Chapter 4
Market

Having pondered over the anthologies that are compiled by keeping a specific objective in mind which could be literary, pedagogical or political, I now proceed to analyse anthology as the flourishing commodity of the market. This however does not imply that a compilation which is formed by keeping its market place in mind is devoid of accomplishing its pedagogical and political objectives. An anthology can be at once governed by the claims of the market and its own individual objectives. However by answering the call of the economic imperatives the anthology is evidently grounded in commitments. The anthology is governed by the demands of the market. This might include the market appeal of the individual entries and their authors, copyright privileges of the work and the overall assurance of the works economic advantageousness. Anthologies become potent tools in reflecting the dynamics of capitalist publishing. Arvind Krishna Mehrotra in The Oxford India Anthology of Twelve Modern Indian Poets (1992) recognizes the existence of verse since the 1820s to the 1945 as ‘truly dead’: “Later poets have found no use for it, and a literary tradition is of no use to anyone else” (1). He candidly observes the construction of anthologies on the observance of the demands of the market thus:

Henry Derozio, Toru Dutt, Aurobindo Ghose and Sarojini Naidu were courageous and perhaps charming men and women, but not those with whom you could today do business. (2)

At times the economic considerations in an anthology’s construction takes cognizance of elements that have little to do with the literary content and flavour of the work. Anthologies have responded to the pedagogical needs of the learners, instructors and the academic institutions, they have recognized their status equally well as politically powerful tools and at the same time they have been produced by publishers and anthologizers for profit. The aesthetic choices are balanced or overlooked not only because of the pedagogical factors but also due to the forces of the market.

The implication of anthologies in the imperative approaches of the market was a debatable issue initiated in A Pamphlet Against Anthologies (1928) by two of the twentieth century’s most distinguished poets. Laura Riding and Robert Graves attend to the perceived issues of
inequities prevalent in the trade anthology. From Graves and Riding’s work originate the idea that anthologies purport to foster bad reading habits and encourage passive readership as their formation is governed by the strong forces and commercial perspectives of the market. The distinction that they foster between “true” anthologies and “trade” anthologies stand notably pertinent to the present discussion. The former term stands for anthologies that tend to fulfill a literary function which could be to offer representation, preservation or initiate new tastes, the latter however is targeted towards the “poetry-consuming public” (158). Trade anthologies according to Riding and Graves: “treat poetry as a commodity destined for instructional, narcotic, patriotic, religious, humorous and other household uses aiming to “turn poetry into an industrial packet-commodity” (17-18).

The sustenance of anthologies is predicated on its economic essentiality as it has responded to the call of the market in its making. The homogenized preferences and the suppression of the emerging voices stirred by anthologies are clearly attacked as being their crucial drawback. Anthologizers practice their power to usurp the entries and force upon them associations that make them naturally fitting components in the entire coherent and narrative design of the anthologies. Nevertheless the work of rescue, preservation and saving the entries from perishing into eternal anonymity, has been recognized by the writers (Graves and Riding) as the only saving grace extended to anthological compilations.

In the chapter on the “Politics of Anthologization” I have dwelled on the representation of marginalised and the subjugated sections in anthologies. However in this section I endeavour to shed some light on the ways in which the publishing industry has encouraged them in having a recognizable place in its world. The industry has certainly progressed from its initial stage of an unquestioned reluctance to the incorporation of suppressed voices in mainstream literature. It has simultaneously fostered an affirmative assimilation of the same in the literary establishment, whereby these voices have been promoted. However I do not propound to interpret the proliferation of anthologies by the publishing industry as an entirely unwelcome act but intend to present at once the reasons and the crucial ways in which anthologies enjoy a prominent status as forceful products of the market.

Authorship, printing, publishing and bookselling as significant enterprises have witnessed both a collaborative and an autonomous working. The progress of anthology is directly related to the efforts of these enterprises which actively participate in taking decisions and fostering changes pertaining not only to shape the physical appearance of the work but also to judge its process of selection. Nevertheless an anthology is the final product of the efforts of
its authors, editors, printers, booksellers, publishers and readers and creates a nexus in which all of these are at once endurably and culpably involved.

Benedict points towards the production of books in the seventeenth century by “licensed printers” (“Paradox” 233); who were often the authors and in the eighteenth century by “the publishing bookseller” (“Paradox” 233), who were neither the authors nor the printers but hired writers for manuscripts and controlled the entire process of production. The lapsing of the Printers Act in 1695 was a moment of proliferation of literary works by printers who could now print amply. Flourishing into specific groups called “congers” they encouraged the practice of copyrights by which huge profits could be made. Reiterating the status of an anthology as a “print genre” (“Paradox” 233) Benedict states:
This practice helped to forge a genre designed for profiting from copyrights: the anthology. In such collections, publishing booksellers could print together material they held in copyright and package it as a new book. (“Paradox” 233)

Publishers could now publish the works which could not be brought out by any other publisher, by giving it a new and a distinct form that of an anthology, thereby succeeding in according the charm of novelty to already published works.

I

By the efforts of Danes, Portuguese, French and English the printed word spread in India. The print as a medium made its earlier impact in places like Goa, Tranquebar, Vepery, Mangalore, Serampore and Gorakhpur. Observing Goa as the preceptor of printing in India, Amitava Mukherjee states an interesting anecdote:

Ironically the genesis of printing in India was by a sheer stroke of fortune: a Portuguese ship laden with a printing machine bound for Abyssinia (Ethiopia) did not reach its destination as it had stopped en route to Goa and when news came that the king of Abyssinia did not want the new wonder, the press stayed put in Goa which saw the first printing outfit in India grow. (Mukherjee 18)

Gradually printing and publishing acquired a status of flourishing commercial enterprises. Anthologies portray the impact of the commercial book trade on the diffusion, production and transmission of knowledge. Influential and prolific publishers play a persuasive role in the transmission and canonization of selective works essentially through the release of astutely composed anthologies. Ulrike Stark states: “Print generated new professions and introduced a distinctive figure into the colonial public sphere: the commercial printer” (1). The dissemination of knowledge through print contributed immensely in the revival of India’s literary and cultural heritage. The efforts of the flourishing book industry in the nineteenth century in the English and more importantly in the regional languages lead to a creation of an enterprise where the capitalist principles of profit making and an increased turn over were not denied even as one acknowledges the great icons of early Indian publishing particularly the most prominent figures: “Fardunji Sorabji Marzban in Bombay, Munshi Harsukh Rai in Lahore, Maulvi Abdul Rahman Khan in Kanpur, Mustafa Khan and Munshi Naval Kishore in Lucknow” (Ulrike 2).
Significantly the mass printing technology experienced a freedom from courtly patronage that controlled writing and transformed itself to a market economy. The dissemination of the written word was a direct consequence of the firm establishment of commercial printing initially in metropolitan areas Calcutta, Madras, Bombay and later in Delhi, Pondicherry, Bangalore, Banaras and Lucknow. Print technology now allowed a formation of a new literary world in which its participants both the publisher and the writer could simultaneously target and draw benefits from the emerging Indian consumer class:

With the Book's gradual transformation into a commercial commodity, literary production and transmission were for the first time subsumed to the forces of the market place, the fate of a literary work and its author depending on its saleability and reception. (S.K. Das 38-9)

The anthologies that have flourished in India testify amply to its reception by both the scholarly and the general readers. The books that were produced could not ignore the rising consumer class whose literary tastes were to be gratified to ensure a commercial success.

Reflecting on the flourishing publishing scenario S.K. Ghai observes the statistical figures that dictate the current status of Indian publishing industry:

We have 16000 publishers publishing approximately 80,000 new titles a year in 22 languages. India is the third largest book-producing country in English after the U.K and U.S, and is placed seventh in the total number of books published in the world. The total publishing business is approximately 2500 million US $ and out of this the share of educational publishing is 60%.(279)

Recognizing the splendid growth of the publishing industry, the unprecedented spurt in the making of anthologies should not come as a surprise. Indian books are exported across the world with more than fifty percent of its exports going to the United States. India has witnessed a rising demand of its books from countries across the world including USA, Canada, Britain and Australia. Nevertheless Indian books are tailored to a notable extent to the requirements of these countries. Anthologies stay in the market because they feed the market. Their high level of proliferation commensurates with their ability to remain highly saleable products of the market. The world of publishing having witnessed a tremendous growth needs to publish more. Single author publications definitely remain a time consuming affair where the author has to devote large number of hours to his work. A recurring
appearance of any writer in an anthology not only ensures him/her a greater amount of sustenance, conspicuousness and recognition but also saves them the misery of prolonged years of wait, to see their works on the shelves of the leading booksellers.

The author in an anthology may be included because of having been published by the leading publishers. Even the single author books by major leading publishers in India including the Penguin, Oxford University Press, Routledge and other leading publishers successfully ensures the writers place in the anthology. With the contribution of different writers, an anthological compilation consumes a lesser amount of time in its formation and lends its framework as the most suitable to the current needs of the readers and the publishers.

Reiterating the immense importance of anthologies as profitable tools of the market and a genre that has gained enormous recognition Leah Price observes:

In Britain today, anthologies count among the only volumes of poetry that stand even a chance at mass-market success. In North America, where the economics of college survey courses have made “poem” nearly synonymous with “anthology-piece”, the canon wars of the 1980 were fought over anthologies’ table of contents — Anthology-pieces ornament tombstones, inspire advertisements, occasion sermons, vertebrate dictionaries. (2)

Anthologies respond to the demands of the audience towards which it is directed and its inclusions and exclusions are governed by the factors that affect its place in the market. If the ideological, social and the political stances of the larger group of readers towards which the anthology is directed fail to match the essential narrative design of the anthology, it would inevitably result in the poor demand and sales of the work.

Joe Lockard and Jullian Sandell give an interesting instance of two anthologies that signify the elements of assimilation and confrontation. The Eclectic Readers produced by William Holmes McGuffey from 1836 to 1857 received immense success as effective tools of learning and created a prosperous market for itself. The writers trace the work as “ producing a new national identity based on the collection of literary works” (232). Significantly William Well’s Brown’s The Anti-Slavery Harp (1848) focuses on the absences of issues pertaining to slavery, racism, gender and immigration by including works pertaining to similar themes and is thereby set in direct comparison to the Eclectic Readers. However the exclusions or
omissions are cultivated deliberately to confirm the imperatives of the market: “Anti-Slavery Harp bursts with an oppositional nationalism in its passion against slavery, whereas the Mc Guffey series endorsed an exclusionary nationalism that guaranteed its commercial market regions where racial inclusiveness would have represented public subversion” (Lockard and Sandell 233).

Since the essential ideological perspectives threaten the sustenance of an anthology in the market if opposed to the ones that tenaciously hold the readers judgement; the editors and publishers remain particularly conscious of this aspect in the construction of anthologies. The assimilation of diverse writers (in terms of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation and nationality) is a commercially advantageous move. Reaching a diverse audience implies appeasing the literary requirements of a larger section of readers. These readers succeed in responding to the work with a substantial amount of contentment which in turn originates by their identification with particular group/s that seem to voice their social, political, ideological and literary aspirations. Identity-based anthologies appease particular sections, however in contrast to this multi genre, multicultural and world literature anthologies flourish by targeting a wider audience in mind.

Nevertheless the emergence of these anthologies also leads to a widened rift between the supporters of canonicity on the one hand and multiculturalism on the other. Wail S. Hassan markedly exposes a simultaneously political act of anthologization that firmly clings to the trends of the market in the construction of The Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces (1995). Reflecting on how globalization offers no fundamental changes in the construction of an anthology to a “reader-tourist-consumer” (42) but only a canonical expansion by adding more and more foreign masterpieces to a consolidated Western canon, Hassan identifies the contemporary market trends as being crucial to the determination of frequent structural revisions: “Reading and teaching world literature become a leisurely stroll in a global literary mall that is structured at once to satisfy and to reinforce Western modes of consumption and interpretation...” (42).

The proliferation of world literature, multi-genre and multicultural anthologies together with identity-based anthologies testify to the tremendous augmented growth of these anthologies and a strong interest of the publishers in the same. However leading commercial publishers as well as small publishing houses have given a colossal platform to the marginalized and the subjugated voices. The dictates of the market stand crucially important
to the former however the latter purport to achieve the objectives of providing adequate representation to the suppressed sections; though not entirely denying the fruits of the market. In the following section I endeavour to examine the approach and objectives of such publishing houses in the construction of identity-based anthologies.

II

The publishing industry has witnessed tremendous changes and challenges to a distinctly greater extent when it comes to the publication of identity-based anthologies. The identity-based anthologies have witnessed enormous augmented growth primarily due to the interests and efforts of publishing houses that are devoted to publish writings which have largely been neglected by the mainstream publishers. Kali for Women, Samya, Stree in Kolkata and Mahila Shakti in Delhi are among other privately owned presses in India which are run by women.

Often considered as an Indian counterpart to the Virago Press in Britain that published books by women writers these publishers have largely flourished in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Ritu Menon observes: “When Urvashi Butalia and I set up Kali in 1984 friends in the trade cautioned us that women’s writing was just a flash in the pan, not something one could build a publisher’s list on” (Menon 137). The Feminist Press founded in 1970 released the astutely composed anthology by Tharu and Lalita Women Writing in India (1991). As a non profit literary publisher it promotes freedom of expression and social equality: “We publish books that tell different stories than what you will find with most mainstream publishers” (Web).

Kali for Women is a feminist publisher in India that dwells on the same line. Set up in 1984 it remains India’s first publishing house dedicated to the promotion of suppressed female voices. Though Butalia and Menon parted in 2003 and set up their individual publishing houses known as Zubaan Books and Women Unlimited, respectively, they have endeavoured to promote the work of pioneering feminist scholars and activists and make their participation in feminist activism clearly overt.

The release of anthologies like Women Writing in India (1991), Truth Tales (1993), Speaking Peace: Women Voices from Kashmir (2002) Parwaaz: A Selection of Urdu Short Stories by Women (1996), Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History (1989) by such publishing houses reinforces the fact that the objective of these publishing houses in
promoting such works is primarily to make Indian women’s voices heard. They deal with the issues of gender and offer works that allow the readers to probe the trajectory of Indian feminism. However these publishing houses proclaim to dwell on a different territory when compared to mainstream publishers of anthologies. Kali for Women gives a lucid interpretation of its primary endeavour in the field of publishing:

   Whoever may be the specific audience in mind Kali’s objective is to increase the body of knowledge on women in the third world, to give voice to such knowledge as already exists and to provide a forum for women writers. (Web)

However to say that these publishing houses entirely overlook the fruits of the market would be incorrect. In recognizing “lack of purchasing power” and an ardent desire to secure “a local market that will support a diverse publishing industry” (Menon 141), Ritu Menon exhibits a desire to make a place for feminist publishing in the market.

   Dwelling on a similar territory is Navayana. It is a publishing house that is exclusively devoted to issues of oppression and casteism. It purports to promote socially engaged writings that examine politics, literature, culture and society from the perspective of caste. The house intends to reflect on caste issues that have been overlooked by mainstream publishers. As a publishing venture ‘Navayana’ which means ‘a new source and vehicle’ has a lucid objective:

   In the tradition of Siddharth Gautama -- perhaps the first to introduce the culture of dialogue and debate with people who held diverse views, in the subcontinent--these books will encourage dialogue and debate on issues the mainstream does not wish to address. (Anand n.pag.)

However the proliferation of these publishing houses chiefly confronts the literary scenario which encourages and prioritizes specific literary productions. As a publishing venture Navayana emerged to combat autonomous publishing largely controlled by non-dalits. Sivakami a Tamil author, editor and a Chennai based bureaucrat points towards the role of non dalits in selection, translation and publishing of Dalit literature into English:

   Non Dalits play a great role in introducing dalit literature to foreign readers by virtue of their contacts with publishers. Therefore the selection would be certainly restricted to their local literary contacts and their knowledge of dalit writings in
Significantly, Dalit and women writings have been promoted by leading mainstream publishers and have led to the creation of many “revisionist anthologies”. Yet when compared to the upcoming publishing houses that reinforce the place and economic value of the literary product in the market, the former stands distinct on account of its varying objectives.

III

Anthologies have succeeded in making a place in textbook publishing which caters to special educational needs of the students. With literacy, the demand of anthologies rose and with technological advancement, the supply was augmented. Since the rule of the imperial powers, India developed a lucrative pedagogical market. Priya Joshi indicates towards the established lucrative market that had a flourishing readership:

> While government presses in India published a very small and basic series of textbooks for Indian schools, a number of private London houses published readers, copy books, textbooks in mathematics and science, and school atlases all meant for the Indian (or colonial) education market. (207)

Whether it was due to reformist agenda of the colonial powers or a consequence of a dire bureaucratic need to have a clerical staff, the fact remains that English witnessed a rapid proliferation and had enough users to make publications in the same language an economically feasible venture. Books for pedagogical use in English at school and university levels have witnessed huge market since the year of India’s independence and continues to maintain its position equally well in the post-independence era.

The trend of exploring the industry of Indian textbook publishing initiated by the editor, poet, and educationist David Lester Richardson in British India has taken an important form in the hands of the private publishers in the current scenario. These publishers dwelling on the current literary scene have released anthologies that have been enormously successful in creating a specific pedagogical market for themselves. The university textbook publishing has witnessed a poor growth. Private publishers have succeeded in offering through anthologies, pertinent canonical selections that entice the students and the general readers equally well.
Significantly they have excelled in the field of publishing anthologies because of poor subsidies being granted to university textbook publishing, lack of financial assistance and absence of a systematic organization that could look into textbook publishing at college level. Ravindra Kumar Gupta reflects upon the challenges faced by the university textbook publishing:

> In university textbook publishing the important matter of finance comes first. The process of publishing in this area is an expensive one from beginning to end. Royalty and editorial expenses are high, the composing of technical matter is expensive as well, illustrations cost money, and paper, printing and binding add to this of course. All this adds up to a large initial investment for every book. Recovery of the initial investment is slow and takes at least five years, in some cases even more. (73)

Though anthologies have also been released for college use by university presses yet when set in comparison to the compilations of private publishers they lag far behind. Private publications have responded swiftly to the changing academic scenario. In the critical pedagogy section I have already dwelled on the emerging areas that have been dealt amply in recent pedagogical anthologies. Private publishers have excelled in offering works that meet the students need and are at pace with the current literary changes. In offering new anthologies they flourish on the virtue of incorporation and assimilation and simultaneously offer a contrast to the traditional modes of learning fostered by most of the university publications.

Tracing the genesis of *The Oxford Book of Bengali Verse* that “never saw the light of the day” (303) Rimi B. Chatterjee examines the desire of leading publisher like Oxford “to capitalize on the Indianizing fervor that gripped British publishers in India in the 1930s” (326) as Macmillan was already involved in the production of “a series of Indian folktales in English translation as rapid readers for schools, a development unthinkable a decade previously” (326). Macmillan publishing house offers an interesting instance of anthologies being produced by private publishers, containing a rich treasure trove of syllabus based learning material for undergraduate and graduate students of English. Macmillan had opened offices in India along with Longman Green, Oxford University Press and Blackie and Sons during the beginning of the twentieth century. The pricing of the anthologies is very strategic. The following table offers a nuanced reading of the pricing-policy of anthologies.

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### Table 1

The prices of the widely used pedagogical anthologies published by leading private publishers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Anthology</th>
<th>Publishing house</th>
<th>Price Year (2012)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>The Silent Song</em></td>
<td>Macmillan</td>
<td>Rs.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>English @ Work</em></td>
<td>Macmillan</td>
<td>Rs.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Musings on Vital Issues</em></td>
<td>Orient Blackswan</td>
<td>Rs.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Essays, Short Stories and One Act Plays</em></td>
<td>Oxford University Press</td>
<td>Rs.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>From Renaissance to Modern: An Anthology of Prose and Poetry</em></td>
<td>Oxford University Press</td>
<td>Rs.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Fluency in English</em></td>
<td>Oxford University Press</td>
<td>Rs.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>English for Empowerment</em></td>
<td>Orient Blackswan</td>
<td>Rs.120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

The prices of notable general anthologies by celebrated publishing houses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Anthology</th>
<th>Editor/s</th>
<th>Publishing house</th>
<th>Price Year (2012)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Golden Treasury of Indo-Anglian Poetry</td>
<td>V.K. Gokak</td>
<td>Sahitya Akademi</td>
<td>Rs.498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten Twentieth century Indian Poets</td>
<td>R. Parthasarthy</td>
<td>OUP</td>
<td>Rs.145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Oxford India Anthology of Twelve Modern Indian Poets</td>
<td>Arvind Krishna Mehrotra</td>
<td>OUP</td>
<td>Rs.235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Poetry in English</td>
<td>Makarand.R.Paranjape</td>
<td>Macmillan</td>
<td>Rs.245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Oxford Anthology of Modern Indian Poetry</td>
<td>Vinay Dharwadker and A. K. Ramanujan</td>
<td>OUP</td>
<td>Rs.345</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Web

The figures in table 1 and 2 reveal the variation in prices of anthologies that are targeted towards an academic and general audience respectively. The anthologies meant for students have been exceptionally low priced. However most of the general anthologies mentioned above have evidently proved their pedagogical usability.

Having collaborated with academicians from eminent universities and ensuring a rich learning experience through anthologies Macmillan has succeeded in releasing numerous interesting anthologies for pedagogical use. To name a few The Silent Song: An Anthology of Verse (1987), Macmillan College Prose and Poetry (2009), An Anthology of Popular Essays and Poems (2009), English at Work (2009), English for Colleges (2009), are anthologies that are widely used for undergraduate courses. The Oxford University Press has also released important pedagogical anthologies. Twelve Short Stories (1994), From Renaissance to Modern: An Anthology of Prose and Poetry (1993), Fluency in English (2005) are some of them. Anthologies by Orient Blackswan and Orient Longman including English for Empowerment (2012), Musings on Vital Issues by P.J. George (2012), An Anthology of
English Poetry (1970) and Experiences: An Anthology of Prose and Poetry (1977) have enjoyed a prolonged longevity in the pedagogical market.

Anthologies have witnessed an environment that is conducive to its proliferation in the world of Indian publishing and has resulted in a tremendous amount of augmented growth in their production. Sadanand G. Bhatkal in his essay “Academic and Scholarly Books in India” states:

Publishers receive unsolicited manuscripts but there are many subjects or occasions where enterprising publishers will not wait for manuscripts but will commission authors to write for them -- where textbooks are concerned the authorship can often be joint, with teachers from different regions working in collaboration. This enlarges the scope of sale and acceptability of such books. (107)

Taking cognizance of the current literary situation it would not be incorrect to say that anthologies no more rely for their formation on the extraction of material which has already been published. Cris Mazza in her essay “In Finding the Chic in Literature” puts forth her experiences in producing anthologies that were formed out of the fresh material and invited calls for manuscripts. Jeffrey R. Di Leo states: “The Chick-Lit volumes reveal the generative power of anthologies to not only reveal and organize pre-existing bodies of texts but also to create them” (16). Nevertheless these volumes are exclusively devoted to women writers and cannot be offered as illuminating instances of excelling products of the market but as emblematic of the changing trends in the making of anthologies.³

The making of anthologies by the mode of seeking manuscripts is a phenomenon that could be discerned in Indian English poetry especially during a period when Oxford, Penguin and Macmillan, and Arnold Heinemann had actively involved themselves in publishing poetry; a genre which gradually realised its marketability. Bruce King indicates the new developments in the making of books:

The start of The New Poetry from Rupa series was amazing: an advertisement was placed in the newspapers seeking manuscripts which brought in a number of new faces including one of the best, the previously unknown Tabish Khair. The books were inexpensive and nicely designed. (277)
The publishers consider numerous issues prior to the publishing of a book. The production of anthologies in popular and the pedagogic is directly related to the editorial practices that are governed by the imperatives of the market. The production costs of the work are restricted to increase the profit margins. This includes the estimates of costs and net returns such as royalties, designing charges, promotion and printing costs. Further costs are settled in accordance with money spent on the layout, binding, format and illustrations in the work. Nevertheless the design, format, size and style of the book are made in accordance with the economic profile of the purchaser. However the physical factors not only become the predominant elements in the construction of the anthology but are also the chief objects that reflect what Benedict calls “mass packaging of literature” (“Eighteenth-Century” 385). They endeavour to act as crucial pronouncements on the quality of an anthology’s contents and govern its receptivity. Permission costs for best writers are at times so high that the editors and publishers are at times forced into entirely excluding such writers or limit the number of pages allotted to them.

Realising the negotiation and compromises that editorial practices lead to, Chaudhuri offers a lucid reflection on his selection criteria. That the number of words and pages allotted to a writer in an anthology are largely in accordance with his/her literary status and appeal in the market is a fact with which Chaudhuri admits his familiarity but refutes the observance of the same in his assortment:

I should point out here that the number of pages allocated in this book to a writer, or a language, is not indicative of his or her, or its standing in my eyes: a writer or a language with ten pages is not necessarily less significant than a writer or a language with twenty. (xxxii)

Significantly the weight and size of an anthology are crucial parameters that govern an anthology’s success in the market. Anne Ferry observes:

For the maker of an anthology, its size is a specially pressing issue because the choices of what and how much material it should contain are not predetermined to the degree that they are in collections limited to poems of a single author. (25)

In its second edition *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature* (2004) seems to be particularly alert towards this feature while in the process of creating a successful
pedagogical market for itself. The editors Henry Louis Gates and Nellie Y. Mc Kay are clearly conscious of not only what they would anthologize and thereby succeed in creating a canonical selection but also of the specific form in which they would make the selections available:

To often we had heard colleagues complain that they would teach African American literature “if only the texts were available “ in a form affordable to their students, meaning in a one- or two-volume anthology, rather than in a half dozen or more individual volumes.(xxix)

The editor’s also proclaim their consciousness of the politically enabling aspect of the work leading to the institutionalization, consolidation and incorporation of black literary tradition in the canonical teachings in academic departments of America: “A well edited, affordable anthology democratizes access” (xxix). The anthologizer is largely preoccupied with the issue of size since it determines the total number of entries that could be assorted and included in an anthology. Hence the number of writers and entries are definitely ascertained to the anthologizer who has to painfully limit himself to the selection of the predetermined number. The publisher of the Concise Anthology of American Literature states: “The best abridged anthology achieves a balance between including works of the highest literary significance and regretfully omitting long works of that significance in the name of practicality” (xiii). In the entire process the editor’s work in collaboration with the publishers who ensure the works compatibility to the needs of the market. To say that the anthologizer is free to select the writers according to his/her better judgement and critical acumen, once the size of the anthology is determined would also be incorrect since they do pay cognizance to writers with well established literary reputations.

A.V. Rajeswara Rau’s compilation dedicated to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Modern Indian Poetry: An Anthology is remarkable not only for being the first notable representative anthology but also for candidly stating the awareness of the anthologizer regarding the act of anthologizing. Humayun Kabir who wrote the foreword to this anthology states the limitations caused due to the considerations of space: “Even the editor will at times feel that he has been compelled to leave out pieces that he would fain include and included ones which would perhaps be better left out” (11). Equally vital is the concern to put Indian poetry through English translation on the literary map of the world: “English translations of the work
of Indian poets will help to bring their work into the common pool of the poetry of the world”
(12).

The limitations caused by space is certainly bedevilling to an act of anthologization at the
same time it is the crucial component that governs the framework of an anthology.
Anthologizers largely state their disdain for the observance of the same. Chaudhuri states:

Some famous names are, regrettably missing, but those can easily be found in
other anthologies, and in bookshops. Some writers I admire very much, are absent
again for reasons of space. (xxxiii)

Pritish Nandy and K. Ayappa Paniker acknowledge the restrictions caused by space
considerations as one that challenges an anthologist’s personal scale of assessment.

I would have also preferred to give a stronger slant to young writing and the new
poets who have come up during the past few years but considerations of space,
that perpetual scapegoat of all anthologists, and as sense of perspective prevented
me from doing so.4 (Nandy 1974, 22)

For want of space the works of many writers whom we consider important could
not be included. For the same reason we could not accommodate all the best
poems of the authors selected. (Paniker 19)

Most of the publishers have succeeded in releasing popular and pedagogical anthologies in
paperbacks. This certainly remains a profitable enterprise where the publishers as well as the
consumers can reap the benefits of producing and purchasing books (respectively) at lower
prices. After having reaped the benefits of hardcover editions in the market, the publishers
tend to release the paperback edition. Nevertheless the publisher might produce the text
originally in a paperback edition keeping in mind the economic status of the larger audience
towards which the product is directed.

Since paperback publishing has now witnessed an unprecedented fillip in India it targets
users who would want to have books at relatively cheaper rates. Paperback publishing keeps
a wider segment of reader in mind. Since these books are priced much lower than hardback
editions they afford a fruitful opportunity for the publishers to target different classes of the
buyers, simultaneously incurring more profit through huge sales. However libraries in India
have shown a low receptivity towards such editions as they cannot ensure a prolonged usage
because of its physical form. K.S. Duggal states spiralling prices and expansion of paperback
outfits as significant reasons behind the flourishing of paperback industry: “Vikas has a paperback outfit in Bell Books, Arnold Heinemann in May fair, Orient Longman in Sangam, India Book House in Pearl and Echo, Oxford University Press in Three Coins” (qtd. in Das 2004, 23).

Nevertheless the costly editions of the anthologies flourishing majorly in hardbacks act as manifestations of a particular culture. They act “as a precious institution of culture” (Korte 27). Hardback editions of anthologies target a particular layer of readers, largely belonging to the elite class. The historical survey of anthologies present typographically embellished works, with glossy jackets, expensive bindings, enticing illustrations as marking particular efforts of the editors and the publisher towards the physical glamour of the work keeping in mind the upper segment of the reader that it wishes to target. Francis Turner Palgrave’s *The Golden Treasury of English Songs and Lyrics* (1861) was released in an expensive edition keeping in mind the tastes of an elite readership.

![Figure 2. Gold bordered boards used in the making of high priced books.](image1)

![Figure 3. The use of gilt bordered boards in the first edition of Palgrave’s *The Golden Treasury* (1861).](image2)
Historical anthologies that bring to fore the literary culture of an era also work towards a revisionist view. However anthologies that are exclusively devoted to a revisionist approach are flourishing in the market by commercial and non-profit publishing houses as an endurable component of the market. In this a selection that is revised according to the contemporary standards and requirements is presented before the readers. Anthologies of women writing, Dalit writings, African-American writings and of other marginalized sections generally fall into this category. The revisionist element fostered by publishers through the medium of anthologies has witnessed an enormous growth and appeal. Barbara Korte emphasizes its value “in the current climate of postmodern decentredness, highly marketable, so that O’ Brien’s The Firebox with its survey of post-second world war poetry is advertised in its blurb as an “authoritative selection” that provides a “timely reassessment of the contemporary canon” (16).

However Indian English poetry as a genre, has witnessed an augmented growth in the post Independence era. Vilas Sarang, while acknowledging an upward movement in the reception of poetry, did not refrain from remarking scathingly on the status of poetry during the decade of 90s:

Publishers have not helped brighten the Indian English poetry scene. Poets everywhere and in all languages fare poorly with publishers, but the Indian English poet has had the worst of it. (3)

The number of poetry anthologies released by leading commercial publishing houses bear testimony to the fact that inspite of a small market for profit that poetry witnessed it continued to be written and acknowledged. Penguin Modern Poetry 2 (1962), Pergamon Poets 9: Poetry from India, (1970), Nandy’s Indian Poetry in English: 1947-1972 (1972), Parthasarthy’s Ten Twentieth-Century Indian Poets (1976). Daruwalla’s, Two Decades of Indian Poetry: 1960-1980 (1980), Sarang’s Indian English Poetry Since 1950. (1988) are some of the anthologies by leading commercial publishers that amply testify to the support extended by renowned publishers to augment poetry in its early years of development through anthologies.

A notable proliferation of poetry anthologies in Indian English writing might as well be viewed as a phenomenon that is a part of the myriad economic considerations that go into the
making of an anthology. As a genre poetry has witnessed an enormous fondness and advancement by the anthologizer. Why poetry becomes a preferred marketable genre especially in anthologies remains a question that might at once vex and intrigue us. The generic appropriation of poetry to the act of anthologization has been linked to many factors Barbara M. Benedict observes:

Since poems compact language, they can pile meaning in layers rather than through narrative, and thus remain short without losing significance. Anthologies which by definition hold more than two works, could therefore expand to include a lot of poems, and offer literally more to the readers. (234)

Anthologization of poetry facilitates an inclusion of a larger number of poets. Nevertheless the length of an individual entry is substantive in judging the total number of entries that could be assorted. If marked by brevity, the work assures an incorporation of more writers. However the adroit practices of the anthologizer makes an aesthetic virtue of a desirable economic necessity. By promoting “conceptual spatialization” (Ferry 26) in an anthology brevity is promoted overtly on the basis of its “aesthetic desirability” (Ferry 25). Ferry states:

--- the explicit excuse usually made for cutting stanzas from longer entries is that the shortened version can more powerfully affect the reader. Implicit is the notion that what is most poetical is experienced in small proportion. (25)

Saleem Peeradina’s *Contemporary Indian Poetry in English: An Assessment and Selection* (1971) published by Macmillan India brings together fourteen poets and seventy two entries in one hundred and twenty four pages. R. Parthasarthy in *Ten Twentieth-Century Indian Poets* (1976) offers an assortment of fifty two entries of ten poets in a slim paperback edition of one hundred and thirteen pages. However the pages devoted to poetry including the headnotes are not more than ninety five. Vilas Sarang’s collection *Indian English Poetry Since 1950* includes eighteen poets with more than ninety three pieces in one hundred and ten pages. Nandy’s *Modern Indian Poetry* published by Arnold Heinemann in Delhi and London in the year 1974 is a collection of sixty poets and one hundred and fifty four entries.

Every individual entry irrespective of its length appears on a single page with the only exception of the longer poems that are allotted another page to fit in well. Despite the use of ample space the anthology incorporates all the one hundred and fifty four pieces in roughly two hundred pages. Apparently the collection is made aesthetically and physically pleasing to
the eyes of the readers. Mehrotra’s *Twelve Modern Indian Poets* (1992) by Oxford India Paperbacks is a more canonically astute collection of twelve poets. Excluding the preface, acknowledgements, introduction, headnotes, bibliography and indexes the collection includes one hundred and thirty seven entries in not more than one hundred and five pages.

*The Oxford Anthology of Modern Indian Poetry* (1994) by Dharwadker and Ramanujan has incorporated almost hundred and twenty five writers in a slim paperback collection. However it is notable that leaving aside the preface, contents, notes and the critical essay the book offers an amalgamation of these poets in one hundred and eighty pages. Had it been any genre other than poetry it would have taken its toll on the selective list of the writers to be included. Gokak in *The Golden Treasury* anthologises more than hundred poets. Excluding the preface, introduction and the indexes these poets are covered in two hundred and thirty nine pages. The works of Sri Aurobindo, Sarojini Naidu and Harindranath Chattopadhyaya have been notably anthologized by the inclusion of large number of specimens. (nine, twelve and eleven respectively).

As compared to poetry anthologies the compilations of short stories, plays and essays do not succeed in incorporating numerous writers. Such anthologies certainly impose a restriction on the number of writers and entries to be included. *Tales from Modern India* (1966) by K. Natwar Singh released by the Macmillan company collects translated and original writings in English by thirteen writers where each writer is represented by minimum one and maximum two entries. In the present selection twenty stories by thirteen writers are allotted more than two hundred and fifty pages.

Indian Plays (2000) edited by Chandrashekhar Kambar and released by the National school of Drama is a multi-volume heavy anthology of eight plays by different writers in five hundred and fifty nine pages. Anthological compilation like Another India (1990) is an intelligible collection by Penguin that attempts to appease a larger readership. Edited by Nissim Ezekiel and Meenakshi Mukherjee the anthology portrays an astute attempt to entice the readers by offering fiction and poetry under one roof. In more than two hundred and seventy pages it brings together the works of forty four contemporary writers.

The preoccupation with size by leading commercial publisher like Penguin, clearly govern the aesthetic choices of the editors. Meenakshi Mukherjee in the preface to her selection refers to the impositions laid on her as an editor by her publisher which coerced her into a decision where she had to act against her better judgement:

I had gone through English translations of scores of short stories and novels from different Indian languages and selected for the journal what seemed the best. Further elimination, as demanded by the size of the Penguin volume, was painful and has had to be done somewhat arbitrarily. (13)

Nevertheless though poetry as genre readily procures the favour of the anthologizer but purveying the wide list of compilations available in the market one could not be faulted into believing that anthology has explored multiple realms beyond poetry. Essays, epigrams, stories, quotes and anecdotes have also rendered their form as suitable for anthologizing. Though Indian English poetry was promoted by the formation of many poetry societies, release of new magazines and was formally introduced as a course of study in universities in India and abroad the fact remains that the publishers were trying hard to create its market and to explore the success of the genre in terms of its economic value. However an anthology’s form does not offer its suitability to novel. Novels even when included in abridged form in an anthology do pose a threat to an anthology’s capaciousness. M.H. Abrams and Stephen Greenblatt observe:

The novel is, of course, a stumbling block for an anthology. The length of many great novels defies their incorporation in any volume that hopes to include a broad spectrum of literature. At the same time it is difficult to excerpt representative passages from narratives whose power often depends upon amplitude or upon the slow development of character or upon the on-rushing urgency of the story. (xxxvi)
However in order to make the anthology more representative and spectacularly abundant in its generic variety the editor’s point towards the general tendency of the publishers to include not the works but the “remarkable achievements of novelists” (xxxvi)

Salman Rushdie and Elizabet West have succeeded in excerpting this genre and practically endeavour to explore its market through anthologies. Indian English fiction in English witnessed an enormous burgeoning in the international market particularly during the end of 1990's. The Vintage Book of Indian Writing 1947-1997 (1997) jointly edited by Salman Rushdie and Elizabeth West and Amit Chaudhuri’s The Picador Book of Modern Indian Literature (2001) have taken cognizance of the trends of the market that already celebrated:

… the rapid rise to success of authors such as Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Arundhati Roy, Vikram Seth, Rohinton Mistry, Vikram Chandra and many others. These collections propose an image of a national literature that largely coincides with the anthologization of novel or short story as the privileged genre of the subcontinental literary canon. (Srivastava 154)

Nevertheless the process of excerption and generic preferences that one encounters in this work reveal the collections by Rushdie and Chaudhuri as standing sufficient opportunity to send the cash registers of the publishing houses ringing. Novel was a genre that could appease the needs of the market. Arundhati Roy’s The God of Small Things (1997), winner of the Booker prize had an enormous influence in creating a market for it. The content of the blurb in India Today on 27th of October 1997 acknowledged Roy’s book as a significant object invigorating the market: “Arundhati Roy opens up the global market for Indian writing in English” (qtd. by Ghosh 8). The process of promoting fiction was also accomplished by anthologies that excerpted fiction. Srivastava notes the trends of the market as imparting strength to the literary process in preponderant ways:

Rushdie and West were thus canonizing a genre, the novel, and a language, English, that were made to be both representative and constitutive of Indian writing as a whole. Compiled with the stated intention to bring Indian literary production into the arena of world literature, “where India has been undersized for too long” (xxii), the book effectively completed the process of canonization of Indian writing as a globalized literary product. (157)
The economic advantageousness of the anthologies yields the readers a literary variety as viewed in the case of world literature, multicultural and multidisciplinary anthologies. Set in relation to the anthologies representing a specific literary culture such works establish a lucrative market by offering a global literary contentment offered to the readers together with the “version of cosmopolitanism” (Sabin 91) embodied enormously in such works. Margery Sabin views: “In case of Indian writing, the very number of anthologies testifies to the dramatic increase in Western interest since 1980, when Salman Rushdie’s *Midnights Children* burst upon the international prize and best seller lists” (90). The collections by Picador and Vintage are exemplary works in terms of being books of literary merit as well as the products governed in diverse ways by the rules of the market. I primarily intend to ponder over the features which make these anthologies worthy contestants in the market.

The two anthologies that I examine are devoted to a specific literary culture that has been assembled and presented to the readers through the illuminating though varied insights of their anthologizers. Sabin points towards the relevance of such anthologies predominantly at a moment: “…when academic publishers such as Norton and Bedford are making their biggest investments in huge anthologies of world literature” (90). Salman Rushdie’s anthology was first published in 1997 by ‘Vintage’ and Chaudhuri’s book came three years after its predecessor (if I may use the term since both anthologies have the names of established and leading publishers to back them up and anthologise specific literary culture in this case being Modern Indian Literature). The former anthology was released by the ‘Vintage’- commercial publication house of Great Britain. Rushdie’s editorship was at once a mark of assurance to the readers that the work flourished under the patronage of a well established and a worldwide recognized literary personality and afforded a productive opportunity for the publishers to what Barbara Benedict calls “capitalizing on the poet’s fame” (379). The international fame that Rushdie had already collected assures the readers as well as the publishers of the enormous practice of an authentic critical acumen that would have governed the process of selection in his anthology.

The year picked up by Rushdie is 1947 which marks India’s independence from colonial bondage. To a western as well as a non-western reader the year signifies a crucial historical point in the social, political, cultural and literary development of India. Rushdie and Elizabeth West displayed their astute judgement in the selection of the year that interests the readers across the world to know the literary changes and progress in India as marking the beginning of true modern Indian literature. Rushdie uses the space provided in the introduction to justify
the aesthetic principles that govern his selection and the first among these is the language issue. Rushdie clearly assigns a superior literary place to Indian English writing:

This is it: the prose writing -- both fiction and non-fiction; created in this period by Indian writers working in English, is proving to be a stronger and more important body of work than most of what has been produced in the 16 ‘official languages’ of India, the so-called ‘vernacular languages’, during the same time; and, indeed, this new, and still burgeoning, ‘Indo-Anglian’ literature represents perhaps the most valuable contribution India has yet made to the world of books. (x)

In the selective principles that govern Rushdie’s selection the work seems to address the world and has kept a larger audience in mind. Rushdie proposes his work as a project of global relevance, providing a platform to the Indian writers who endeavour to address a global audience.

The short story “Toba Tek Singh” is the only translated text making the “final cut” (x) and Rushdie affirms the inadequacies prevalent in literary sphere of translation as the reason behind this lopsidedness. Rushdie further claims a position for his work by taking cognizance of the standards based on international level and requirements:

The point about the power of the English language, and of the Western publishing and critical fraternities, also contains some truth. Perhaps it does seem, to some ‘home’ commentators, that a canon is being foisted on them from outside. The perspective from the West is rather different. Here, what seems to be the case is that Western publishers and critics have been growing gradually more and more excited by the voices emerging from India; in England at least, British writers are often chastised by reviewers for their lack of Indian-style ambition and verve. It feels as if the East is imposing itself on the West, rather than the other way around. (Rushdie xv)

On the question of literary citizenship and location Rushdie observes “Literature has little or nothing to do with a writer’s home address” (xv). However Rushdie is not compromising “a profound knowledge of the soul of India” (xv) in his selection to the merits of English language or an abandoned question of literary citizenship. The anthology includes the work of almost all notable Indian English writers including Nayantara Sahgal, G.V. Desani, Nirad
C. Chaudhuri, Kamala Markandaya, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, Ved Mehta, Anita Desai, Robinton Mistry, Amitav Ghosh, Kiran Desai, Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy and many more. Rushdie’s assemblage boasts the inclusion of not only the predominantly notable writers but also of the ones who have largely been ignored such as Ruth Prawer Jhabvala. Rushdie writes:

As a writer, she is sometimes under-rated in India because, I think, the voice of the rootless intellectual (so quintessentially her voice) is such an unfamiliar one in that country where people’s self-definitions are so rooted in their regional identities. (xix)

The literary position of G.V. Desani has also been restored in the anthology. Rushdie observes:

The writer I have placed along side Narayan, G.V. Desani, has fallen so far from favour that the extraordinary *All About H. Hatterr* is presently out of print everywhere, even in India. (xviii)

The editors regret V.S. Naipaul’s exclusion from the book. Having emerged as a notable voice of contemporary literary scenario in India his absence is chiefly regretted by Rushdie: “V.S. Naipaul, is regrettably absent from this book, not by our choice, but by his own” (xix).

Analysing the multiple accounts of loss and dislocation dominating the editor’s assemblage Sabin questions an authentic representation of modern Indian literature:

Rushdie’s writers constitute the Indo-Anglian branch of a new migratory community of intellectuals, affiliated as much with one another as with their “families” at home. Rushdie interestingly wants his anthology to work in what might seem opposite ways: he offers his Indian writers for “world literature”; at the same time he wants them recognized as an important team with a collective ethnic identity. (94)

The association of the assemblage with “world literature” brings to the mind its literary merit governed by targeting a larger audience and making the work a literary and commercial success. Further the editorial excellence of the anthology lies not only in its coherent narrative design but also in the generic variety which is presented to the readers as a primary feature of enticement. The anthology begins with Jawaharlal Nehru’s “Tryst with Destiny”
which was the speech broadcasted on the eve of Independence Day in August 1947. Nayantara Sahgal’s “With Pride and Prejudice” is the second piece included in the anthology and is excerpted from the writer’s memoir Prison and Chocolate. Manto’s “Toba Tek Singh” is a short story that highlights the conflict faced by a certified lunatic who refuses to acknowledge the Partition by insisting on dwelling exactly on the border.

Anita Desai’s short story “Games at Twilight” is set in relation to Ved Mehta’s memoir “exceptional for the acuteness, poignancy and unsentimental humour with which the world of childhood is entered, and revealed” (Rushdie xix). Nirad C. Chaudhuri’s autobiographical work “My Birthplace” is the next piece to be excerpted. The generic variety exhibited in the anthology can be valued as a rewarding element of anthologization that certainly increases the receptivity of the work. The anthology which was published both in paperback and hardcover incorporated all the essential features to make its place in the market. Marked by the literary appeal of its editor, the generic and literary variety that it presents, and the clever selection of the beginning of modern Indian literature (relating to the year of independence), the work presents its entries without hampering the readings with any professional and editorial apparatus.

The Picador Book of Modern Indian Literature edited by Amit Chaudhuri first published in 2001 by Picador an imprint of Macmillan Publishers Ltd and also published by the Vintage under the title The Vintage Book of Modern Indian Literature in 2004 offers an assemblage that gives to the Indian and Western reader the illuminating ways to peruse modern Indian literature. The first striking feature of the anthology is the fact that at the very outset it sets itself as a rival to the Vintage collection by Salman Rushdie and Elizabeth West. The first issue Chaudhuri attacks, pertains to the literary citizenship which Rushdie claims, is least concerned with the writer’s home address. Chaudhuri questions:

Can it be true that Indian writing, that endlessly rich, complex and problematic entity, is to represented by a handful of writers who write in English, who live in England or America and whom one might have met at a party, most of whom have published no more than two novels, some of them only one? More importantly, is it possible to assess properly and appreciate the merits of this handful of writers without any recourse to the diverse intellectual traditions to which they do or do not belong? (xvii)
Chaudhuri views a reawakening in Indian English writing. However he also takes cognizance of the vagaries of the literary world governed by the dictates of the market and a simultaneous desire to offer pieces of literary merit. He states:

How much of the resurgence has to be with what publishers in England consider the marketability of Indian fiction, and how much of it is genuine achievement, will take at least twenty or thirty years, or more, to decide. (xvii)

If Rushdie’s work gains extended credibility on account of the author’s literary status one witnesses Chaudhuri’s work gaining recognition by offering another illuminating piece that boasts the latter’s pertinent anthologization offering a varied perspective on the periodization and historicization of modern Indian literature. Beginning the work with the restoration of Rabindranath Tagore is not the only feature that marks ‘newness’ or novelty offered by this work but is a deliberate effort whereby Chaudhuri intends to trace the beginning of modern Indian literature with the Bengal Renaissance. Unlike Rushdie’s work it is not the year of independence but the mid-nineteenth century which is seen as marking the notable processes in the Indian literary scenario:

The continuing marketability of India should come as no surprise; nor should it surprise us that intelligent people appear to lend, fitfully their support to this phenomenon. The first global star or celebrity in literature was not an Englishman or an American, but an Indian, Rabindranath Tagore. (Chaudhuri xviii)

Chaudhuri views colonialism as an era that was crucial in displaying the changes and progress in the identity of the native individual. By incorporating entries that flourished in British India he offers a periodization of literature that differs from Rushdie’s at once. He states:

The only way India enters history, is evidently, via colonialism; and as colonialism is seen basically as an encounter between Western colonizer and native colonized, it is perhaps fair to say that colonial India is interesting, because, at least in one crucial sense, it is a part of Western history. (xix)

With the inclusion of excerpted works of the eminent writers of mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century Chaudhuri stirs the interest of the West in knowing an Indian’s response to changes stimulated by colonialism. However he admits:
If a Western reader should turn to this extraordinary literature in Bengali and expect to find some sort of simple response to colonialism, he or she will be disappointed; the response is complex, subtle, varied and profound; the colonial world is represented, in these fictions, as history, contemporaneity, memory and change, by, for instance, the post office and the railways, by the names of roads, by professions, and old and new ways of life, rather than the figure of the British oppressor. (xix)

That the work predominantly has a ‘Western reader’ in mind is clearly unmistakable. The editor addresses issues that might be unsettling and intriguing for the Western reader including the language issue. Chaudhuri gives recognition to the vernacular literature and stands in direct contrast to Rushdie’s preferences. He states:

And, in order to study the most profound impact of Western, and English, culture on a non-Western one, in order to study the most complex response to that cross-fertilization in India (which, in itself, represents one of the most important, and neglected, intellectual developments in the modern world), one must turn not to the English language and the way it is used in India, but to Bengali, Hindi, Urdu, Marathi, Tamil and the other vernacular tongues. (xxi)

He further observes “English is not an Indian language in the way that Bengali or Urdu, for instance is one” (xxii). Having included eighteen writers in English and twenty in the vernacular languages, Chaudhuri goes on to affirm newness as a criterion for his selection. The ability of the work to reflect on the largely unexplored areas in a writer’s work in particular and literature in general have largely succeeded in gaining the editors consent for inclusion. The generic variety that the work might seem to showcase excludes poetry.

The literary form I most love, poetry, is absent too, for the same reason; the extract from Vikram Seth’s The Golden Gate is in verse, but it is included here as an example of hybridized narrative fiction rather than of poetry. (Chaudhuri xxxiii)

However excerpts and works from essays, memoirs, novels and letters are amply present in the anthology. The newness that the anthology incorporates can be seen to be embodied in subtle ways. Chaudhuri writes:
The fact that some of the most rewarding work in English has been done outside of the domain of fiction, in the essay and the memoir, has also been reconfirmed to me during my work on this project. (xxxiii)

However though Chaudhuri states the work to be not considered as “a riposte to any other anthology” (xxxiii), the fact remains that whether intended or not in its process of selection and its predominant stances, on the issues of language, literature and literary allegiances it does present a stark contrast to the collection by Rushdie and West. Rushdie’s and Chaudhuri’s anthologies extend two distinct set of experiences to the readers. However as products of the market the anthologies endorse a formation that ensures them a sustained longevity and an enormous market potential. The works intend to entice a larger audience; predominantly the Western reader. The alluring generic variety, the element of newness, and a revised periodization of the Indian literary culture are some of the essential features whereby these anthologies appease a generously proportioned readership and allure the market.
Endnotes

1 The term “revisionist anthology” is used by Barbara Korte in her book Anthologies of British Poetry: Critical Perspectives from Literary and Cultural Studies. She describes it as “collections specifically intended to publish the work of and for merely silenced or marginalized groups of poets, thus challenging prevailing notions of the state of poetry” (17).

2 An account of the regular prices of the books has been taken into consideration. The prices offered by selective sites or under promotional schemes and offers may vary.

3 Barbara Benedict denies the commonly held perceptions according to which anthologies are constructed from the material that is already published and lies between the covers and miscellanies are formed out of entirely new literary constructions. Benedict states: “In historical practice, however, this is not a meaningful distinction since miscellanies could include outdated material as copy laden printers and copyright-rich booksellers determined, and anthologies deliberately designed to last, like Robert Dodsley’s Collection of Poems By Several Hands included freshly commissioned poems” (231).

4 Italics added

5 For details see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palgrave’s_Golden_Treasury

6For details see http://www.library.unt.edu/rarebooks/exhibits/binding/’880s