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
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 Masefield, 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 every 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).

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 Auvergine" 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 vapidity 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.

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 Monro 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 Monro 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:

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

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
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.
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 despoised (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. *Ite 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 Romains 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 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 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 Lundon, 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 tinielessly present, and freed the art from 'contemporaneousnes" 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 editorial was 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 'inviolate' 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 of 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 cliched 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 the 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 librists* 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 "prepense," 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 nauseam* (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 *risque*. 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 form wherever their quest might have led (Monroe 1946 xlv). The "modem" 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 lxxii 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 form 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"
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 poetics 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 in firm in focus.