

## 1 Anthologising Anthologies

Anthologies can be powerful tastemakers; historically, they have been responsible for creating and standardising a national canon of literature, whilst offering more opportunities for an emerging society of readers (Price, 2000; Benedict, 2018). However, more recently, anthologies have challenged notions of canonisation by promoting new and underrepresented authors and stories (Lauter, 2004; Damrosch & Spivak, 2011). Despite their long publishing history and the importance of anthologies in canonisation, tastemaking, and challenges to both canonisation and tastemaking, little scholarly research has been written on this area. In fact, only two core monographs focusing on anthologies have been published to date: *Making the Modern Reader: Cultural Mediation in Early Modern Literary Anthologies* (2018) by Barbara M. Benedict and *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel* by Leah Price (2000). It is no surprise that the authors of these books address this fact. For example, Price (2000) argues, ‘although literary critics spend at least as much time quoting out of context as do literary anthologists, the profession that teaches anthologies has provided few theories of the genre’ (p. 2). This Element contributes to the theorisation of anthologies by building upon such studies and bringing discussions firmly into twenty-first-century Young Adult Fiction (YA) publishing. Primarily, this Element is concerned with the transformative role that Western Anglophone anthologies play in challenging the established norms of YA authorship and the representation of socially marginalised groups.

### *Outline of Element*

This chapter provides a brief history of how the anthology, as a form, developed alongside the changes in the publishing industry, copyright law, and authorship during the Early Modern period.<sup>1</sup> It examines how modern

<sup>1</sup> Due to space constraints, this Element will not discuss the earliest instances of anthology-like collections in ancient civilisations, such as classical Chinese poetry collections (e.g. the *Shih Ching*) and Greek epigram collections (see: Baumbach et al., 2010; Yu, 2018). This Element will focus on Western Anglophone anthologies.

anthologies began to focus on authors from socially marginalised groups and how this contributed to the development of inclusion, diversity, and identity-formation, challenged the canon, and continue to do so to this day. These conversations and histories are contextualised within the field of young adult literature (YA) in Chapters 2 and 3. By analysing the history of anthologies, this Element identifies patterns of exclusion that have persisted over time. These patterns often have deep historical roots. Recognising these patterns is essential for addressing ongoing issues of exclusion in contemporary literature and working towards greater inclusivity. Chapter 2 details the development of YA anthologies, using a selection of key YA Anthology texts to understand and map the evolution of this genre (and the subgenres within it). This history focuses on: Queer YA; Race and Ethnicity; Bodies and Minds; and Activism. It analyses anthologies that centre on, or at least include, authors from socially marginalised groups. The field of YA often tackles a wide range of social issues, including racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, classism, and more (Cart, 2016). Analysing the representation of these marginalised identities in YA therefore offers valuable insights into the ways in which exclusionary dynamics operate within the field. However, most of the examples discussed in Chapters 2 are US-centric. This is because the United States (US) has a very large and influential YA market, which impacts reading cultures across the world (including the UK) (Jenkins & Cart, 2018; Ramdarshan Bold, 2021). Anthologies are, and have historically been, a communal endeavour. From the collective nature of manuscript coteries, which made up early miscellanies and were the forerunner to the more formal anthologies in the eighteenth century, to the anthologies we know today: anthologies showcase the relationship between the writer, booksellers/publishers, and reader (Benedict, 2003). Chapter 3 explores this relationship to understand if and how YA anthologies are fostering a space where contributors can develop individual and collective identities. Importantly, especially to counter the US-centricity of YA, Chapter 3 presents a case study of a British YA (UKYA) anthology, situating the discussion within a British context. This helps us reflect upon and understand what British inclusive youth literature tells us about the UK today.

*Form and Function*

An anthology is a compilation of different works by various authors, often centred around a different theme, genre, time period, or country/culture (Price, 2000; Di Leo, 2004; Benedict, 2018). The exact definition of what an anthology is varies: neither publishers nor scholars have settled on uniform terminology. William Germano, the former vice president and publishing director of Routledge, suggests two categories: collections and anthologies. This is based on the level of editorial activity each requires. Collections, Germano (2001) argues, are ‘gatherings of new or mostly new writing’; this requires the editor to seek contributors, and commission work from their networks. Anthologies, on the other hand, are ‘previously published or mostly previously published work’, which means editors collate ‘the best of what has been thought and said’ (p. 121): this reflects the original distinction, which will be detailed later in this chapter. Prescott (2016, p. 565) describes the latter, where the short story may have been published in a magazine or another publication, as the ‘standard route’. Conversely, he calls anthologies that bring new writing to the fore, including through prizes, ‘adventurous’. ‘Adventurous’ anthologies, or collections that feature new writing and genre or popular fiction, can be seen as prompt and opportunistic forays into the market, while collections of ‘previously published or mostly previously published work’ strive to make enduring and impactful contributions to the field, regardless of their commercial success. This Element focuses on the ‘adventurous’ anthologies, the collections of new writing, and what this means not only for the genre but for the publishing industry in general. It looks specifically at curated collections that bring together the work of several authors (instead of the collected works of one author). For example, Chapter 3 presents an illuminating exploratory case study focused on the *A Change Is Gonna Come* YA anthology, which was published by Stripes/Little Tiger in 2017, specifically to tackle issues of exclusion in British publishing and writing. This anthology serves as an exemplar of how these collections can be catalysts for profound change, not only within the literary landscape but also within society at large.

Related to the topic of this Element are the numerous studies, in recent years, that have argued how exclusionary the English-language publishing industries are (Saha, 2017; Ramdarshan Bold, 2019a, 2019b; So, 2020). In the UK and the US, publishing is dominated by global, transmedia conglomerates that favour certain genres, languages, and types of authors, and those who do not fall within certain categories have found themselves writing and publishing on the margins. Historically, anthologies have been central in instituting a restricted canon. Jarrell (1994, p.9) observes that ‘Any anthology is, as the dictionary says, a bouquet – a bouquet that leaves out most of the world’s flowers’. Anthologies, like bouquets, are carefully curated to display the individual stories or poems within the collection but ultimately reflect the choice and tastes of the selector. Consequently, ‘anthologies are more than a referendum. They determine not simply who gets published or what gets read, but who reads, and how’ (Price, 2000, p.3). For example, when considering the creation of an African American literary canon and the role of African American literature in creating counternarratives, Henry Louis Gates, Jr contends, ‘a well-marked anthology functions in the academy to create a tradition, as well as to defend and present it’ (Gates, 1992, p.31). Anthologies can, therefore, have a valuable role in expanding the circulation and awareness of literature by authors from socially marginalised groups, particularly racialised (i.e. Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) authors;<sup>2</sup> literature that

<sup>2</sup> No terminology used to describe people’s ‘race’ and ethnicity is perfect, and language is evolving continuously. Throughout this Element, Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) and Black and People of Colour (BPOC: UK terminology) are used as general terms to describe people, specifically authors, from racially marginalised groups. As the author of this Element, I acknowledge the problems associated with using acronyms to capture the complex histories and cultures of racially marginalised people. I also acknowledge that people within these groups have distinct and different identities, and that this also differs across national contexts; the terms are used as a social identity that reflects shared cultures and experiences. Black refers to people from the African diaspora. Black is a distinct category from People of Colour because Black people face higher levels of discrimination than any other racialised group. Wherever possible, precise terminology to describe the specific ethnicity of a person or group will be used.

has been historically overlooked by traditional publishing in the UK (and the US). The open and flexible nature of the format means that readers can approach the content from different points and make different connections between the texts. Bond (2019) argues that this makes anthologies a participatory genre and, as such, can be ‘vehicles for collective action’ (p.168). Consequently, this Element explores the social and cultural functions of anthologies in relation to discussions around exclusion and inclusion in the publishing industry, and charts how this has developed over the years.

### *A [Brief] History of Anthologies*

During the Early Modern period, there was a significant movement in literature: from the oral tradition to print culture in Europe, and books as an elite product to a mass-produced commodity (Benedict, 2003). Anthologies were a part of this shift. Early anthologies – or miscellanies, as they were more accurately called – were not collected by the quality, or even the content, of the work, but by convenience. Miscellanies have a potted history: booksellers often pieced together remaindered materials – poems, sermons, plays – loosely group by genre or theme. There was no formal structure or formula to these loosely grouped collections: in fact, they were quite haphazard, including anything from two to a hundred pieces of work from one, or dozens of authors (Benedict, 2003). These roughly assembled pieces were often in response to the trends and fashions of the day to provide ‘variety and novelty’ (Price, 2000, p.4). The haphazard miscellanies developed into something more commercial after the post-Interregnum society: there was a growing number of writers and readers, and booksellers decided to capitalise on this with printed anthologies. The booksellers were involved in most aspects of the production process: from initiating the process to distributing and advertising the works. Consequently, Benedict (2003) argues that ‘the story of the anthology in the period is very much a story of booksellers’ innovation’ (p.36).

Booksellers in the mid-sixteenth century created a more commercial marketplace, which was a result of the rise in literacy and a change in the religious and political climate (Feather, 2006). The term ‘publisher’, as we know it now, was not used until the eighteenth century, and even in the eighteenth century it was

used to describe someone who arranged and financed the project. During this period, the term ‘bookseller’ was more commonly used because ‘publishing’ was seen as an additional activity for members of the book trade (Sher, 2006). The advent of copyright legislation engendered the advent of ‘publishers’ because it reduced the importance of both bookbinders and printers, which enabled the publisher – or the bookseller as they were known then – to become the dominant figure in the book trade (Patterson, 1968). These booksellers – the early publishers – hired other people to write and print books, so they had to make money elsewhere. The anthology was a genre that profited from copyright. Booksellers could collect works for which they owned the copyright, and repackaged them as a new book to maximise profit (Benedict, 2003). Additionally, fashionable poets – such as Samuel Johnson and John Gay – were recruited as editors to confer prestige on publications. Booksellers began targeting different audiences with different formats: books were kept at a high price, for wealthy readers, while lower-cost pamphlets were aimed at less wealthy readers (Benedict, 2003).

Anthologies have, historically, had a synergic function; it was, and still is to some extent, a genre in which booksellers/publishers, authors, and readers could collaborate (McKenzie, 2002). Benedict (2003, 2015) and Crawford (2023) have argued that the collaborative form and function of anthologies can liberate them from rigid structures. As Benedict (2015) argues, ‘[anthologies] pull language out of legal frameworks and decentralize literary culture [...] by their subversive deferral of a central authority’ (p.221). In fact, Benedict (2015) extols the unifying role of the bookseller:

Literary anthologies influenced writers as much as readers, and made booksellers participants in the creation of culture [...]. They are partly responsible, in fact, for binding a fractured society by making easily available a shared body of various texts, for England at the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660, following the divisive English Civil War (1642–49) and Interregnum, was a diverse society [...]. The late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century anthology helped to unify British society and to induct new classes of readers – women, the under-educated – into literary culture. (p.36)

The literary anthology genre grew and developed during the long eighteenth century to the early Victorian period. The anthology, which offered literary variety, was one of the most important genres for readers and writers by the eighteenth century (Benedict, 2003). After a period of censorship, there was a growing number of readers, across social class and genders, in Restoration England (MacLean, 1994). By the end of the eighteenth century, anthologies were influential in establishing a British literary canon (Bonnell, 2008). There was a boom in literary anthologies, in the UK, in the mid-nineteenth century. These anthologies, a mix of short stories and poetry, were typically gift books aimed at young women. Such gift books also included annual anthologies, which were important for genre development and raising the visibility of topical writing. These annuals, and short story magazines in general,<sup>3</sup> were an important source of income for women writers in the nineteenth century (Prescott, 2016). Additionally, literature, as a field of study, was introduced into the British school classroom in the late nineteenth century; so, this period saw anthologies, as a classroom textbook, flourish. In the UK, literary anthologies have been used in mass education more widely since the twentieth century (Banta, 1993). Anthologies based around a specific theme or time period have been used, by secondary and higher educators, to develop pupils/students reading range. For example, the English Association<sup>4</sup> published its own anthologies – *English Short Stories of Today*, to showcase prominent authors – such as H. G. Wells and John Galsworthy – to school pupils. The inclusion of postcolonial authors, such as Chinua Achebe and V.S. Naipaul, in the fourth series published in 1976, showed the new developments in canon-formation (Prescott, 2016).

‘Modern’ anthologies proliferated in the mid-twentieth century; however, there was an uncertainty around their status. Concerns focused on ‘the challenges of narrative experimentation and modernist innovation’ (Prescott, 2016, p.570). In the introduction to *Modern English Short Stories 1930–1955* (1956), editor Derek Hudson concluded, ‘this much is certain – that

<sup>3</sup> Such as, the short-lived, *The Yellow Book*.

<sup>4</sup> The English Association was established in 1906 to promote English Studies in schools. Their first anthology was published in 1939.

these stories do not derive from a dying art' (p.xiv). Christopher Dolley, who would take over from Allen Lane as Chairman and Managing Director of Penguin Books in 1969, echoed these sentiments over a decade later. In his editorial foreword to the *Penguin Book of English Short Stories*, Dolley (1967, p.5) emphasises the focus on modern writing:

The aim of this collection is to appeal to the reader at large. No attempt has been made to conduct a historical survey of the English short story, and the collection starts in the mid nineteenth century, from which date the short story developed as a recognizable genre.

Furthermore, he stresses the healthy nature of the genre, 'The short story still flourishes.' The disquiet about the genre is reiterated in the foreword to the Second *Penguin Book of English Stories*, published in 1972, in which Dolley writes (about the multi-language companion editions): 'their publication has demonstrated that, far from continuing its supposed decline, the short story is enjoying a revival' (1972, p.7). However, Hudson and Dolly's concerns were unfounded: the *Penguin Book of English Stories*, for example, has been reprinted frequently in the last, almost, fifty years (Prescott, 2016).<sup>5</sup>

Much previous scholarship centres upon the type of anthologies where poems, prose, and essays are removed from their original home and placed in a new one, often out of context (Gerson, 1989; Pace, 1992; Mujica, 1997). This type of anthology is often, as Germano (2001) suggests, 'unfairly regarded with some disdain, as if the anthology were in itself a middlebrow enterprise, crafted to eliminate the difficult or the provocative' (p.136). In fact, Epstein (2001) goes as far as to say, 'Anthologies serve no literary purpose, usually find few readers and quickly go out of print' (p.139–40). However, Price (2000) demonstrates how various literary genres from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, such as the gothic and the epistolary novel, were significantly influenced by readers' desire to have their components featured in anthologies. This allowed

<sup>5</sup> The last reprinting was in 2011.

(some) readers to give the impression that they had read the full version of the book – and thus be considered as members of a high-status group – when they had, in fact, simply skimmed the excerpts in an anthology. Furthermore, Price contends that until the twentieth century, a noteworthy work of literature was essentially synonymous with being ‘widely anthologized’ (p. 70).

### *Canon [and Identity] Formation*

Anthologies serve as a means of selecting and presenting a subset of literary works that are believed to be representative of a specific genre, period, culture, or theme (Price, 2000). The act of choosing which works to include and exclude helps shape the perception of what is considered culturally significant and worthy of reading and/or study (Gorak, 1991; Lauter, 1991; Guillory, 1993; Kaplan & Rose, 1996). While anthologies of new writing can bring previously unpublished stories, and sometimes authors, into the world, Prescott (2016) argues that ‘the canon-forming function of anthologies is most clearly evident when there is a longer historical perspective on the selection’ (p.565). Anthologies are often put together by editors, scholars, or institutions with certain perspectives, biases, and preferences. As gatekeepers of literature, these individuals or groups exert influence over which works are elevated to canonical status. This can impact the visibility and recognition of certain authors and works while excluding others. In fact, Kilcup (2000) argues that ‘composing an anthology creates a miniature canon, no matter how resistant the editor is to vexed notions of goodness and importance’ (p.37). As Hopkins (2008, p.287) argues, ‘The processes of anthologising, canon-formation, and literary judgement, are intimately bound up one with another.’ Over time, anthologies can change to reflect shifting cultural norms and expanding perspectives. March-Russell (2009) argues that literary anthologies have played a pivotal role in ‘recording the impact [...] of historical movements such as modern feminism, Gay Liberation and post-colonialism’ and thus occupied a central position in the initial cultural discussions concerning questions of identity and representation (p.58). This led to anthologies being part of the ‘canon wars’ that occurred in the US in the 1980s, as Price (2000) notes: ‘the canon wars of the

1980s were fought over anthologies' tables of contents' (p.2). There was a tension during this period, Guillory (1993) argues, between perceived literary value and 'representing the consensus of some community, either dominant or subordinate' (p.29). It was during the 1970s and 1980s that a subset of anthology, focusing on identity-themed new writing by under-represented voices, began to emerge.<sup>6</sup> New editions of anthologies including underrepresented voices allow for a more expansive canon. This dynamic process can lead to the re-evaluation and expansion of what is considered canonical. Anthologies of new collections of writing can therefore subvert this canon-forming process, or at least help construct new canons, which strengthen and promote a new generation of voices and cultural works. Srivastava (2010) mentions the dual role of anthologies, 'as much innovators as conservators of the canon and, in many cases, they offer to their readers writing that makes a decisive intervention in society and culture' (p.162). Social marginalisations – such as social class, race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexuality – find their meanings in particular historical contexts and locations. Anthologies during the twentieth century contributed to the development of inclusion, diversity, and identity-formation, challenged the canon, and continue to this day.

### *Anthologies Today*

Contemporary anthologies continue to reflect the evolving literary and cultural landscape. Digital technology has transformed the way anthologies are created and distributed. Online platforms allow for more immediate and

<sup>6</sup> For example *Cuentos: Stories by Latinas* (1983), *Girl Next Door: Lesbian Feminist Stories* (1985), and *Out Front: Contemporary Gay and Lesbian Plays* (1988), *Charting the Journey: Writings about Black and Third World Women* (1988). 'Underrepresented voices' here refers to socially marginalised groups, for example BIPOC and LGBTQIA+. There were, of course, earlier anthologies by women writers; Blain, Clements, and Grundy (1990) note evidence of such anthologies going back to the sixteenth century. Additionally, Chester (2022) provides a history of feminist anthologies, including those such as *The Body Politic: Women's Liberation in Britain 1969–1972* (1972), which proliferated in the UK in the 1970s.