Teaching English Poetry to Tribal Learners Preparation of a Tribal Learner Friendly Anthology of Poems* (2016) submitted by Preetinanda Roy (KITT University). Sharan's research, although close to this present study, deals not with the making of modern poetry in India, but with the Western canon. Bali's research on the other hand deals with anthologies, but it is neither focused on poetry, nor modernism. It is an overview of the genre and its relationship to pedagogy and the market. And lastly, Roy's research, as the name suggests, is a pure pedagogical study.

Anthologies have long served as an inseparable tool within the academic community, but more importantly, they have become the primary source for accessing poetry for many general readers. There has never been a dedicated study concerning modern Indian poetry and its place within the anthology format. As a majority of the population consumes poetry through the anthology medium there is a need to understand the dynamic layers that entail the anthology – its relationship with the texts, its relationship with readers, its relationship with canon formation, etc. The primary objectives of this study are few and clear. They are: a) to contextualize the history of Indian poetry anthologies and the roles they play in the development of thought and new literary culture(s), b) to examine the changing nature of modern Indian poetry in English as documented in anthologies, and c) to establish anthologies not just as spaces for collection and archiving, but as construction sites where new ideas are grounded and modernism is created.

Methodology

Owing to the nature of this research which demands an understanding not just of the written text/poetry but also of the book/anthology as a "material object" with its own historicity, a mixed-method analytical approach has been opted. This allowed the research to adopt both qualitative and quantitative models. With these tools, I was able to pursue both content-based analysis and analysis of descriptive statistics to support the arguments. A theoretical understanding was achieved using a blend of historicist and structuralist frameworks. The general construction of the thesis moves away from emphatically trying to verify the hypotheses and instead opts for a porous framework based on constant testing/problematizing of the hypotheses through a constructivist outlook.

Data for the present study was accumulated from multiple sources through various means, and they are categorically discussed in the following sections.

Data Collection

The data utilized for this research was accumulated over multiple years beginning in late 2017 and which were constantly updated through 2022. My primary resources have been anthologies of Indian poetry accumulated through purchasing, institutional library visits, and consultation with online non-profit repositories. Many out-of-print anthologies

whose copyrights have expired such as Dunn's *The Bengali Book of English Verse* (1918), Goodwin's *An Anthology of Modern Indian Poetry* (1927), and K.R. Rao and P. Lal's *Modern Indo-Anglian Poetry* (1959) were accessed through the *Internet Archive* (archive.org) digital repository. Supplementary resources including documents and archival matters were consulted through the Study Centre for Indian Literature in English and Translation (SCILET) located at the American College, Tamil Nadu, India. I have also consulted and utilized archived periodicals at *Ideas of India* (ideasofindia.org), a non-profit educational website maintained by Rahul Sagar (New York University, Abu Dhabi). The website was launched in late 2018 around the time I was concluding my preliminary survey. Mr Sargar and I have also exchanged a few discussions on the value of archives and the necessity of making them available for public use.

Furthermore, to gain "insider" information and better understand the politics behind the writing of poetry and the making of poetry anthologies, I have also conducted multiple interviews with poets, anthologists, and booksellers as well. The methodology of the interviews and the construction of my core dataset are described in the following sections.

Interviews

Preparation for the interviews began in January 2019 with a core question set further divided into five sub-sections: i) On Editing, ii) On Language, iii) On dealing with Publishers, iv) Poetry in the Digital Age, and v) Conclusion. Each interview was slightly different as the subjects (interviewees) were from different backgrounds. There were spontaneous but delightful digressions in each interview as well. The interviews followed a semi-structured format and were constructivist. I inserted new questions outside of the template wherever it felt required. I was able to conduct three interviews physically with the help of a voice recorder (Sony ICD-PX470) throughout 2019. In 2020, owing to logistical problems and the arrival of the COVID-19 lockdowns the interviews had to be conducted via online mode (e-mail). Some interviews took weeks of back-and-forth exchange(s), and some took months. The longest was my interview with diaspora poet and anthologist Kavita A. Jindal which lasted for seven months. My interviews with poet and anthologist Abhay Kumar, and with poet Jayshree Misra Tripathi were conducted twice as they published newer works between 2019 (first interview) and 2022 (follow-up interview). They have been updated accordingly.

The interviews do not form the core of the research, but I have used the insights I gained to make informed judgments and analyses of the anthologies I have discussed in my thesis. They have been referenced or cited in places wherever required. In addition, I have also included relevant interviews as separate numbered appendices at the end of the thesis.

The list of people interviewed are: Robin Ngangom (poet and editor of *Dancing Earth*), Kynpham Singh Nongkynrih (poet, editor of *Dancing Earth,* and author of *Funeral Nights*), Martin Thokchom (Bookseller), Abhay Kumar (poet and editor of multiple Bloomsbury anthologies including *The Bloomsbury Anthology of Great Indian Poems*), Jayshree Misra Tripathi (poet), Benjamin Aleshire (poet), Chinmaya Lal (ex-editor at *Jaggery: Arts and Literature Journal*), Rochelle Potkar (poet and editor of the anthology *40 Under 40* and three others), and Kavita A. Jindal (Diaspora poet and editor of *May We Borrow Your Country*).

Statistics

This study demanded selective statistical data to support the hypotheses/arguments, and the main supporting data has been derived from the accumulated list of Indian poetry anthologies in English published throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. As the research progressed a comprehensive list of anthologies emerged along with the writing of this thesis and it has been included in its entirety as Appendix 1 at the end.

The dataset was created with the help of two main sources: a) a close analysis of the "Chronology of Significant Publications, Journals and Events, 1947-99" which is included in King's *Modern Indian Poetry in English* (355-387), and b) a close analysis of the annual bibliography compiled by Shyamala A. Narayan, simply titled "India", and published within *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* annually. The latter was an immense task of cautiously reading and combing through an excess of 1,500 pages to locate published anthologies listed among other kinds of publications. Narayan's first bibliography appeared in 1972 and the most recent is 2022. There were no publications in the years 2003, 2004, and 2005. The publications for the missing years have been identified through careful cross-checking with the catalogue/database at *WorldCat* ® (worldcat.org) and with the respective publishers' websites, wherever available.

For the benefit of the general public, I submitted an edited version of the list to Wikipedia moderators for the creation of a dedicated page on Indian poetry anthologies. The proposal was approved after some minor changes and it exists now as a page titled "List of Indian English poetry anthologies" which was officially published on 19 November 2017. I continue to maintain and update the page. If any similarities and redundancy in anthology names are found between this thesis and the Wikipedia page, it is for this reason.

The second major dataset that I have relied upon is the India Book Market Report published by the leading market insight provider Nielsen ®. These surveys were conducted by Nielsen BookData in collaboration with the Association of Publishers in India (API) and the representative body of Indian publishers, the Federation of Indian Publishers (FIP). They have released two Indian book market surveys in the last two decades, the first one in Oct 2015, and the more recent one in Oct 2022. Both were released at the Frankfurt Book Fair (Frankfurteer Buchmese) which is held every year in mid-October at Frankfurt am Main, Germany (Anderson). Before these reports, the last recorded comprehensive Indian book market survey was undertaken by the National Council of Applied Economic Research and published under the report titled "Survey of Indian Book Industry" in 1976 (Mallya).

The tables, figures, and graphical visualization used in the thesis were generated as per a careful analysis of both the anthology dataset listed in Appendix 1 and the Nielsen BookData reports. Microsoft ® Word's inbuilt SmartArt tool, and Datawrapper ®, a Berlin-based online visualization tool were used to generate the figures.

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In the subsequent chapters of this thesis, I have attempted an examination and scrutiny of the modern Indian poetry anthology.

Chapter Two titled "Poetry Anthologies: A Historical Understanding" has been dedicated to better understand the anthology as a cohesive agent that dictates literary culture. It is a survey and examination of anthology as an archival tool and cultural object. To achieve this, the origin of the anthology as a literary object and its gradual evolution into a medium and a genre is explored by going back to its Grecian roots. The chapter presents background on how the arrival of the movable-type and newer print

technology affected the publication, distribution, and consumption of printed literature. It presents an understanding of the evolution of the anthology into a cultural item, first in 16th century Europe and its gradual entry into the colonies of Europe. The making of culturally significant anthologies such as the *Planudean Anthology*, the *Palantine Anthology*, *The Greek Anthology*, *Tottel's Miscelleny*, *Englands Helicon* and Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* have been discussed in detail.

The second half of the chapter examines the re-entry of the anthology on Indian soil through the printing machinery brought by the Jesuit missionaries and colonial administrators. The arrival of poetry anthologies by English editors in the early part of the 20th century marketed with an ambivalent sense of "modernity" has been highlighted and examined. The chapter proceeds to establish a holistic understanding of the poetry anthologies that emerged after India's independence, paying key attention to poetry and its relationship with language, and poetry and its relationship with the establishment of a new national literary identity. A wide literature survey of Indian poetry anthologies that were published throughout the 20th century has been achieved in the section.

Finally, the chapter probes into the question(s) of how the anthology mutated along with the tides of history and how the contents of the medium matured along with the demands of social and historical conditions. The process of literary "transmission" that takes place within the pages of anthologies, and among anthologies, resulting in the establishment of a "hybrid" literary culture is also examined. The architectonics of the editorial voice and the evolution of their role in constructing the shapes and textures of the anthology have also been highlighted.

Chapter Three titled "Anthologies and the Construction of Poetic Modernism" examines the significant roles anthologies have played in the solidification of modern Indian poetry in English. Among many investigations, an examination of select modern anthologies and their relationship with the editors and readers has been undertaken. The progression of the anthologist's role from the restrictive sphere of a passive compiler to literary authorship is explored in this section. To probe the question of Indian modernity, comparative studies of pre-independence anthologies and post-independence anthologies have been conducted. To establish a working foundation for the study, a series of historical attempts at defining Indian modernism has been presented and critically examined. The first half of the chapter also constitutes the examination of modern Indian

poetic expression as an "aesthetics of estrangement," and presents arguments on why the beginnings of Indian modernism have been an "arbitrary and progressive project" which is difficult to define.

In the second half of the chapter, an argument is put forward suggesting that the concept of modernity in Indian poetry in English cannot be construed in its totality by analyzing only the text(s), as such an analysis is limited by the study of language and standard poetic devices. In lieu, a thesis has been put forward suggesting that Indian poetic modernism, as a concept, was constructed through an incisive blend of four systems working in nuanced co-ordination: the *text* and the *paratext,* which are the foundational elements of an anthology, and the machinery of *production* and *consolidation*. I have also made observations on how certain anthologies have dominated our cultural understanding of "modern" Indian poetry.

To investigate these two constituent elements – the *text* and the *paratext* – in Indian poetry anthologies, I have taken into consideration Pascale Casanova's argument in *The World Republic of Letters* (2004) which argues that the modern literary practices since the early 19th century is connected to a new idea of language and its relationship to its community of speakers, and Gérard Genette's concept of *paratext* as the secondary materials which lends meaning to the core text(s) in his seminal study *Paratexts: Threshold of Interpretation* (1997). Finally, using Raymond Williams' "epochal theory" in *Marxism and Literature* (1977), I have suggested an alternative understanding of modernity – not as a concrete historical idea – but as a fluid concept which is continually struggling for dominance.

Chapter Four titled "Modern Indian Poetry: The Field of Production" continues the argument trajectory of the preceding chapter on anthologies as cultural commodities. The chapter examines the culture and sociology of Indian poetry anthologies using frameworks provided in Pierre Bourdieu's *Field of Cultural Production* (1993). I have proposed parallel arguments concerning the modernist voice of Indian poetry as an *intended* and also a *consequential* outcome in the pages of anthologies; *intended* as a concept synonymous to Vladimir Mayakovsky's argument of art as an act of "manufacture." The chapter argues that the making of modern Indian English poetry occurred through decades of collective cultural deliberations taking place within the pages of anthologies.

The second half of the chapter examines the modern Indian poetry anthology and its nature by placing it within Bourdieu's "field of cultural production." An understanding is achieved by a) mapping the anthology and identifying its position within the "field of production" and by identifying its social dimensions and relations within the field, and b) understanding the different "forms of capital" operating within the field which contributes in the consecration of the modernist voice.

Chapter Five titled "New Modernisms: Plurality and its Discontents" is included as a coda to conclude the study with an examination of recent history and new direction(s) of modern Indian poetry as evidenced in anthologies. It re-examines the anthology as a space and habitat for the "textual afterlife", and how modern canon(s) are formed through a momentum of discontent built against the categorical *past*. The chapter examines the impact of the arrival of economic liberalism and political correctness which has enabled the emergent challenges of the established canon(s) and the creation of alternative parallel canon(s). I have proposed an argument concerning the circularity of modernist thought, and how its cyclical nature is reflected in Indian poetry anthologies. To substantiate the argument, two broad classifications of anthologies – the *centripetal* and the *centrifugal* anthologies strains are introduced. The chapter concludes by problematizing the emergence of new modernities which seem caught in the intersections of the "local" and the "global" tendencies in contemporary anthologies.

In Chapter Six, the conclusions of the research are presented and prospects and domains for further research are also proposed.

Finally, this study is inclined towards the understanding of literary history and its making, therefore the strength of this thesis is provided not only by the arguments presented but also by the inclusion of the testimonies of the editors, poets, and interviews of industry "insiders." It is for this reason, and to present their opinions and voices as unadulterated as possible that they have been reproduced in generous block quotes wherever necessary in the chapters. Any disturbance in their testimonies became a reductive and interpretive exercise and so they are presented in a required length which preserves their integrity of thought.