

RECONFIGURING BOURDIEU'S CONCEPT OF THE 'FIELD': ANTHOLOGIES AS A CASE STUDY¹

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Abstract

The second half of the twentieth century gave rise to poststructuralism, one of several movements that played a central role in liberating the literary canon from the confines of hegemonic Western-centrism. By transcending the limitations of systematic inquiry and calling for a dialectical approach to literary studies, poststructuralism contributed to revolutionizing the domain, impacting the process of canon formation in the last two decades of the century. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's development of the concept of the field had a profound impact on the study of literature and actively contributed to redefining the literary canon and expanding its boundaries. Such expansion and its repercussions can be traced by examining collections such as anthologies. By tracing the hierarchy of the agency of anthologies, their editors, and literary texts through a reinterpretation of Bourdieu's concept of the field, this article examines how this concept remains relevant to understanding the dynamics of power players in the subfield of anthology-making.

Keywords: Poststructuralism, Bourdieu, Cultural Capital, Agency, Field, Anthology.

"When a new literary or artistic group makes its presence felt in the field of literary or artistic production, the whole problem is transformed, since its coming into being, i.e. into difference, modifies and displaces the universe of possible options; the previously dominant productions may, for example, be pushed into the status either of outmoded [déclassé] or of classic works."

(Bourdieu, *The Field* 32)

In the above lines, French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu succinctly articulates the core of the literary canon's ongoing process of reformation through the influence one group can have on the literary field. Poststructuralism³, particularly the work of Bourdieu,

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³ Poststructuralism is not hyphenated throughout the article to avoid confining the prefix "post" to the status of a temporal marker. In avoiding hyphenation, 'poststructuralism' becomes more than a mere chronological development of the term 'structuralism' and implies its capacity to not only transcend the tenets of its predecessor but also subvert them.

is the gateway to understanding how the second half of the twentieth century had a momentous impact on the opening up of the literary canon and, consequently, on the importance of the selection criteria in literary anthologies. While postmodernism is a challenging concept to define, given how it permeates an array of disciplines, poststructuralism – stemming from the umbrella of postmodernism – has established its capacity to create a dialectic mode of thinking that goes beyond the limitations of the dichotomies and binary thinking patterns propagated by structuralism. Poststructuralism's importance to the discipline of literature manifests itself in a number of ways. Chief among them is its contribution to expanding the canon – especially as a result of the canon wars that raged in the United States in the 1980s – beyond its Eurocentric focus. One of the ways in which poststructuralism has significantly impacted the literary field is redefining the agency of literary anthologies and their creators. To examine this impact in tangible ways, this article delineates how the work of Bourdieu in poststructuralist thought is central to examining variations in the agency of anthologies and their editors, both of whom have the capacity to (de)-canonize works of literature. Bourdieu's development of the concepts of habitus, field, and cultural capital in sociology can be utilized to examine the multi-layeredness of the subfield of anthology-making as part of the broader literary field and the agents occupying these different layers. This article reconfigures Bourdieu's theory of the field of cultural production and examines the positionality of agents in relation to each other within the context of anthologizing works of literature. It illustrates how Bourdieu's concept of the field provides a relevant framework to understand the multiple layers of agency played by different actors in the process of creating an anthology.

Poststructuralism is not a mere natural evolution of the structuralist movement. It is rather the product of several structuralists stepping away from the structuralist trend of the 1950s and 1960s, which advocated reliance on systems that analyze the relations within and between structures: “[S]tructuralism maintained that in order to fully understand a system, whether it is language or some other system, the entirety of its relations needed to be simultaneously considered in order to ‘see’ what was hidden from view” (Lundy 72). Classical structuralism, of which Claude Lévi-Strauss was founding father, propagated “scientificity, synchronicity, ahistoricism, universalism, and a withdrawal from the immediately preceding political climate” (Lundy 72). The move towards what was yet to become poststructuralism was inadvertently spearheaded by Roland Barthes when he began relying on subjecting everyday objects to a structuralist

analysis (see *Elements de Semiology*, 1964), which propagated structuralism yet simultaneously pulled it away from the clear linguistic parameters within which it functioned (cf. the works of Claude Lévi-Strauss).

Bourdieu's *The Field of Cultural Production, or the Economic World Reversed* (1993) is an attempt to bypass the schisms present in objective and subjective approaches to art and in the dichotomy of these approaches. That culture plays a role in reproducing social structures is a tenet of Bourdieu's work that marks his transition from structuralist notions in which he detected limitations for both objectivism and subjectivism to a more encompassing approach that transcends those limitations. Bourdieu's theory of practice brings together three concepts central to his analysis of culture: the field, the habitus, and the (cultural) capital. Bourdieu defines capital as "accumulated labor ... which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor" ("The Forms" 241). Capital is a force to be found in everything and is acquired over time. Bourdieu delineates three forms of capital:

in the *embodied* state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the *objectified* state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.), which are the trace or realization of theories or critiques of these theories, problematics, etc.; and in the *institutionalized* state, a form of objectification which must be set apart because, as will be seen in the case of educational qualifications, it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee. ("The Forms" 243)

Within the literary field, cultural capital – a symbolic form of capital – dominates. Bourdieu maintains that power in the social sphere, i.e., social classes, is directly proportional to an individual's cultural capital. Cultural capital, manifest in what Bourdieu calls the habitus, is intrinsic, subtly present, and informally acquired through one's family and its social standing, upbringing, education, among other factors. As John Lechte illustrates, "*(h)abitus* is a kind of expression of the (unconscious) investment social actors have in the power stakes so implied" (68). Habitus is directly proportional to the 'power' an individual might wield in varying facets of social life and interactions, and it is also closely linked with the hierarchical structure of people in different contexts. Lechte explains how "[t]he boundaries between one habitus and another are always

contested because they are always fluid – never firm” (Lechte 69).

Despite the connection of Bourdieu’s work in sociology to literature and its relevance to explaining contemporary phenomena in the literary field, Bourdieu’s work endured considerable criticism, which this article briefly alludes to. Several scholars contend that Bourdieu’s attempt to escape the subjectivism-objectivism dialectic inevitably leads to another form of objectivism. Richard Jenkins argues that Bourdieu “fails to operationalize in his own practice his acknowledgement that the ‘objective’ structures of society are only objective inasmuch as they are perceived as such by actors ... and that the ‘subjective’ actions of individuals contribute towards the reproduction of ‘objectivity’ for those actors” (272). One of the criticisms also directed towards Bourdieu’s work is that despite his extensive use of the term ‘capital,’ employing it when distinguishing between economic and symbolic forms of capital, he hardly provides an in-depth theorization of what ‘capital’ denotes in his sociological constructions. According to Göran Bolin, what capital means for Bourdieu is actually value. In delineating the three forms of capital mentioned above, Bourdieu actually means value: “the acquired abilities and dispositions that form a person’s habitus ... is value rather than capital” (Bolin 40). Another criticism Bourdieu’s work has endured is that “the concept of the field is not without its difficulties for it refers to objective structures of power and material inequality” (King 425-26). The concept of the habitus also received its fair share of criticism. Although it is praised for its capacity to give an account of social reproduction, it fails to explain how social change actually occurs (King 429). The habitus was also criticized because its definition “prevents it from doing anything other than effacing the virtuosity of social actors and the intersubjective nature of social reality” (King 426). While Bourdieu defends the habitus and calls for looking at the use of the term rather than its definition (King 423), the arguments posited by critics remain meritorious. However, this article attempts to look beyond the criticism Bourdieu received and explore the potential in borrowing Bourdieu’s model and reconfiguring it to adapt to the literary field, particularly to what I call the ‘subfield’ of anthology-making.

In *The Field of Cultural Production*, Bourdieu reintroduces the notion of the agent by developing the concepts of ‘habitus’ and ‘field’ because “symbolic aspects of social life are inseparably intertwined with the material conditions of existence, without one being reducible to another” (Johnson 4). The habitus is the “systems of dispositions ... characteristic of the different classes and class fractions” (Bourdieu *Distinction* 6). Those dispositions are solely shaped in and function within a field (Bourdieu *Distinction*

94). Since agents constantly act within social spheres and situations where objective social relations rule, Bourdieu thus developed the concept of the 'field' to "account for these situations or contexts, without ... falling into the determinism of objectivist analysis" (Johnson 6). The field is a "structured space with its own laws of functioning and its own relations of force" and is "relatively autonomous but structurally homologous" with other fields, and its structure is determined based on "the relations between the positions agents occupy in the field." Not conforming to fixities, fields occupy a status of relative autonomy and partial dependence on other fields; they cannot exist without any connection to other fields and simultaneously enjoy particular merits independent of other fields (i.e., literature is partially autonomous but remains dependent on markets and politics). The field thus is a dynamic notion; "a change in agents' position necessarily entails a change in the field's structure" (Johnson 6).

Agents are thus vying for power to control interests and resources within the field through their occupation and creation of positions, yet the interests and resources of certain fields are oftentimes immaterial, resulting in the form of power that Bourdieu considers symbolic. When examining the cultural/literary field, "competition often concerns the authority inherent in recognition, consecration and prestige" (Johnson 7). These are the agents who occupy positions with enough power to elevate a text to the ranks of the canonical. It should be heeded that "[a]ll relations among agents and institutions of diffusion or consecration are mediated by the field's structure" (Bourdieu, *The Field* 133). Within this field, multiple agents come into play: academics (and their syllabi), critics, theorists, general readers, publishers, translators, prize-granting committees, and editors of anthologies. Within the literary field, the dynamic among those agents is in a state of flux; the field is constantly impacted by the emergence of new texts that vie for power themselves or seek consecration and prestige to be conferred upon them. The position of literary texts themselves is flexible, subject to changes instigated by all agents listed above.

Göran Bolin elaborates on the interconnectedness of the consecrating power of agents and the capital or value they either have or are able to bestow: "A field is relational, and the consecration of the value at stake in the field and the positions achieved are dependent on the consecrating power of the individuals and institutions with legitimacy to appoint these positions" (Bolin 35). The field is also impacted by the simultaneous active involvement of multiple agents. Agents are not present in a void; they act within tangible social situations (Johnson 6). Those agents are concurrently

influencers and influenced entities. Agents are influencers by virtue of their power and authority, which they draw upon from their habitus, namely the cultural capital they acquire and the system of dispositions that gave rise to this cultural capital, which enables them to occupy the position they are in. At the same time, they are influenced entities by virtue of the fact that multiple factors (such as publication, market, circulation, translation, to only name a few) markedly affect the work of these agents and the scope within which they can move and exercise their authority.

To give an example, academics are oftentimes specialized in one or two research areas and teach a limited range of courses to students. Their authority is undoubtedly powerful; they select what is and is not to be taught in lecture halls. They are part of the process of text diffusion and, thus, of the introduction of texts to the academic scene, the assertion of the status of other texts, and the exclusion of others from the syllabus. Inclusion of all texts in a particular field in a syllabus or any list of sorts is an impossibility, and some might argue – unless that list is meant as a referential list, in which case it might also be impossible to put together *all* published texts. However, the nature of the texts included and excluded – within the larger context of academia on a global scale, what has been regularly taught and what has systematically been marginalized or overlooked – is an indicator of the status of canonical literary texts. Classrooms and lecture halls are also one effective way of introducing a new work of literature to an academic setting. Therefore, professors of literature are agents with the capacity to bring new texts into a classroom and relegate others to the sidelines (of the canon) or even exclude them altogether.

However, it is essential to avoid reducing academics to mere agents with purchasing power. Academics are strong agents because they contribute to not only the purchase and dissemination of anthologies but to the (re)shaping of their value as symbolic capital. The combination of the two allows academics to have a hand in both economic and cultural spheres. On the one hand, the decision to read or to select and teach – therefore disseminate – a particular anthology contributes to furthering economic capital in the literary field. On the other hand, the choice made ultimately adds to the expansion of a given anthology's symbolic or cultural capital. Therefore, academics enjoy a powerful position as an agent in terms of their curatorial authority.

When it comes to anthology-making, from among all agents, anthology editors perhaps have a broader range of authority in the process of anthology-making; they

oversee text selection and inclusion/exclusion in texts that are considered referential on a global scale. Anthologies as products are designated reliable references in their own respective areas. As references for academics and students, and even for non-specialists, they are collections that enjoy a certain level of authority. Anthology editors are, therefore, a major player with enough agency to contribute to literary texts' inclusion and exclusion from the literary canon, which is – by default – an elastic field with porous borders.

This article proposes that the literary field in its entirety is composed of multiple subfields that are superimposed (see Figure 1⁴), and each subfield consists of a varying number of layers (See Figure 2). The model is as follows: Within the literary field, there is a limitless number of subfields; the ways in which we can construct subfields are limitless. Subfields can be representations of time periods, literary genres, national literatures, theories, etc. They can be intersections between genres and time periods or between authors and genres; the forms which subfields can take are endless. Every subfield can comprise a changing number of layers. Within a given subfield, every layer is a mini-field in itself with its own agents, who – in turn – acquire a habitus that they bring with them to their respective fields. For purposes of this article, where the main focus is anthologies, I interpret Bourdieu's field theory liberally and propose examining anthologies as one subfield with its own dynamics and agents, a subfield that contributes to reshaping the global literary canon. In my analysis, I maintain that there are three layers that together constitute the subfield of anthologies. The first layer in the subfield will be labeled (L1), the second (L2), and the third (L3). Agents in each respective layer will be referred to as agents of layer 1 (AL1), agents of layer 2 (AL2), and agents of layer 3 (AL3).

The hierarchy of the subfields is directly proportional to the agency of its players. That is to say, the top subfield (L1) is the one where players have the utmost level of agency players in this field have. The subfield below that (L2), which occupies the middle, is one which less powerful players, who nonetheless still acquire agency within the literary field, occupy, while concurrently remaining connected to the subfield above (L21) and its agents (AL1). The lowermost subfield (L3) is where the least powerful players (yet still with some level of agency) reside. I argue that all three layers or fields are connected, and all agents occupying those fields are interconnected as well, with

⁴ Figures 1 and 2 are the author's creation. They are not taken or copied from an external source.

the totality of this figuration creating what has come to be known as one subfield of the literary field, i.e., the field of anthologies. While Bourdieu maintains that “each field is relatively autonomous but structurally homologous with the others” (Johnson 6), I argue the same could be applied to layers within a given subfield. Any field/subfield is expandable by default, capable of taking on any number of agents, which further develops the complex web of relations between those agents and, as I argue, between the layers which those agents occupy.

It is worth noting that another set of agents exists within the topmost layer: readers and buyers that constitute an effective purchasing power. The topmost layer [L1] (where anthology editors are agents) is also where readers/buyers, who are mostly academics, are agents as well: distanced but intricately connected to editors and anthologies. As Barbara Mujica puts it, “they influence the process [of the canon reformation] through their purchasing power” (208). The division of the subfield into layers is essential to my interpretation of Bourdieu to explicate how agents who do not acquire the same capital cannot be equated with each other, and it thus becomes essential to place them hierarchically.

Anthology editors belong to the milieu Bourdieu calls “agencies of consecration” or consecrating authorities, which he defines as “not only academics and salons, but also institutions for diffusion, such as publishers and theatrical impresarios whose *selective* operations are invested with a truly cultural legitimacy even if they are subordinated to economic and social constraints” (*The Field* 112; emphasis added). Bourdieu argues that “every position, even the dominant one, depends for its very existence, and for the determinations it imposes on its occupants, on the other positions constituting the field” (*The Field* 30). At the same time, positions are occupied – and shape the (sub)field – based on the capital of the agents occupying those positions. This is why anthology editors are at the topmost, i.e., most powerful, layer within the subfield. The editors – who occupy the dominant position – draw upon their strength from its relationship to other occupants of other layers. Without canonical texts, without the existence of anthologies, the editors of these anthologies would neither acquire the level of agency they do have nor occupy the topmost layer of the subfield.

Anthology editors are creator-as-agent. Unlike literary works, which are aesthetic (a passive, somewhat static quality), anthologists have a consciousness, which makes them active, dynamic agents. If we temporarily cast aside our understanding of copyright

and originality, the status of an anthologist almost amounts to that of an author (Kuipers, 123). Anthologists are empowered by virtue of the power they wield in wide academic and educational circles and by the fact that they are on the creator end, not the reader or receiver end. Their capacity to create entails an artistic process which – while different from that of authors – allows a new amalgam of works to emerge with a distinct purpose. Christopher M. Kuipers divides this artistic process into three stages: the selection of material, the arrangement of this material, and their final presentation (Kuipers, 123). It is in this artistic procedure that anthologists are akin to authors. Selection is often based on varying criteria pertaining to the tendencies of their editor(s) and their purpose for compiling the volume. Kuipers maintains that selection not only entails great artistry but is also a creative endeavor in itself for its involvement of the necessity to 'locate' works or unearth them, particularly if they have been neglected or are no longer published and in circulation (Kuipers 124).

First, it is essential to understand why anthologies make for an excellent case study. Barbara Mujica presents anthologies as "historical surveys of literature, that is, compilations of canonical texts" (203). She maintains that at the core of the criteria used to include texts is careful selection; an anthology, by definition ("from the Greek word 'selection of flowers'") and by default, dictates the necessity for selection (203). Literary anthologies are always created with a sense of purpose. They are derived from a need to preserve, illuminate, juxtapose, and even critique past and present paradigms in the literary field. While anthologizing is an act of literary curation, anthologies should also be created with a solid function or purpose. Since making anthologies involves multiple layers of work, editors often are required to deal with several issues as they arise, including length, copyrights, permissions, and publisher requirements. Thus, despite the power they wield, anthology editors should be flexible and "let the picture unfold as well as keep reining it in to [their] original intention or idea" (Gale 81). Bringing an anthology to life is as rewarding as it is a laborious work requiring intensive effort, making editors more than mere collectors. As Kuiper puts it, "[e]ven the gathering of selections under a relatively limited rubric can be a process fraught with intellectual difficulties" (124), which makes it an intellectual task with economic dimensions. Roger Brubaker refers to the distinction between material and symbolic goods: "cultural or symbolic goods differ from material goods in that one can 'consume' them only by apprehending their meaning" (757). Looking at the status anthologies occupy, they exist where both the cultural and economic conflate; in other words, they simultaneously have economic and

symbolic capital.

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While anthologies may not always be the go-to for many instructors, Martha Banta defends the use of anthologies and claims they “have the right to stand and be tested as a legitimate means to the intended end of placing before the student a wide variety of texts to compare, one against another” (332). Anthologies are often compiled with texts that complement or juxtapose each other with a bigger purpose that is merely stringing together a number of texts. One of the major functions of anthologies in classroom settings is their “juxtaposition of texts – canonical, noncanonical, and neocanonical” (Banta 332). Such juxtaposition makes room for a critical understanding of (non)canonical texts as well as texts that have the potential to join the ranks of the canonical. When anthologies are used in teaching, instructors usually tend to highlight their favorites and may indicate gaps in the anthology, which “contribute[s] to the process of the reformulation of the canon” (Mujica 208).

However, for academics reliant on anthologies in teaching, there is a covert danger to using anthologies in courses they teach. Many anthologies are designed in such a manner that their pattern and structure are best followed closely. This implies a need to cover the texts in the anthology in the order they are presented in so as to maximize the impact of relying on it, which consequently means that the instructor realizes that “selection implies an agreement to follow the pattern” (Hook 109). Even if the pattern is

not closely followed, there is – in selecting the anthology in the first place – a subtle push towards the pattern suggested by the anthology. Instructors should thus be conscious of their choices when selecting an anthology; instead of merely browsing the content selected, they should be wary of ‘where’ the anthology is pulling them and the general direction it proposes: “Anthologies are useful, but the teacher must exercise care in choosing the one which both in the selections and editorial assistance offered best fills his particular need” (Hook 109). This understanding of anthologies and the methodology of their structuring emphasizes the importance of the role academics play not only in terms of their purchasing power but also in terms of their curatorial ones. Instead of merely marketing anthologies by using them in classrooms, they significantly contribute to the textual curation of selected bodies of works, highlighting the multiple roles they are capable of playing.

Anthologies thus make for an excellent case study because they straddle the line between the literary and the economic fields. They are a literary creation in their own way and a production that takes the market demands into consideration. They are the outcome of the tension between the need to collect, reorder, and juxtapose texts on the one hand and the market at large on the other (Gale, 80). In the proposed reconfiguration of Bourdieu’s field theory, anthologies occupy the middle layer (L2) of three layers that constitute the literary field within the area of anthologies. My rationale for the placement of anthologies in the middle layer is that the agency of players is directly proportional to the hierarchy of layers; the higher the layer, the more agency a player/agent has. Since the topmost layer is occupied by anthology editors for agents (thus constituting the most powerful agent within the whole field), the second most powerful agent is an anthology as the product of the editor, particularly one that enjoys wide recognition and circulation, because “[t]hey create and reform canons, establish literary reputations, and help institutionalize the national culture which they reflect” (Mujica 203-04).

Anthologies thus occupy the middle layer of the literary field, simultaneously connected to the layer above, agent-as-creator (editors), and the layer below (literary texts). Anthologies draw their power from their status as referential texts by default. However, as agents of L2, the extent of their authority is drawn by editors (who are agents that play the role of creators). Anthologies are, therefore, what I call created-as-agent, as opposed to anthologists who play the role of creator-as-agent. Instead of looking at anthologies as standard collections with a minimal amount of innovation, we can look at them as potential “sites allowing considerable editorial innovation” (Kuipers

130). The question of readership has always been central to the literary canon and, by extension, to anthology-making. John Guillory points out the equal importance of *who* reads and *what* they read (18). This has created a resurgence of interest in anthologies on academic and commercial levels in the twentieth century that has extended until the present moment. Theo D'haen maintains that anthologies of world literature, to give an example, "primarily serve education, preservation, and profit purposes" (552). Within this triangle, anthologies are simultaneously a product geared towards certain markets and a producer contributing to canon formation.

Given the editors' and anthologies' occupation of L1 and L2, literary texts themselves occupy L3 in the subfield of anthologies. "The work of art is an object which exists as such only by virtue of the (collective) belief which knows and acknowledges it as a work of art," which necessitates taking into account "everything which helps constitute the work as such" (Bourdieu, *The Field* 35). Literary texts are intricately connected to their makers and readers, their publishers and circulators, their applauders and censors. In the multi-layered division of the subfield of anthologies, texts occupy the lowest rank, not for lack of agency but for the simple fact that the two other players who function within the context of anthology-making as a literary subfield, namely anthologies and their makers, have more agency – in terms of consecration capacity and canon formation – by virtue of the positions they enjoy. The position a text occupies, and consequently the meaning and value it takes on, changes with any change in the field, whether from producers or consumers, or even with the appearance of new texts on this plane: "The meaning of a work (artistic, literary, philosophical, etc.) changes automatically with each change in the field within which it is situated for the spectator or reader" (Bourdieu, *The Field* 30-31).

Works of art are symbolic objects only when recognized and received by readers as such. Thus, both material and symbolic production matter to the sociology of art. Symbolic production is a "belief in the value of the work" (Bourdieu, *The Field* 37). When a given literary text is widely applauded in the right circles (i.e., among academics, critics, prize-awarding bodies, etc.), its status is elevated. With a limited number of texts, they acquire the potential to become canonical, and a percentage of those texts acquire this status. This grants the texts themselves partial authority, making them agents (albeit without full autonomy) that are *partially* independent of other individual agents (such as publishers, academics, anthology editors, etc.). When anthologized, texts become more powerful, yet they remain connected to editors and their choices. Under

the collective power of all agents, when these texts are removed from later editions of a given anthology, they can potentially be stripped of their partial agency and demoted once again to below-canonical ranks, joining what world literature scholar David Damrosch calls the “shadow canon” (45).

Consecrated literary texts and those seeking consecration play (as opposed to editors who are creator-as-agent) the role of created-as-agent, which is already what anthologies do. Texts are agents for the aesthetic worth they hold and often for the historical and cultural value they represent, but they are also passive and static. Anthologies, however, are more dynamic than individual works of literature in how they pitch texts against one another and create dialogue through intertextuality, which is why I place them in the middle layer of the subfield in my interpretation of Bourdieu's notion of field. Bourdieu argues that the field of power is “a battlefield which can be seen as a game” where “trump cards are the habitus” (*The Field* 148-50). Agents compete, engaging in a battle for power, which is the main stake in any given field. In doing so, they demonstrate whether they acquire the basic and most essential dimension of the habitus: “the determination to succeed” (*The Field* 150). Within this context, literary texts in L3 are players with a limited agency yet relative autonomy, still connected to agents in the two layers above. The “determination to succeed,” the most fundamental of all features of the habitus, is arguably a text's capacity for consecration, be it aesthetics, style, content, or language. A literary text is never fully autonomous, yet it can demonstrate potential for canonicity, thus calling attention to its habitus as a distinguished text in a field teeming with many texts that are often ‘too commercial’ or ‘too popular’ to be considered for consecration. That is not to overlook such texts' interconnectedness with their authors on the one hand and institutions of consecration or diffusion on the other.

To conclude, Bourdieu's understanding of the field can be expanded in a way that allows for a broader understanding of the literary field's composition. Acknowledging the criticism of some of Bourdieu's concepts, my aim is to illustrate that despite the limitations of some of these concepts, Bourdieu still manages to remain relevant in today's world when looking at consecrating authorities such as academics and anthology editors. Bourdieu's concept of the field can be reconfigured to examine power dynamics in the literary-economic field. In that sense, a field is not a one-dimensional flat plane; it is a complex web of subfields, each consisting of a number of superimposed, homologous layers. As Göran Bolin writes, “[o]ne of the benefits of field theory is its

insistence on the empirical grounding of theory” (34). Provided that we “modify the model and differentiate between several fields of power in society, rather than one singular field of power” (Bolin 40), the concept of the field thus remains relevant in providing new, critical sociological interpretations of the functions and roles of agents. The literary field, as any other field, encompasses a practically inexhaustible number of subfields, and these subfields offer a diverse array of agents, each of whom occupies a particular position in a given layer of that subfield, that is dependent on its relation to other agents. Given that agents play an active role in constructing the dynamics of the space they occupy, the relations between agents are dependent on the cultural capital they acquire. Anthologies and their editors make for a case study that illustrates how this new reconfiguration of the field asserts the contemporary relevance of Bourdieu’s concepts in deconstructing power dynamics in the literary sphere.

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Appendix 2

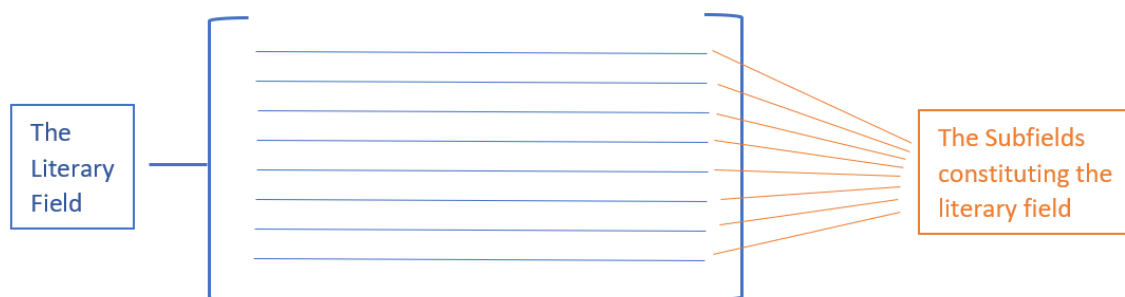


Figure 1

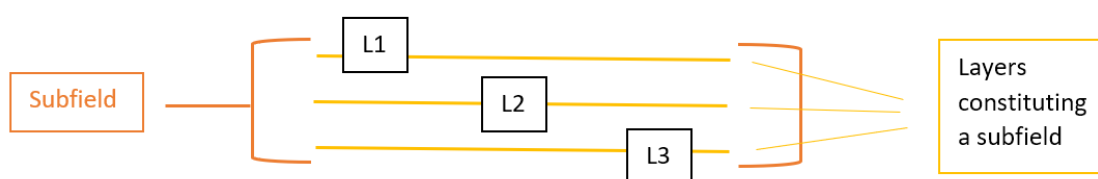


Figure 2