



## A TAXONOMY OF ANTHOLOGIES ACCORDING TO THE CRITERIA OF DELIMITATION

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*ABSTRACT.* Anthologies have usually been approached in relation to the canon and have usually been criticised for their inclusions and omissions. Yet anthology criticism ought to firstly acknowledge that the selection process stems from a concrete understanding of literature, tradition and its categories—period, genre, theme. These categories applied to the field of anthology-making are referred to as the criteria of delimitation, which condition which texts are apt to be anthologised. For this reason, Menand’s definition of tradition and its categories is set forth alongside Hopkins’s classification of anthologies in order to preserve the latter’s precise divisions—comprehensive, period, and trade anthologies—, to revise its terminology—genre anthology instead of generic anthology—, to demarcate the categories of the criteria of delimitation—critical anthologies are left out because they belong to the realm of the selection process—, and to propose a new class—the denomination of group anthologies for those collections which focus on the representativity of social groups. Thus, the criteria of delimitation, derived from the categories of tradition, offer a possible taxonomy of anthologies: comprehensive, period, genre, trade and group anthologies.

*Keywords:* anthology, literary criticism, tradition, categories of tradition, taxonomy, criteria of delimitation.

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## UNA TAXONOMÍA DE LAS ANTOLOGÍAS A PARTIR DE LOS CRITERIOS DE DELIMITACIÓN

*RESUMEN.* Las antologías han sido generalmente estudiadas en relación al canon y han sido generalmente criticadas por sus inclusiones y omisiones. Aun así, la crítica centrada en la antología debería en primer lugar reconocer que el proceso de selección deriva de una concepción concreta de la literatura, la tradición y sus categorías –periodo, género, tema–. Estas categorías aplicadas al campo del estudio de la creación de antologías son denominadas criterios de delimitación, los cuales condicionan qué textos son aptos para formar parte de una antología y facilitan una posible organización de las antologías. Por esta razón, la definición de tradición y sus categorías de Menand es expuesta junto a la clasificación de las antologías de Hopkins con el fin de preservar las divisiones precisas–general, histórica, comercial–, de revisar su terminología–antologías de género textual en lugar de genéricas–, de demarcar las categorías de los criterios de delimitación–las antologías críticas son excluidas porque pertenecen al ámbito del proceso de selección–, y de proponer una nueva clase–la denominación de antologías de grupo para aquellas colecciones especializadas en la representatividad de grupos sociales. Así pues, a partir de los criterios de delimitación, derivados de las categorías de tradición, se puede establecer una taxonomía de las antologías: antología general, histórica, de género textual, comercial y de grupo.

*Palabras clave:* antología, crítica literaria, tradición, categorías de tradición, taxonomía, criterios de delimitación.

*Received 27/12/2023*

*Revised version accepted 23/06/2024*

Even though anthologies constitute one of the main tools in literature courses, the critical corpus on anthologies is astoundingly reduced. Most literature students, if not all, have had in their hands a copy of an anthology which, even if sometimes weighty to carry, has saved in the end the space and money of separate works. However, the monographs, manuals, and specific studies on this form can be easily counted on both hands, if not on one. It is true that this neglect derives from the critics' preference for other aspects, such as the use of anthologies in the institution of academia, as in Guillory's famous book *Cultural Capital*, or the effect of anthologies in the history of reading, as in Price's *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel*. The lack of specific studies on anthologies contrasts with the raised agitation when new anthologies are published and one's own expected list of names and works does not make it into the final product. Anthologies have historically been judged for their selections and omissions. Yet these selections are part of a bigger picture which sets the foundations for the anthology. This paper argues that anthologists' selection of works actually succeeds the previous step of concretising the criteria of delimitation (a given tradition, genre, period, theme, and social group), which give unity to the anthology and offer a possible taxonomy of anthologies (comprehensive, genre, period, trade, and group anthologies).

Anthology-making, according to Kuipers, is divided into three creative steps: selection, arrangement and presentation. The problem with this division is that it implies that the material is firstly selected and then ordered into “limitless possibilities for arrangement of the selections, such as by genre, theme, or other aesthetic variations” (Kuipers 124). Nonetheless, the conscientious and well-defined selections prove that there must have been a previous step that defines the general principles that structure the anthology. Choosing anthology-pieces does not precede but succeeds another critical step; the selections are bound by this step.

The concept of *criteria of delimitation* alludes not to the process of choosing literary works for the anthology, but rather to the previous step of narrowing down the corpus from which the anthologist will make ulterior decisions. The question here is not “what specific texts make up the anthology?”, but “where should the material be taken from?”. Bearing in mind that the *bouquet* constitutes the final product of the process, the anthologist ought to firstly delimit the field. These criteria of delimitation can usually be seen condensed in the title of the anthology, which gives hints about the parameters applied to delimit an area from the whole domain of a literary tradition. For instance, the work *Kissing the Rod: An Anthology of Seventeenth-century Women's Verse* shows how the editors Greer et al. have carried out a selection applying three explicit filters and a fourth one which is described on the first page of the “Introduction”. Firstly, a temporal specificity of writers who have been born before the turn of the seventeenth century; then the requirement that the writers must be women; further the condition that the selection is limited to poetry; and the fourth filter determines that all these writers must have lived in “seventeenth-century England” (Greer et al. 1). Causally enough, these delimitations seem to fit into the three vertices of the triangle of written tradition: generic, historical, thematic or “composed of any combination of [these] features (‘the tradition of 19th-century black women’s autobiography’)” (Menand and Foley 3722).

Yet before delving into the discussion of the vertices of tradition, it should be pointed out that Menand incorporates a second meaning of tradition. This is Cunningham’s view as an all-encompassing term discussed in his book *Tradition and Poetic Structure*: “more generally, *tradition* has been defined as ‘the body of texts and interpretations current among a group of writers at a given time and place’” (qtd. in Menand and Foley 3722). This structuralist position interprets tradition as totality, that is, as the whole body of texts which determines the form of a new work, and which one potentially has access to in a certain period. For its structuralist quality, Cunningham’s theory might be put side by side with similar notions by other critics, such as Northrop Frye.

Their similarity, nevertheless, lies in their different use of terms. For example, Frye’s ironic treatment of the term tradition in *Anatomy of Criticism* does not coincide with Cunningham’s understanding of tradition. The former states that “only one organizing principle has so far been discovered in literature, the principle of chronology. This supplies the magic word ‘tradition’ which means that when we see the miscellaneous pile strung out along a chronological line, some coherence is given it by sheer sequence” (Frye 16). On the other hand, the latter’s conception of

tradition might be compared to Frye's concept of "total literary history" in their common vocation towards totality, their central position in an essentialist structuralist stance, and their view of the literary past as the constitutive material for contemporary works.

Indeed, tradition for Cunningham is not just a mere descriptive term, but an active agent in the elaboration of literary works, for what makes up tradition is principles of order, which are defined as "that which directs and determines the selection of the materials that enter into a work, and their succession and importance" (20). These principles of order in Cunningham's *Tradition and Poetic Structure* are the chosen language, the sub-languages, literary conventions and extraliterary ideas. The chosen language refers to the potential expression of any given language. Sub-languages allude to a "special selection of language appropriated to poems, or to certain kinds of poems, or to certain groups of poets" (20-21). These sub-languages determine choices of vocabulary, phrasing and syntactical patterns. Literary conventions might be concretised as repeated patterns, forms and genres. And extraliterary texts (mainly theological and philosophical), as part of tradition, can provide the structural idea or the progression of the argument in a work. These principles of order shape the final work; there is no escape. Such a deterministic stance usually leads the critic to dismiss the concept of originality, due to the fact that the individual work has become a set of qualities, properties, phrases or structures from other texts. The most illustrative instance of this point is the chapter on Chaucer "Convention as Structure: The Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*". In it, as the title already tells us, Cunningham argues that "The Prologue" of *The Canterbury Tales* has a clear antecedent in terms of its structure, which is the medieval convention of the dream vision. The whole chapter (and book) overflows with such terms as precedent, scheme, technique, method, subject, and principle, leading to the conclusion that

The identity of the literary form of the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* with the conventional form of the dream-vision prologue can be regarded as established. It may be felt, however, that the distinctive feature of the *Canterbury Prologue* —the series of portraits —has not adequately been accounted for. No one, I trust, will ask one to account for the greatness of Chaucer's portraits, for his peculiar skill in writing. If such matters can be explained, certainly they lie outside the scope and method of this chapter. (72)

Here, Cunningham recognises his inability to provide an analysis which comprises the peculiar, differential, distinctive quality of a work. Frye would put it in a starker way since the poet for him "is at best a midwife" (98). In relation to tradition and originality, Frye shares as well the deterministic opinion that "the possession of originality cannot make an artist unconventional; it drives him further into convention, obeying the law of the art itself, which seeks constantly to reshape itself from its own depths, and which works through its geniuses for metamorphosis, as it works through minor talents for mutation" (132). What differentiates Frye and Cunningham is that the former, rather than compartmentalising the study of literature as a whole in language, literary aspects, and ideas, opts for exclusively delving into

the literary specifics and poses an archetypal criticism all around *mythos* (or plot) and *dianoia* (or imagery) extracted from commonalities found in works taken from the classical English canon.

Nevertheless, the understanding of tradition as totality displays an attitude less preoccupied with dealing with tradition as a classifying term than treating tradition as source detector of the work's structural form to prove that not only every formal decision or image, but even every idea has had a predecessor in a previous text. The work becomes an enumeration of structural abstractions which take part in a complex network of source detection and study of influence thus proving that the literary past is present in contemporary works. Yet the view of the literary past as a cohesive unity might be seen as a conceptual indeterminacy since it is an impossible task for an individual author to comprehend it. In the context of literary studies, tradition, used on its own, without any modifier, might be called, after Fredric Jameson, an "untotalizable totality" (xii); its referentiality is primarily temporal rather than bearing a specific classifying denotation. In this sense, tradition refers to the past, to what has been done up to a certain point in time; its specific meaning, however, is empty. What really defines tradition is what accompanies this term. Therefore, to understand tradition and its complexity, one has to delve into the peculiarities of the possible complements which define the noun 'tradition'. The critical discussion of no specific tradition, just tradition in isolation, is fruitless.

In the same way as structuralism abstracts the work of art into practices found in other works, it abstracts the whole creative activity called 'literature' with the pretence of setting the structural principles of the discipline as a whole. But this leads to what might be called 'the fallacy of totality'. When one critic aims at discussing the principles of tradition as encompassing every work of art made to date, he or she is playing the illusionist making the public look at the hands while the trick is elsewhere. The trick is obviously that which goes without saying, namely, the critic's implicit view of literature and its categories, which are those of tradition.

Besides Frye and Cunningham, one of the most influential figures in relation to tradition is T. S. Eliot. His has a very specific understanding of tradition, in the temporal and spatial dimensions. Lucy claims that "tradition is for him that part of living culture inherited from the past and functioning in the formation of the present. Eliot sees the whole of European culture as a living growth springing from the stem of the Christianised Graeco-Roman cultures" (6). Eliot's view of tradition is founded upon Christianity and the cultural heritage of classical antiquity in Europe; it is not to be understood in absolute terms. This is one of the multiple traditions that can be drawn. His wish to make this tradition *the* tradition, as is posited in "The Classics and the Man of Letters" (160), is more related to his political views than a thorough study of the concept.

In exploring the most relevant discussions of tradition in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Cianci and Harding observe that this concept has evolved over time: from Eliot's Tradition, Leavis's Great Tradition, and Cleanth Brook's The Tradition, to most recent "vigorous academic reformulations" in terms of ecocriticism, feminism, sexuality,

postcolonialism, and race. They give the example of Bate's *Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition*, Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own*, Woods's *A History of Gay Literature: The Men's Tradition*, Lawrence's *Decolonizing Tradition*, and Bell's *The Afro-American Novel and its Tradition* (Cianci and Harding 2). These "academic reformulations" are different concretisations of tradition inasmuch as they stem from a new understanding of its categories. Moreover, these are examples of today's need to acknowledge the critic's specific approach to tradition since, provided that tradition is explored on its own, it is likely to obviate mentioning which tradition is borne in mind.

This is recognised by Fowler who, in attempting to define literature in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Literature and Criticism*, asserts that "I am concentrating on a particular tradition of theory and criticism. It is an English tradition, frankly a parochial one; for France, or Germany, or Russia, the history and the possible theoretical positions would be different" (10). Later Fowler gives more details about the specific conception of tradition he has in his hands:

If 'Literature' is a cultural category, one has to concentrate on a particular cultural context, and describing it from within is bound to seem parochial. By 'our' culture I mean English-speaking Britain and America, where there is a common economic organization, an integrated publishing and reviewing industry, and very similar educational systems. (10)

Widdowson, in his book *Literature*, quotes this same fragment from Fowler and admits that his knowledge of literary traditions other than the English one is too limited. For this reason, his study "is primarily anglocentric in focus" (19).

Due to the fact that approaching tradition as totality is not shared anymore and that *Literature* as a universal concept, and with a capital 'l', has been discredited, coping with literature needs and demands to be contextually specific. That which is said of a determined literature affects a concrete tradition, and vice versa. In fact, the categories of literature are those of tradition. For instance, the expression 'literatures in English' actually alludes to 'literary traditions in English'. If there is not a unique definition of Literature, literature needs to be understood in the context of a specific tradition. And as the term 'literature' and what it encompasses has historically evolved over time, that which constitutes 'tradition' has been affected. In other words, different definitions of 'literature' over time imply different material belonging to 'tradition'. And consequently, the historically determined material of 'tradition' encompasses the works which can be potentially anthologised.

Dealing with literary studies, it seems obvious that in talking about tradition, one refers to literary tradition. What is less obvious is the implicit definition of literary, and therefore of literature, adopted by the critic. Other fields apparently have had an easier starting task, as can be seen in cultural and religious studies, since tradition is defined as "a set of practices" or "a pattern of action", which are to be created from or based on the past, as Hobsbawm (1) and Hammer (736) claim. However, the adjective 'literary' does not carry with it such a straightforward delimitation of tradition.

There is critical consensus nowadays in relation to the fact that there is no single valid conception of literature to be applied to any context. As a matter of fact, Widdowson claims that “[n]o one by now – not even the most dyed-in-the-wool traditional literary critic – can easily accept either a notion of a unitary ‘Literature’ or that there can be a meaningful essentialist definition of the concept” (10). Consequently, historical specificities are to be taken into account. The concept of literature has evolved over time and in today’s world it includes works which were excluded some years ago. Indeed, Widdowson argues that, from a conception of Literature as the field of masterworks and geniuses, twentieth-century critical perspectives redefined literature turning their attention to disregarded works, discriminated voices and new ways of interpreting meaning. The critic points out that “postcolonial feminisms have a clear linkage with notions of ‘Cyborg’ identity, with transgressive sexual politics, with all the creative postmodern movements whose rationale is the continual breaking down of unitary and universalising paradigms—and of which ‘Literature’ has surely been amongst” (92).

Illustrative cases of this new view of literature are the anthologies *Nineteenth-century American Women Writers: an Anthology*, edited by Kilcup in 1997, *Anthology of Australian Aboriginal Literature*, edited by Heiss and Minter in 2008, *Common People: An Anthology of Working-Class Writers*, edited by de Waal in 2019. In fact, these collections are far from being homogenous. Whereas the former takes into consideration, amongst other texts, journals, travel literature and advice columns, Heiss and Minter’s add political letters to their anthology, and the latter includes essays and memoirs. All three anthologies, rather than focusing on a specific literary form or genre, are conceived to give voice to a historically underrepresented social reality: that of women, Aboriginal Australians, and working-class people.

The expanded conception of literature from feminist, postcolonial or class perspectives are instances of minorities’ redefinition of tradition’s essentialism. In this aspect Bhabha’s work is fundamental. He argues that “the recognition that tradition bestows is a partial form of identification. In restaging the past it introduces other, incommensurable cultural temporalities into the invention of tradition. This process estranges any immediate access to an originary identity or a ‘received’ tradition” (*The Location* 3). Consequently, more and more voices stretch the boundaries of a fixed paradigm. Tradition cannot be packed into a definitive list of compulsory readings—nor in an anthology—which condenses the fulcrum of a national identity. In fact, alongside tradition, the notion of nation has been equally disrupted. Bhabha in the same book observes that “the very concepts of homogenous national cultures, the consensual or contiguous transmission of historical traditions, or ‘organic’ ethnic communities—as the grounds of cultural comparativism—are in a profound process of redefinition” (7). Nations, like narrations, undergo constant evolution with the involvement of new political entities which push their boundaries in the process of hybridity (Bhabha, “Introduction” 4). This cultural diversity within geopolitical spaces leads Bhabha to move the spotlight away from the national to the global: “where, once, the transmission of national

traditions was the major theme of a world literature, perhaps we can now suggest that transnational histories of migrants, the colonized, or political refugees—these border and frontier conditions—may be the terrains of world literature” (*The Location* 17). Similarly, but focusing on the role of the reader, Damrosch proposes an “elliptical approach” insofar as it recognises the cultural specificity of texts and acknowledges their relevance for the reader’s context (133). The reader, then, is placed in an intermediate position which negotiates the meaning of a text between the past and the present.

These perspectives of what makes literature have conditioned what is to be considered as anthologisable. As a matter of fact, the redefinition of tradition, the ambivalence of the national, the avowing of the global interweaving of narratives, and the recognition of the simultaneous otherness and assimilation of the text are aspects that make up the critical foundations of *The Heath Anthology of American Literature* and *The Longman Anthology of World Literature*. The former, whose general editor is Paul Lauter, displays more clearly Bhabha’s ideas. American literature, rather than being ascertained as a truism, is problematised from its origins, boundaries, and political assumptions. Such is the case of the sections “Nation within a Nation: Lakotas/Dakotas/Nakotas”, “Redefining the South”, or “Outside/Inside U.S.A.: Expansion and Immigration” in volume C. It displays a new understanding of its history and its constituting sociopolitical groups. The latter, being Damrosch one of the general editors with Pike, more clearly explores the reader’s elliptical approach through the section “Resonance” where texts, sometimes far in time and space, are connected. As can be seen, the selection and the arrangement of the texts in anthologies derive from the different delimitations according to the starting point of a concrete understanding of literature and its traditions. Therefore, the volume of works which make up literature and tradition is historically conditioned, and thus, the selection of the content which is to appear in an anthology is narrowed down by the contemporaneous view of these concepts.

After having set the boundaries of literature, and hence of literary tradition, one is able to discuss the subcategories of literary tradition. As has been noted above, the titles of anthologies give plenty of information about the tradition taken into consideration. Thus, the delimitation of the categories of tradition underpins the parameters—criteria of delimitation—established to develop a coherent anthology. Hence, each category of tradition leads to a type of anthology. In this sense, it is worth pointing at the correspondence between Menand’s taxonomy of generic, historical and thematic traditions with Hopkins’s categories of anthologies.

The first category is *comprehensive anthologies* “attempting ‘representative’ coverage of the whole field” (Hopkins 290-291). As can be guessed, the cognate aspect of treating tradition in isolation is the view of tradition as totality, whose impossible realisation is reflected into an ideally all-encompassing but always failed anthology. What is impossible of the definition of comprehensive anthology is not the emphasis on representativity, but the understanding of “the whole field”. If this expression implies an understanding of literature as a unitary field of knowledge, this essentialist perspective has been historically undermined, as has already been



discussed. Literature, with a capital 'L', is always partial, biased. Literature, with a lowercase 'l', is divided into compartments according to the categories of tradition. Besides the Heath and Longman anthologies of world literature mentioned above, *The Norton Anthology of World Literature's* shorter fourth edition proves this. By simply glimpsing at the table of contents of its volumes, one quickly realises how these anthologies are organised according to the different geographically based traditions: "Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Literature", "Ancient India", or "Early Chinese Literature and Thought", among others. The editor, thus, has to give due credit to the contextual specificity of the geographical belonging. In fact, Lawall, one of the editors of the *Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces*, states that the first editions gathered in the 1950s gave preference to the richness of the text per se, following the critical tenets of New Criticism. However, "more recently, the format has changed to combine previously separate historical and biographical material with the analysis of the author's work. The implied critical perspective now presents literary and aesthetic structures as part of a broad referential context" (Lawall 27). Even in those anthologies where the scope is global, one cannot dodge the cultural specificity of texts.

A different issue is, from the specificity of each tradition, the attempt to offer a broad outlook of representative samples. This would be the case of dealing with literary traditions without the imposing model of a centric and dominant conception of Literature. These comprehensive anthologies would have the presentation of a culturally specific tradition in all its variety as the ideal goal. Lauter, who can never be suspicious of defending the centrality of Literature, claims that "to observe change, to account for difference and similarity, to comprehend the historical conditions of textual production – all, it seems to me, lead us toward the comprehensive anthology, rather than to separate books by individual authors" (Lauter 20). Here *comprehensive* alludes to the anthology's intended goal of presenting a tradition in all its complexity and contextual value.

In relation to the historical category of tradition, the anthological equivalent is Hopkins's *period anthologies*, "offering 'representative' coverage of a particular century, reign, or historical movement" (291). This term, far from being Hopkins's coinage, already appears throughout Ferry's book; it is used by Kuipers, as in "literary period anthology" (128); it appears in Hibbard's study of types of anthologies, one being "anthologies devoted to a period in literary history" (648); and Houston cites the specific example of "Romantic period anthologies" (256). Woodcock notices this tendency in the publication of Oxford Books, since "there are Oxford Books which cover particular centuries of English poetry" (119), and McDowell adds a subtle comment on the continuity of tradition by observing that one of the purposes of an anthology is that "it may celebrate the status quo and attract new readers to the accepted poetry of a particular period" (595). As can be seen, almost every critic has noticed the evident capacity of anthologies of encapsulating literary works into temporal compartments or movements.

It might be argued that every anthology is in a sense a period anthology since there is no text appearing in an historical vacuum, and there can be no anthologised

text after the time present. The fact that time logically limits the works which can be published is to be remarked, since it is one of the main factors which conditions the appearance of new and re-editions of anthologies. Readers need anthologies which comprise contemporary materials. As new works are continuously being published, cutting-edge anthologies rapidly become outdated. Moreover, as the critical tenets which inform the selections are also grounded in the historical specificity of its elaboration, every anthology is in part a period anthology not only in terms of the material taken into consideration but also the followed critical principles.

Regarding Menand's generic (genre-based) category, Hopkins opts for "formal and generic collections focused on a particular category of poem (pastoral, country house poem, sonnet, satire, ode, elegy, ballad, translation, poem on affairs of state), and usually ranging across more than one period" (291). However, the terms "formal" and "generic" might not be the most suitable inasmuch as they might generate confusion. "Formal" echoes formalism, which does not necessarily have to be related to the historical portrayal of genres. The problem of "generic" is that it alludes to something whose reference is not concrete. Actually, this is the opposite meaning to the concrete process of categorising works into genres. For this reason, the easiest solution is to name this kind of anthology *genre anthologies*, so that there is less ambiguity, and we avoid possible confusion.

As might be guessed, the controversy does not lie in the use of the word 'genre', but in the definitions of the genres, which directly affect those works which are considered literary, and therefore, what is bound to be considered an anthology-piece. The case of *The Oxford Book of English Verse* shows the historical evolution of this issue. The word "Verse" has a lot to tell us about this because of the changing perception of the poetic genre over time. Whereas Quiller-Couch limits the anthology to "the lyrical and epigrammatic" (ix), Gardner includes in the collection "the tradition of satiric, political, epistolary, and didactic verse in English" (v), and Ricks encompasses the "lyric..., satire, hymn, ode, epistle, elegy, ballad, nonsense verse..., the prose poem..., nursery rhymes, limericks and clerihews" (xxxiv). It is most likely that part of the inclusions in the last edition would not have been understood as poetic, and probably neither as literary, in the years of the first edition, the turn of the 20th century. Consequently, the categorisation of genres is grounded in the specific historical context of its formation, since this critical aspect has evolved over time, as has the concept of literature.

The last comparative step between Menand's categories of tradition and Hopkins's types of anthologies does not coincide. Following the logic applied so far, Menand's 'thematic traditions' would correspond to Hopkins's 'critical anthologies', but this correlation is inexact. Thematic traditions include any literary topic which can be abstracted, whilst critical anthologies refer to those collections in which the editor's personal criteria have determined the inclusion or exclusion of the works. With regards to the latter, Hopkins moves from a taxonomy based on the categorisation of the materials anthologised (related to traditions, periods and genres) to the anthologist's implication in the selection of these materials. The

difference is subtle, yet significant. Whereas the first elements delimit the whole corpus of literature into compartments so that the anthology has cohesion and coherence, the category of ‘critical anthologies’ alludes to the next step of selecting which pieces are to take part in the anthology. The process of selection, therefore, is not part of the criteria of delimitation.

Yet Menand’s thematic traditions have a relative cognate in anthologies, namely *trade anthologies*. This denomination was coined by Riding and Graves in *A Pamphlet against Anthologies*, and it refers to those collections whose *raison d’être* is market success. First published in 1928, Riding and Graves’s book constitutes a fierce attack on this type of literary collection because they are deemed a distortion of literature made by the anthologist’s taste (36). The polemicists only accept unpublished private collections and corpuses of unknown or unavailable texts (34; 182). Since an anthology, as soon as it finds a publisher and goes into the market, becomes a product to sell and is expected to at least return on investment, Riding and Graves’s rejection of trade anthologies is actually a dismissal of anthologies in general.

Hopkins recovers the expression but, rather than being a pejorative denomination for most published anthologies, he uses it to allude to thematic collections (285). Washington’s *Love Poems* is a good example of a trade anthology in this sense. Being divided into “Definitions and Persuasions”, “Love and Poetry”, “Praising the Loved One”, “Pleasures and Pains”, “Fidelity and Inconstancy”, “Absence, Estrangements and Parting”, and “Love Past”, this collection gathers poems from very different traditions which, however, find themselves at the junction of love. Such identifiable names of the English tradition as Shakespeare, Whitman, Dickinson or Rossetti appear next to Wên T’ing-Yün of ninth-century China, the father of Persian literature Rudaki, Barthrari of fifth-century India, or Izumi Shikibu of tenth and eleventh centuries in Japan. Whilst *Love Poems* is constructed with the clear intention of being pleasant for the general public, it also shows freedom of choice. The restraint of the economic demands is accompanied by the editor’s loosened pressure of academic accuracy. It is true that these anthologies lack the precise definition of traditions, the historical approach to literature and the contextual setting of each piece. Nevertheless, Washington’s collection sets poems together for the sake of the universal literary experience of love. Trade anthologies, thus, might be useful to comparatively explore works from different traditions as poetical expressions of a given theme.

Another particularly interesting example is D. J. Enright’s *The Oxford Book of Death*. This anthology’s title combines the transcendence of being an Oxford Book with the thematic centrality of death. Therefore, with the exception of courses on the literary depiction of death that might recommend this anthology, or research conducted around this topic, *The Oxford Book of Death* might be regarded as more closely fitting the category of trade anthology. The thematic centrality of the anthology is accompanied by another factor which reinforces this label. Enright observes in the “Introduction” that “the great initial uncertainty had to do with the public status of the subject” (xii). The anthology does not have an academic target reader but aspires to take part in society. Therefore, “this being a subject on which

there are no real experts – lay voices rightly insisted on being heard alongside those of ‘literary men’” (xi-xii). As Dana argues, “the interest of the editors and compilers of these anthologies is not in poetry, primarily, but in subject or stance” (49).

Besides the central presence of English-speaking writers in an Oxford Book, there is room for thirteenth-century Persian Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, Raage Ugaas of c. nineteenth-century Somalia, or Po Chū-i of around eight and ninth centuries in China, among many others. Moreover, Enright also combines different genres to display the multifarious perceptions of death: not only poems, but also newspaper articles, fragments from narrative works, fragments from non-fiction writing as Tadeusz Borowski’s “Auschwitz, our Home: A Letter”, or royal dictums as Charles IX of France’s “the body of a dead enemy always smells good” (231). Apart from the fourteen sections of the book—“Definitions”, “Views and Attitudes”, “The Hour of Death”, “Suicide”, “Mourning”, “Graveyards and Funerals”, “Resurrections and Immortalities”, “Hereafters”, “Revenants”, “War, Plague and Persecution”, “Love and Death”, “Children”, “Animals”, and “Epitaphs, Requiems and Last Words”—the writings appear in consecution with no context of the precise experience they refer to, their cultural or geographical origin. As can be appreciated, trade anthologies display literature as a creative activity which enables the mutual sympathy and empathy across the globe.

At this point, however, there still remains an aspect to be discussed, that is, the fact that, after Menand’s classification of “generic”, “historical” and “thematic”, he adds “or any combination of features (‘the tradition of 19th-c. African American women’s writing’)” (3722). The historical part of the example is clear, but defining if “African American women’s writing” is generic or thematic is less obvious. Viewing genre anthologies as united by a common formal characteristic of the text, one has the impression that Menand sees “African American women’s writing” as a thematic category. Provided that theme is considered a textual element, a category might be missing. In the current critical world where the concept of literature has been expanded in terms of geographical, gender and minority re-presentations, new traditions emerge. As a matter of fact, traditions are subjected to history, and as such, they might appear, evolve, transform, and even disappear. As Louis Gates Jr. argues:

Literary works configure into a tradition not because of some mystical collective unconscious determined by the biology of race or gender, but because writers read other writers and ground their representations of experience in models of language provided largely by other writers to whom they feel akin. It is through this mode of literary revision, amply evident in the texts themselves—in formal echoes, recast metaphors, even in parody—that a ‘tradition’ emerges and defines itself. This is formal bonding, and it is only through formal bonding that we can know a literary tradition. The collective publication of these works by black women now, for the first time, makes it possible for scholars and critics, male and female, black and white, to demonstrate that black women writers read, and revised, other black women writers. To demonstrate this set of formal literary relations is to demonstrate that sexuality, race, and gender are both the condition and the basis of *tradition*—but tradition as found in discrete acts of language use. (xviii)

These new traditions have been consolidated, which means that literary criticism should have a proper name for this. Instead of being part of thematic anthologies, these could be integrated into *group anthologies*, in which the fulcrum is the representativity and formal closeness of the works written by a given part of the population, especially those marked by race, class and gender. These three sections of the population have been historically under-represented, marginalised, and disregarded in the study of literature. In dealing with the historical challenges to the concept of Literature, Widdowson argues that: “any notions of ‘disinterestedness’, ‘scientific’ objectivity and ‘ideological innocence’ have been scuppered by the political analysis of Cultural Studies, as they have, too, by those of the latter’s principal theoretical drives: Marxism, feminism and postcolonialism” (77). The inclusion of these voices derives from the demands of these socially involved groups which put the emphasis on the ideological burden of literature. Besides the three anthologies discussed above edited by Kilcup, Heiss and Minter, and de Waal, other instances to take into account are Keating’s *Working-class Stories of the 1890s* (1971), Rodenberger et al.’s *Writing on the Wind: An Anthology of West Texas Women Writers* (2005), and Rushdie and West’s *The Vintage Book of Indian Writing, 1947-1997* (1997).

In brief, dealing with literary anthologies implies having in mind a definition of the literary and literature, being this definition far from definitive. Many have been the approaches and interpretations of literature, which has invariably integrated new perspectives historically disregarded. As Literature has been dismantled, the study of literature needs to be contextually precise, and historically aware. For this reason, literature is to be approached from the specificity of a given tradition and its categories in order to acknowledge the works taken into consideration. Hence, this study of the categories of tradition, mainly derived from Menand, leads to the analysis of the types of anthologies, mainly derived from Hopkins. In Menand’s categorisation, historical and generic traditions correspond to period anthologies and genre anthologies, respectively. Thematic traditions, diverging from the example posed by Menand, are particularly relevant in trade anthologies—those non-academic anthologies whose creation is destined for economic profit, but at the same time, give the anthologist the freedom of approaching literature without the constraints of academe. One last category of tradition which Menand overlooks is the re-presentation of minorities. Those anthologies whose main defining aspect is the collection of writings by these traditions might be gathered together under the umbrella term of ‘group anthologies’. Obviously, it goes without saying that these categories of anthologies are complementary and that an anthology might fit into more than one slot at the same time. Yet those anthologies whose defining constant is a specific category might be considered part of that category. For instance, an anthology representing more than one genre within a given time could well be classified as a period anthology. Likewise, if the depiction of a genre over more than one period or movement is preferred, the literary collection could be named a genre anthology. If different genres over centuries are to be considered for the shortlist, the anthology will likely be a comprehensive anthology. Group anthologies turn their attention to the social group being anthologised and trade anthologies do not necessarily need to follow any category inasmuch as the product succeeds in the market.

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