Who's Afraid of Poetic Invention? Anthologising Australian Poetry in the New Century

A.J. CARRUTHERS
Shanghai University of International Business and Economics

> So this mud map (and the collection itself) represents nothing so fixed as a community, nor a hierarchy of influence (as from teachers to students), but a rhizomatic, dynamic network of enabling connections creating a shifting terrain which will look like a completely different landscape in another ten—or even five—years. . . The point of this cartographic exercise is less to represent and codify what already exists, than to orient the vibrant energies of the present towards a 'something else,' an open possibility unable to be specified in advance.
>
> —Anna Gibbs, Preface to *Mud Map*

Glaciers and Sausages

The distinction between a canon and a theory of the anthology is one I want to stress at the outset of this essay, something Christopher M. Kuipers exposes in his examination of the Anthology/Corpus dynamic. An anthology is a 'literary storage and communication form: a textbook, (now) a digital archive, (once) a commonplace book' whereas a canon is a changing force, a '*literary-disciplinary dynamic*' (51). Finessing this distinction, Kuipers takes 'corpus' to be a vital third term whose impact can be explained using the glacial metaphor, building on work by Wendell V. Harris (1991) and Alistair Fowler (1979):

> For the glacier, being on earth and subject to gravity means more than one thing, forcewise: on the one hand, there is internal pressure and downward compaction, leading to a spreading that glaciologists call 'creep,' and on the other hand there is the partial resistance of the surface, over which the glacier also experiences 'slide.' For the canon, being on earth and subject to the accumulating weight of the snow of literary production means experiencing two forces, which I am calling 'anthology' and 'corpus.' . . . anthology and corpus could also be likened, respectively, to the glacial zones of ablation (wasting) and accumulation: what is 'good and bad' about glaciers is not the glacier, or the snow and firn at the top, but what happens at the bottom: all that anthological calving, galloping, melting, and tilling. (Kuipers 56, 58)

This essay is therefore not a gripe about canons; if anything, the gripe is more about the glaciality of corpuses. Far from a gallop, the Australian corpus too slides at a tectonically slow pace, sometimes too slow; what anthologies have scooped up have sometimes not been very potent forces in defining the canon or distinguishing canon from corpus. Whether what these anthologies derive from these bigger forces of production can amount to an Aristotelian 'good' or 'bad' is of concern here but I am not replacing critique with judgement and nor is this, of course, not being a book review, going to be whiny, a category that also has to be considered when it comes to talking about anthologies. This said, the whiny and the aggrieved are both close to the heart of responses to anthologies, well-articulated in an excellent exchange between Sean Shesgreen and those he prosecutes in a special 2009 issue of *Critical Inquiry* concerning *The Norton Anthology of English Literature,* its commercial and competitive history with *The*

Longman Anthology of British Literature, and their respective editors, particularly M.H. Abrams of Norton, whose emails he produces as scurrilous evidence. To be aggrieved about anthologies will often involve a complaint. The complaint revolves around inclusion and exclusion; 'Injured authors sound aggrieved, petty, whining, even unbalanced; reviewers look sportive, principled, or disinterested' (307), but such aggrievances in this instance concern the editorship. Abrams and Stephen Greenblatt, of Norton, though defensive, chose to respond in an aggrieved tone rather than talk about those issues of anthologies and their commercial life. Affronted, outraged at the 'morals' and 'ethics' of the situation and the 'tabloid'-style use of sources, their attitude was, unsurprisingly given the charges, to go on the defensive rather than into the theoretical questions raised: of just how anthologies get made, how corpuses survive, advance, turn into canons over time. No less aggrieved, but more polemical, the best challenge to Shesgreen came from Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, who edited *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women* (1985). For Gilbert and Gubar, Shesgreen ultimately still presents it as a history of men—thus the 'history' is Greenblatt versus David Damrosch, editor of the *Longman Anthology*—men locking horns, overlooking the history of embattled women fighting for inclusion over time. Yet regardless of whether these longer battles are covered by Shesgreen, he gets the final word, comparing anthology-making to sausages:

> In this respect, an analogy between anthologies and sausages runs true and deep; we all love sausages, but none of us wants to know precisely how they are made. Those who inform us about their manufacture, name particular sausage makers, and divulge information about their profits are 'low-order' tabloid journalists; they distort, take sausage making out of context, ruin the good name of all sausage makers, and bring their guild into disrepute. (1086)

We might not all love sausages, but there is a certain truth in this. The debate that followed Shesgreen's response—see, especially, the contentless reply from W. Drake McFeely, W.W. Norton & Company's chairman and president—shows how little we can ever get to theorising the anthology and its material history without getting caught in the game of careers and aggrievances. We rarely know or talk much about how anthologies/sausages are manufactured, and, crucial to this study, theorised.

Let me be open about my approach and what I might or might not have at stake. I am interested in the potential of an anthology that pays attention to what has been an Australian avant-garde. In terms of actual efforts to promote this, the closest I've gotten so far to seeing the full face of aggrievance was in an exchange I initiated with several avant-garde poets over exclusion from *Contemporary Australian Poetry*, a recent anthology I won't have time to examine here. All I did was initiate a discussion, because I felt that there were several experimental poets of an older generation that ought to have been included if not at the very least glossed. The result was some vitriol, exchanges of emotion on a personal level, and on my part the feeling that I perhaps had already gone too far trying to get a debate going in the first place. Perhaps that already reveals too much. For despite this distancing, it gets close to the heart: literary cultures are composed of individuals, careers and associated sociabilities. But to forgo such personal tales of aggrievance and discomfort, even anger, and they are to be set aside here, is necessary in order to really do the work of theorising the anthology in general, then, specifically, the Australian anthology in proximity to histories of the avant-garde. I believe I've been able to zoom out sufficiently to see the wider picture, but the reader can decide.

Anthologising After Missing Forms

This can be no synchronic task: the point here is to place anthologies—histories, theories of them, and their poetics—in relation to the past, present and future architectures of an Australian corpus. To open future possibility up to a 'something else,' as Gibbs proposes above, seems an echo from one of the most radical of Australian anthologies, for its time and now, *Missing Forms: Concrete, Visual and Experimental Poems* (1981). Doubtless then and doubtless now, *Missing Forms* was a moment of embrace for those preoccupied with the languages of invention, as the Preface announces: 'TO PREPARE THE GROUND FOR ANOTHER WAVE OF POETS AND ARTISTS.'

Anthologies such as these are concerned for the future as much as being chronicles of the present ground. This essay returns us to those collative, summative attempts at communal or national poetic reckoning: anthologies, as things that can sweep up huge swathes of writing and whose strongest representatives can ostensibly leave a groundshaking mark on literary history. Like books, sure, but in momentous cases, much more than books. Let's turn our back, so to speak, on poetry books, as useful as they are in articulating some of the more monumental, hardbacked or hardlined statements of invention, to get a birds-eye view of it all. What I want to explore here is the discourse and rhetoric of twenty-first century Australian anthologies, and investigate those attempts at presenting a radical, or conservative, poetics through the form of the anthology.

Rather than treating anthologies as exercises in upending and rerouting literary history, I want to closely examine on their own terms, and in context, 'Australian' theorisations of the anthology. Sometimes this has meant claims of even-handedness in navigating a path between what these anthologies and their editors have designated as conventional verse on the one hand, and avant-garde, inventive and/or experimental poetries on the other. Bringing together supposed polar opposites even happened, I argue, before it was clear what the poetics of the two opposing sides really were. That is to say, a sense of *binarity* became part of the theorising of the Australian anthology, a theorising that presented it as a meeting point of or between clashing discourses, and approaches. There was, you will clearly see, a discourse around 'playing it safe,' something which meant to 'settle,' or fall back on a clearly defined category: the conventional or the received. Then there are those discourses that unashamedly claim radicality. But there are also several exceptions to this formula, either where fairness really did mean to present a wide range of meeting points and contrastive poetics, or, where one or another side was taken. These discourses will help us search for a *theory of the anthology*, testing the form in its relation to various cultural thematics: aesthetics and history, and connections between poetics—theories of poetry, which I regard as the *sine qua non* of anthology making—and the sociopolitical. I want to stress that a theory of the Australian anthology ought not necessarily lead us to a program or a manifesto. Nor is the schema here one of judgement. Such a theoretical and literary-historical inquiry shows us just how Australian literary culture viewed, and still views, poetics, on a larger scale than the single author.

Introductions to Australian anthologies have often raised the question of a 'national literature,' as does John Kinsella in the introduction to the 2014 *Turnrow Anthology of Contemporary Australian Poetry* where he writes:

> Most collations of a country's poetry are not embodiments of that country; neither
> is this an embodiment of 'Australia.' Though Australia as place, as continent, and
> geo-political construct, obviously informs many of the writers collected herein,

> and for some the cultural and geographical specificity of place is pivotal, this is rarely on a nationalist level, and rarely as a blanket idea. Rather, specificities of place and country are the spatial register of the poetry. (19)

Spatiality, specificities of place replace notions of nation, something that the 2013 anthology *Outcrop: Radical Australian Poetry of Land,* edited by Jeremy Balius and Corey Wakeling, likewise explores. This is Australian poetry by embodiment of country, land, continent, geospatial region, but it isn't Australian poetry by strict requirement of nation or nationalism. Yet, the curious offshoot of Kinsella's postnational, geospatial politics is a disavowal of aesthetics:

> there are no aesthetics at work. I do not select on the basis of beauty; neither do I search for 'satisfaction' or 'art for art's sake.' I do, of course, consider the nature of the poem, the attributes that inform it as creative object, but I profoundly distrust any form of aesthetic distancing. (Kinsella, *Turnrow* 21)

Kinsella is wary of making aesthetic judgement, we are told, in order to foreground the agency of the reader. Aesthetics is distancing, and about beauty. Aesthetics (not, one assumes, poetics), for Kinsella, is uncertain territory. To make an aesthetic judgement on a poem is anathema but something easy to fall into, and thus something to be avoided, whereas the 'nature of the poem' which is also a 'creative object' is considered. The nature of the poem, its 'attributes,' are favoured over aesthetics because aesthetics estranges; the creative object's attributes get us close.

How might one read this? Does aesthetics really distance? What is an *aesthetics* of poetry? How close does it get to poetics, to the language of the poem? (Are we asking for judgement: beautiful or not?) Can we think past aesthetics, which must concern itself with the look of poetry, a sense of its beauty, to a larger sense of what aesthetics means to the fields of cultural influence and tendency in Australian poetry, without lapsing into the problem of either aesthetic 'bias' or the notion of art for art's sake? If we can move from aesthetics to poetics, we might say this is not about favouritism in the first instance; of the editorial-I, the one who may (or may not) be able to judge a poem upon its aesthetic merit.

We might discard aesthetics, then. But if the anthology isn't the place to speak about aesthetics, I would stress that we cannot discard another kind of nonjudgementalist stance in such theorisations, and one that, although it intersects with aesthetics, isn't strictly speaking aesthetics—that of poetics. Poetics is *crucial* to any kind of anthologising in that anthologies, whether the editors or the poet in it like it not, will present a poetics at some point; that is to say, an anthology will have to present some theory of what makes a poem worthwhile in its verbal textures and use of language. The real question here becomes whether or not poetics and aesthetics have common ground. Discarding aesthetics in this way would become a problem if it became, simultaneously, a discarding of poetics. If aesthetics-as-poetics entails 'art for art's sake,' then why? Is it possible for an ethical and political imperative to support the larger promise of a poetic aesthetics? Aesthetics, if it can include poetics, all the microtextualities and particularities of language, can at the best of times be where politics *takes place*. The sociality of a poem does not somehow exist in a realm separate from the language of the poem. There need not be any 'distancing.' What we now think of as poetics can and has productively gone in the direction of a kind of reading attentive to the sociality of the trace and mark: an ability to *get close* to those smaller scales, the lexical, phonatory, audial, sonic microparticles, registers, tonalities and segmentivities of language. It has also meant that we can read these *as* politically,

culturally, ethically and socially charged. Radical formal experimentation and social critique come together in Kinsella's choice of Javant Biarujia's 'Plus Ça change . . . 1981–2011'

> JUAN   DAVILA   GETS   AN
>   R-RATING [at the   Sydney Biennale, for "explicit
>   homosexual material"]   [Armed]   SERVICES   DRAFT
> NEW   RULES   ON HOMOSEXUALS   BAN
>   ON   HOMOSEXUALS'
> (*Turnrow* 51)

The radical typographic experimentation of this piece, the visual effect of staggering across the page, and spacing of words, similar to the technique of *paragonnage,* both erases and foregrounds instances where institutions rate, censor or ban cultural products. Such cultural oversight is something similar to what Jasbir K. Puar, in *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* has identified as the 'proliferation, occupation, and suppression of queernesses in relation to patriotism, war, torture, security, death, terror, terrorism, detention, and deportation, themes usually imagined as devoid of connection to sexual politics in general and queer politics in particular' (xii).

Another way to put it would be this: does a more conventional poem, one perhaps less apparently 'distracted' by aesthetics, have a better, clearer route to ethico-political intent? At stake in Biarujia's poem is the intersection of radical typographic form and State or institutional suppression of homosexuality. Aesthetics, plus politics. A no less explicitly State-centred but more biopolitically motivated poem in Kinsella's anthology is Chris Mann's 'its a trick, right?,' likewise evoking typographic interest:

> (ok, so a plasticine or anyway chewable or, surface anyway, Thing, Lozenge, that employs bone resonance so .. you know, some piezo polymer, Conduction is the word, that does voices in your head and all .. (the Speak fetish. wants to negotiate, but finds itself recused with something of a conflict of interest, (sounds like theyve just discovered milk, or the function of a Number. i mean CoordinatedWith or UndertheDirection Of is the classic def of Terror, no?), a Word, (or (the art of being seen, the Fulcrum), an   epileptic   Name   for   a   word,
> (*Turnrow* 341)

The way Mann here uses the left-right justification of the poem to protract and sometimes compact each line gives a whole new meaning to the notion of the line break, because, like in the prose prosodies of Ania Walwicz, the line is broken where (or more precisely, when) the left-right justification is chosen; on the modern computer this is achieved by pressing shift-enter. Gapping gives pause. In terms of content, the poem's language takes on pharmaco-capitalist and nutraceutical discourses: material life in different textures and shapes—bulbous, hard, fluid, whether lozenge, plasticine, chewable, milk or 'piezoelectricity'—encircle the uneven surface of the text. The last line quoted here 'an epileptic Name for a word' (after which, in Microsoft Word: Shift > Enter) gaps each word out of a notional, perhaps conceptual fidelity to the margins. The line break is prosaic, but the number of words per line is still, as in lineated poetry, determined by Mann, so that the textures and resonances of the language itself gather up or tilt like fluid. The sheer *speechiness* of the writing, as if transcribed or sourced

(procedurally), is such that writing is a kind of listening, no doubt some aspect of his experience with the groundbreaking experimental group *Machine for Making Sense* (of which Amanda

Stewart was another member), a group founded on a sense of political urgency. Contrasting with such poetics, laterally distributed across the page, Pi O in '2 Poems' puts axes up to vertical and runs the poem down with thin lines:

> when it
> was it
> like it
> did it
> to it
> when it
> let it
> put it
> in it
>
> (*Turnrow* 403)

Almost analogous to musical slurs, these rhythmic one-two linelets, comprising vertically independent trochees, rush down the page, where the use of the pronoun can set off a whole set of tonal and verbal questions: is 'was it' a question without a question mark, or are we to read 'when it/*was* it' phrasally (my emphasis)? Are these fragments or can they occasionally join vertically and be read out as such? How we *hear* clipped line and line-break all depend on what route our eyes will take from top to bottom.

As an anthologiser it is clear Kinsella has a keen eye and ear for poetics. Often, by extension, aesthetics, but for the most part, poetics. To say nothing of the radical form, the shaping and the visual prosodics of these poems, the disjunctive or unusual poetics that they seek and inhabit, is not to take into account their full capacity as poems. The question then is how to avoid judgement without forgoing aesthetics and poetics. It doesn't have to mean a regression to 'art for art's sake,' whether in a conventional poem or an experimental one. Instead of conceiving of the 'nature' of a poem as object, with attributes, understanding the poem as process allows us to interimplicate literary form and cultural impact. It allows us to read the trace as social. If getting close to the language of a poem, rather than distancing ourselves from it, amounts to 'art for art's sake,' how can we imagine an approach in which the participatory role of the reader takes precedence, and into which we can begin to explore the politics of aesthetics?

In *Landbridge: Contemporary Australian Poetry* (1999), just a little out of our designated dates here, Kinsella argues that the Language Writers were the chief source of inspiration for an innovative challenge to the supremacy of a mainstream stylistics or tendency. The argument goes that the idea of language as a thing in itself, in opposition to language as reflective of an ego-I, had not yet been thoroughly floated:

> Australian poetry in the late twentieth century—at least that available in the mainstream press and in literary journals—has tended to skirt these issues. Innovation has mainly come within the tradition of the 'lyrical I' poem—working within or against the lyrical and/or narrative structure . . . (*Landbridge* 20)

Kinsella goes on to note:

> Innovation has always been part of a developing poetics, but it hasn't been until more recent years that signs of what we might call the 'linguistically innovative'—a term I originally acquired from translation texts though claimed by a number of anthologists and critics—have become more common . . . among Australian poets on a broad scale. An increasing number of poets have begun to focus on language itself, and its means of production. (*Landbridge* 20–1)

Though his eventual choices might not lead to the concerted developing of new ways of thinking about the poem, new forms of *poesis*, or of making, and certainly do not further in any explicit sense an innovative challenge to the received, Kinsella's acknowledgement of the historical development of innovation, and his citation of the innovative as a valid challenge to the received, bodes well, as we will see, for anthologies to come.

It comes down to the question of the existence of an avant garde in Australia. It is no longer possible to avoid the issue of 'linguistically innovative' poetics in the twenty-first century. To return to the question of judgement, a better way to put it might be this: poetics is not so much the presentation of judgement as the implicit presentation of some kind of stance on linguistic invention. Mapping the *development* of experimental poetics, aesthetics, the formal and linguistic aspects of the poem (on the one hand), and the cultural, ethical and political aspects (on the other), such *specificity of purpose* will mean less of the requirement for an anthology to 'make sense of it all' so to speak. With specific purpose, anthologies bear less of the burden to provide a full picture of Australian literary culture.

The Conservative Anthology

In 'Loaded Canons: Australian Poetry Anthologies' (1994), a rare assessment of the history of Australian anthology-making, Geoff Page reads anthologies as those 'main contributors to, or definers of, a possible canon of Australian poetry . . . Poets who are left out of too many slide away into oblivion; poets who are in most of them become the "tradition"' (20). But the progression of anthology to canon, Page says, is not so simple. When it came to the question of the generation of '68 and the explosion of poetry in the 1970s, the bifurcation of experimental and mainstream emergence—and here 'mainstream' does not imply an empirically verifiable large-scale readership, it, too, is a construction—leads to what Page calls the 'abstract' school, even abstract expressionist, after Jackson Pollock, led by John Tranter and specifically his landmark 1979 *The New Australian Poetry,* the reaction against which produced Lehmann and Gray's 1983 *The Younger Australian Poets*:

> In this collection, which confined itself to poets born later than 1937, Lehmann and Gray claimed to be 'discovering what survives of the "poetry explosion" of the 1970s.' Using the criterion of including 'only those poets who we feel can manage a precise, communicative use of language and who have something moving or interesting to say,' Gray and Lehmann graciously included poets such as John Tranter (who had studiously left them both out of his own anthology four years earlier) and Michael Dransfield, but represented them in most cases either with atypical poems which made them seem to have deserted their original school (Tranter) or with a brief selection of inferior poems which made uninformed readers wonder what all the fuss had been about (Dransfield). ('Loaded Canons' 22)

Tranter's euphoria as editor of *The New Australian Poetry*, following Donald Allen's *The New American Poetry, 1945–1960* from two decades earlier with similar tones of rapture, Page claims, meant that *New Australian Poetry* painted no fair picture of the times. But it wasn't all bad bias: the value of these irruptions of new paths, none of which would take full root, came as a blessing in disguise. Thus 'There is no generally agreed canon; various traditions contend or, increasingly, coexist' (26). The canonical poets of one anthology wouldn't match up with those of another but these so-called opposing sides, though snarky, would call truce and accept each other's place, and no accepted canon emerges. Debate over, a canonless society of poets. For Page one gets the sense that even-handedness begets a sort of directionless anthologising, anthologising-without-theory, anthologising without poetics or aesthetics. But there's no solution to this issue. This is the inevitable ('democratic') means for how these loosely opposing sides coexist in Australian poetry. Partiality, then, doubly manifests as both euphoria and a kind of complex, careful masking of the anthologiser's will-to-group. But is this totally the case? Might euphoria also involve certain attitudes and stances on poetics that are quite real and robustly theorised? What is 'even-handedness' when it has meant, or really stood for, as Page points out, blindness around the exclusion of Indigenous poets, feminist poetries, migrant poets (26)?

We need to know about these trends, tendencies and convergences in order to understand how what I will call the conservative anthology continues today. One of the editors of the 2012 anthology *Australian Poetry Since 1788*, Robert Gray, had said of the first women's anthology *Mother I'm Rooted* that 'to insist on the sex of the person is an irrelevance and an impertinence' (Jennings 36). Such contempt didn't prevent his career as an anthologiser from advancing. But what I want to expose here is how such reactionary conservatism plays out in poetics. Lehmann and Gray, the editors of *1788*, still promote the communication-model of poetry from the 1980s: 'a precise, communicative use of language.' That simple, they claim: a good poem contains a nugget of information or meaning successfully and clearly communicated or transmitted to the reader. This is not a question of what any verifiable readership thinks, or wants. Whether a generic average reader at all follows this model is not the point. They prescribe this model.

We will get to the larger implications of this but we must begin by examining first, by very denomination, why these editors choose what must be described as a Nation/State or nationalist-statist model of anthologising. It begins with invasion: 1788 is the brutal marker of a certain wound, a ruthless cut that marks an erasure of any sense of continuity, any longer durée of Australian poetry that stretches back before this marker. Despite the fact that the hardcover book is decorated with Indigenous art as endpapers, all that oraliteral writing of the Australian landmass and its inhabitants, the survival and thriving of Indigenous poetries through and beyond this cut—all of it is cancelled out. It's figured as frame not content. 'Australian poetry' figured here can only be understood historically as beginning with the colony. But here's where it becomes more entrenched. In their introduction, the editors, curiously, given what I have argued above regarding the 'neutrality' of aesthetics, *link aesthetics with land, country and landscape.* They insist:

> The uniqueness of the country [its land, landscape] has meant that poets here have
> concentrated in their work not so much on formal innovation, until recently, but
> on the peculiar content of the land itself, which has provided originality enough.'
> (1)

This link or leap is extraordinary. Innovation was or is not needed, so they claim, because the land provided originality enough. That is, the poetry of land is not innovative, it can't be inventive, it must always fall on the side of the formally conservative. Formal innovation is, moreover, a recent thing, the stuff of the postmoderns, not moderns. Now, there are perspectives countering the notion that 'innovation' is only recent; the biggest inroads in this area come from Michael Farrell's *Writing Australian Unsettlement: Modes of Poetic Invention, 1796–1945* which elaborates, historically, a way of rereading Australian writing—including colonial, migrant writing, throughout the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century—with a poetics of invention in mind. And this is the crucial point; the *1788* anthology is not simply one that avoids *poetics* (and theories of poetry) for the sake of it. These aesthetic and poetic avoidances have, at core, and importantly, at their word, political and ideological underpinnings. There's no such thing as poetic invention in Australia because, at the same time, whatever formal elements we find are linked to land (which is, apparently, conservative).

We need thus to be skeptical of Lehman and Gray's claims to making 'sensible' and 'unbiased' selections and unravel the nuances here, for their frameworks have clear underlying, and I think purposive, ideological functions. It's this shying away from defining; this lack of evidence, that allows the editors to then say the following:

> Poetry is, to a large extent, defined by poetry and judged by poetry. Of course, content is what is most moving in a poem; but the language first has to be effective. A good poem is appreciated at least as much as poetry as it is as message. (*1788* 1)

What does this mean? In what sense is poetry 'defined' and 'judged' by poetry? How are the several uses of 'poetry' defined here? Does the first poetry mean language, and the second, some thing more like message? Do they mean poetry defined by 'its poetry' (as code for its 'musicality' or 'lyricism' or 'poeticity')? Or do they mean that there is another Poetry that defines and judges poetry (a poetry that is not 'poets' *per se* but some godhead capital-P 'Poetry')? They then seamlessly move on to what seems like the middle of a discussion about form and content: 'A good poem is appreciated at least as much as poetry as it is as message.' The curious function of the 'as' here; clumsily 'as it is as,' seems to distance those various poetries from each other (poem-as-message, poem-in-itself). They seem to be saying this: a good poem is poetry, but it is good because of its message, not just because of its 'poetry' (code for other things, language, language-in-itself, etc). So again: do they then designate poetics as code for the 'effective' language of 'lyricism' or 'musicality'?

With all this in mind it's hard to say how or why they made their choices. The problem, I think, is that little sense of *poetics* is given. They have not defined these several different senses of poetry that are cropping up, and so what the poetics of the anthology will be is not clear. It isn't quite New Criticism here, but because there is no means to judge a poem using poetics, the poem does float free of any sense of what makes the selection anything more than arbitrary.

Or so we might think, for the editors briefly turn to the 'marks of poetry' (at which point we seem to get closer to poetics). But once more there is little theory to hang on to. The mark, it so happens, is depoliticised and drained of its links to the social. The mark means 'imagery, rhythm, musical texture, aphoristic phrasing, mastery of form, and an original tone of voice' (2). It might then include prosody. As I have suggested with Kinsella, who in his critical work often plays close attention to the material text, it is important to stress that the politics of the work are contained in the mark and the trace. Politics and poetics *are intertwined*. In short, why

is the 'mark' (in the way they use it) a depoliticised mark? In the introductory matter, the editors of *1788* insist that poems are clear communicators of precise meaning, and yet when it comes to language, the mark and the trace, where meaning happens, the whole question of meaning goes out the door. It's as if language interrupts, rather than supplements, meaning. Why isn't a mark inflected with sociocultural implications (gender, class, race, culture and the various crossings and intersections therewith)? And if those markers of rhythm, prosody, phrasing and 'musical' texture (used carelessly here), are to be taken seriously under the rubric of poetics, the poetry they choose doesn't seem to have any specific link to these frameworks. The kind of poetry that comprises the *1788* anthology is overwhelmingly quietist. For Lehman and Gray, 'lyric' doesn't seem to mean transformative, subjectively inventive uses of language. But nor is this 'consensus' verse—we cannot verify it to be popular in any statistical sense—and therefore not 'representative' of the real volume of noise that multiple generations of Australian poetry since the 1970s and, arguably, before, have made. 'Aphoristic,' in light of their choices of verse, must mean 'clichéd.' That's why I cannot help but think that the underlying motive behind the conservative style of poems they seek, is some brute, insular yet sinister fact of nation.

Notwithstanding, some of the poems in *1788* are indeed arresting. The anthology includes poets who, from another historical perspective, are far more consequential to Australian literary history than the editors make out. Alan Riddell, Jas H. Duke, Alex Selenitsch, and Pi O are there. But Lehmann and Gray leave out the history of concrete poetry and other kinds of experimentalisms in Australia. Thalia, Chris Mann and Amanda Stewart do not appear, despite writing consistently in experimental modes over many years. Ania Walwicz, who has been widely anthologised, only has a single poem in this anthology. Lionel Fogarty, broadly understood to be a chief representative of radical experimental poetry, does not appear. This is unusual given not only his singular transformation of language, but his sustained output. Jas H. Duke's concrete work is not shown, Selenitsch's is. Furthermore, a tactic, perhaps even strategy for the conservative anthologiser is to include poets who have often shown signs of linguistic invention, or for whom linguistic invention is core to their practice, and choose these poets' more conservative poems. There is little by way of visualist exploration, new formations and deformations of the fabric and fiber of poetry, less poetics by other means, less challenge to poetic diction as we know it, less of a sense of lexical or audial dexterousness you could say, and much less by way verbal texture or phonatory unsettlement in the *1788* anthology, thus experimental poems appear more as occasional oddities. Take one of Pi O's number pieces:

Moonlight

```
1111111111111111111111111
1111111111111101111111111
1111111111110000111111111
1111100000000111111111111
1111111110000000000011111
1010000000000111000000001
1111111111110000011111111
1111110000000011111111111
1111111110001111111111111
1111111111111101111111111
1111111111111111111111111
```

With the simplicity of an Agnes Martin canvas or a Hanne Darboven grid, a poem such as this derives its poeticity not only from a radical emptying of meaning; the short circuit between reader and author is not unworkable; you get when you see it that there is variation in the body of the poem and a conceptual overlay in the title. More than the observational poem, representability occurs in the body of the poem itself, pictorially. And for the critic, ever restless as we are for new means of making poetry, new poetics, new ways of challenging *poesis* in the new century, a close reading can *dance* around an instance such as Pi O's above, taking in verbico-visual, as well as spatial aspects of the poem. We are placed intermedia, interartistically poised between number, pictoriality and the letter.

What I want to emphasise as unusual about this anthology is that Lehmann and Gray don't define the mark in the poetic sense, even though this is about choices pertaining to poetry. Their choices and their approach reveals no reflective attitude to poetic language. They see no connection between the poetics and the politics of language. Nothing lettristically diverse or appealing emerges because of deep social and historical ties to a concept of nation built literally on land and landscape, a model they uphold regardless of the level of cliché in the kinds of styles they mandate. One supposedly 'looks through' a poem to get its message. Ignoring levels of *inventiveness* that many Australian poets have and have had in their exploratory inhabitation of language and form is therefore wilful. They proceed, with purpose, as if that other history, that avant-garde and experimental history never existed, precisely because it threatens the edifice of the nonrepresentative, patrilineal, and conservative, Verse-Nation.

For this is there is little to go on and from this perspective, the anthology is all but dead in its fixity, in its refusal of those languages of invention in poetry written around this landmass over the past half-century or so. It doesn't present any broad sense of what Australian poetry was, or is, or might be; that becoming which Gibbs proposes in *Mud Map*, that enlivening potential.

Radical and Received: Poetics

If an anthology was to boldly say things about the forms, shapes and cultural urgencies of the poem together and at once, it would do so with an eye and ear to poetics, and would then have to weigh up, assess, or bring together instances of clashing poetics, clashing theories of the poem, as they underlie or gave credence to social, ethical and political-economic currents. This impetus towards the social, something missing from the conservative anthology, especially from Lehmann and Gray's anthologising from the 1980s to the present, is what I want to now examine in more progressive anthologies published in the new century. In their introduction to *CALYX: 30 Contemporary Australian Poets* (2000), Peter Minter and Michael Brennan write that they sought a better equality of genders (to start with, 50-50 M-F), as well as a thinking around ethnicity, in commissioning work for the volume. Minter and Brennan are not neutral in their polemical stances toward nation either, arguing for a decolonising imperative in Australian poetry.

What about stylistics? They further state that: 'what we have sought to achieve is a mapping of new points of contact and reaction between the received and the innovative' (12). The argument Minter and Brennan are making here is not that *CALYX* is an anthology with a special focus on either 'innovative' or 'received' writing. The notion of the 'received' however, if it can be substituted with 'the convention' (though not 'the tradition,' given that experimental poetry is, also, a tradition) is no hard-and-fast enemy. Rather, the editors are positing that the beginnings of a conversation *between* 'experimental/innovative' writing and the *status quo* are here in this anthology. It is framed precisely *as a meeting point* between two different ends of a binary. Whatever the case may be, this is significant, because in a sense, the beginning of the twenty-

first century in Australian anthologising culture began with some kind of shift away from *just* 'the received' to include (that other aspect of literary culture in Australia) 'the innovative.' This is an important point because the twenty-first century for Australian poetry, or at least Australian poetry anthologising, begins with a binary. From an historical perspective, I want to suggest this binary is real and potent, not reductive. In what sense? It exists *first discursively*, because it is posited *as* existing. But the question now, building from this meeting of the received (what is) and the innovative (by definition that which changes, or results in change), is *what now,* dialogically, and diachronically, *what future*? Even more precisely: Is the institution and the constitution of Australian poetry now ready for an anthology that is thoroughly innovative and experimental, that actually *changes,* that forges not so much consensus but some kind of *dissensus* on the side of radical aesthetico-formal and ethico-political engagement? (One assumes here that 'innovative' is not a neutral term, really meaning 'better,' but let us defer judgement.)

Perhaps it's fair to say that what is under pressure here is that sense of the 'representative' in anthologising culture. If Australian poetry in the new century truly is *at the cusp of something else,* we may need to begin thinking precisely how vanguardisms did or did not become established. The established vanguardist is of course a contradiction: if radical poetry is also a received tradition, which it is, it continually defies any sense of its own establishment because of its overt antiestablishment ethos. If anthologies do provide pathways to the new, the invented, *CALYX* is 'representative' of (some) antiestablishment tendencies, and is in fact replete with linguistically and visually inventive experimental poems, some of which are produced below. James Taylor's 'Forfeit Of & For' engages some disjunctive work around the page. Kate Lilley and Nick Riemer deploy verbal gymnastics which always come back to something happening in the ground of language. Coral Hull writes in a blunt vernacular with oraliteral aggression:

> dad where have you left the dog?/naarrr/
> dumptharfuckindog/ donwannafuckindog/ esasheepkilla/
> dad I'm getting really angry/...
>
>   fucradford/ fuckindog/ fuckim/esasheepkilla/
> the straight road to the tip/ takes us twelve
> minutes/

Despite the very vernacularity of the poem, with its self-imposed imaginary line-breaks or lyric slashes, the poem is quite literary; the agglutinative compaction of phrase into word, gruntlike, mimics a classed vocabulary while also defying any sense of polite readership. Geraldine McKenzie offers a poem that is, and is not, simply, an etymological dictionary entry for **Adenfrorde**:

> **Adenfrorde** *n.* Whilst it is generally agreed that **Aden** is a corruption of **Eden**, there is considerable dispute over the origins and meaning of **-frorde**. Some scholars argue that the word is an Anglicised version of **-frorde** (*f.*), thus giving **Edenfroide** *n.* literally cold Eden. The term arose in contradistinction to the traditional temperate Eden, positing a paradise of the intellect rather than the flesh of the original. In **E(A)denfroide** form and clarity preside in utter candour. Apollo is invoked, Dionysus cited.

Not simply because, hidden in plain view, the poem is citational, a poem, too, that is framed as nothing more, and nothing less, than its content (being also, an etymology for the poem's title).

Appearing also in Hambone (edited by Nathaniel Mackey) we read here a kind of poetic lexicography, a poem using words to inquire about the shifting historical meaning of words. Also astonishing, again, is the work of Javant Biarujia. In 'Tôtekiko,' Biarujia erases and gaps words to get into them, creating a poetry of lexical segmentivities:

```
by   sno      this   mou
  w    il        a    nt
  T      l      e n   ing
he   aves of sand h     s
            a    v    a l     t
a                ll    e   m a     r
h and s  of    s mOiré o
y           b        n g       n
       day    be   e s   g
garde          low ripples
s n                          a   r
```

I pick out this kind of work, this fractured literary surface, which bristles with the scatter and 'smudge' of a palimpsest (or palimptext), in order to dance around its textually stimulating *jouissance*, a *jouissance* that not so much shocks, perhaps, as requires a different kind of critical attention. Biarujia's poetics is striking on a number of levels. Boldly experimental, it's playfulness inquires with language, which is to say, language for Biarujia is not just a tool for the direct communication of a message. To say this poem is 'difficult' need not mean that it sets up an impasse of hermetic closure. Difficult can mean delightful, textually and linguistically gratifying. Ethan Paquin, reviewing the anthology, again invokes the middle ground: 'Inside there is a peculiar brand of Australian *duende* that echoes hauntingly, lusciously. It's felt across the stylistic board: sprawling, avant-garde gems rest comfortably and naturally next to quiet pensum.' Paquin, rather, sees the quietist lyrical mode and the avant-garde gem as sitting naturally and comfortably beside one another. No hard feelings.

In 2007 an online anthology *The Material Poem: An E-Anthology of Text-Based Art & Inter-Media Writing* was published, edited by James Stuart. Catalogue-like, this intriguing anthology contains key intermedial experimentalists like Alex Selenitsch, Michael Farrell, Hazel Smith, Komninos, Chris Edwards and Amanda Stewart, with generous visual presentations of their work throughout. In the case of Stewart, for instance, there are links to performances of her pieces, an added benefit of the digital forum of this anthology. Not since Duyke, Selenitsch and Murphy's *Missing Forms* (1981) has there been such an exploration of the visual in the literary.

In Stuart's introduction to *The Material Poem* he makes a distinction between writing as 'purely literary' (12) and writing as material practice, a distinction that he then challenges by reassuringly linking literary writing with the 'idea of a literary work's *material basis*' (13), before once again claiming that this writing can 'transcend the realm of the purely literary' (19). Another way of conceptualising this is through a material poetics in which the literary is material, and impure. Nonetheless Stuart then writes that an alphabetic ordering for the writers would have been 'too arbitrary,' opting instead for a more 'intuitive strategy' of linking works (17):

> Having eschewed an alphabetic ordering, I have nonetheless begun the anthology
> with an A—Alex Selenitsch. I have featured some of his sculptural book-works

alongside an essay. The express aim is to explode some of the assumed conventions with regards to literature's medium par-excellence, the book. (17)

Seven years later, the aforementioned *Outcrop: Radical Australian Poetry of Land* (2013) begins to question the residual romanticisms of Nature-as-monad in lyric form, with a wide range of poetic styles. Under pressure from poetic form in relation to 'land,' *Outcrop* does explore the consequences of ecology put beyond metaphor and allegory. That is to say, the aesthetics of *Outcrop* offer some challenges to poetic form through a politico-ecological imperative. Then there is the *Best Australian Poetry* series—more almanac-like, more a poetry annual or poetry yearbook than an anthology. These are customarily edited by senior Australian poets, and though they show socioliterary tendencies, nexuses and groupings, they are not primed to show any interest in a particular poetics. Seeking the energy of youth, *Thirty Australian Poets* (2011)*,* edited by Felicity Plunkett, presents poets born after 1968. It 'celebrates a new generation and includes a wonderful diversity of voices and styles—from traditional forms re-imagined to the experimental and avant-garde, from exquisite lyricism to wild feats of intellect and imagination.' *Contemporary Asian Australian Poets* made culturally significant gains in showcasing for the first time a host of nonwhite voices, over an array of different stylistic tendencies. Recently, the *Active Aesthetics: Contemporary Australian Poetry* (2016) anthology that came as a result of an Australian poetry conference at Berkeley, and *Writing to the Wire* (2016), an anthology of writing around the seeking of asylum in Australia, are both concerned with the meeting point of poetry and politico-ethical urgencies. In the interim of peer-review of this piece, two anthologies came into publication: *Contemporary Australian Poetry* (2016), *20 Poets* (2017, poets from the Cordite book catalogue) and *Contemporary Australian Feminist Poetry* (2016), the latter a particularly strong example of experimental forms in play. For the sake of the historical running of our discussion here I won't go any further into these but readers may see how some of the ideational templates sketched out here might be mapped onto these other anthologies.

The history of women's anthologising in Australia began with Kate Jennings's *Mother I'm Rooted* in 1975, which Gray comments on as noted above, and continued with *The Penguin Book of Women Poets* (1979), *The Penguin Book of Australian Women Poets* (1986) and the 1995 *Oxford Book of Australian Women's Verse,* culminating in *Contemporary Australian Feminist Poetry* of 2016. But I want to focus more narrowly here on *Mud Map: Australian Women's Experimental Writing* (2013), a continuation of this tradition but one which raises questions of concern for the study of the radical potential of the anthology along alternative historical lines. An anthology with a clear intent, this will be experimental writing; it presents both the aesthetic and sociotextual implications of writing otherwise, inhabiting the lettristic. As Anna Gibbs puts it, the horizontality of the anthology is *not* community as such, but an allegory of the communal. *Mud Map* was never able to secure a print publisher, yet a good many of the poems in *Mud Map* place pressure on the edges of poetic form. Many are pleasurably difficult. Teri Hoskin's 'The rectilinear case (from Cultivating writing: How to learn an unknown environment),' uses a kind of citational poetics by quoting 'how-to pocket manuals that were published in the 1960s. The titles ranged from instructions for exhibiting flowers to financial planning to "How to be an effective public speaker."' The result is a pleasing set of found citational fragments, lettered and numbered according to the 'paragraph identifiers in the original text' ranging from the dull:

> IB007_63 Do I need to tell you that every fully expressed sentence has a subject and a verb? If I do, you should be reading a much simpler book than this.

IB017_45 The Worldwide television set which you sent to my home on the 6th December appears to be defective. Since the first day there has been constant distortion of the image, with flickering and 'ghosts.' Your invoice number is 25708, dated 3rd December 1968; the model is No 6FH.

IB030_2 Select your cheese carefully, buy to meet your requirements, and store refrigerated at 38 to 40 degrees F, in plastic wrap, aluminium foil, plastic bags, or plastic containers.

to the ominous:

IB022_25 There will always be a slight amount of drawing in at the edges (as in the lips of mass graves).

Then we get list poems like Pam Brown's 'Borrowed modifers':

Administered Capitalism
Advanced Capitalism
Affective Capitalism
Anarcho Capitalism
Bio Capitalism
Bureaucratic Capitalism
Cartel Capitalism
Casino Capitalism
Cognitive Capitalism
Communicative Capitalism
Comprador Capitalism
Consumer Capitalism
Corporate Capitalism
Creative Capitalism
Crisis Capitalism
Crony Capitalism
Cultural Capitalism

Joanne Burns's run-on lines in 'lotional' bemoan the middle-class family unit in a thickly vernacularised, no less polemical reversioning of Brown's borrowed modifiers:

portafiled in waterproof snaplock plastic
share portfolios will bide their time like
projected family weddings you ought to be
congratulated mums and dads for feathering
your nests intoned the presidential spectacle/s
from a harbour newsroom . . .
         . . . glitches and corrections
peaks and troughs   but she'll be safe
as toasted fingers vegemite or anchovette;
ditch any second thoughts between the calomine
and chamomile   summer cockroaches will
eat them up—

No quietist-sounding security here, the ferocity of the lines bequeaths a pharmacopoetics where the detriment of nutriment lurks in the chemical socius of the home. Kate Lilley, also in *Mud Map,* turns to the public domain, this time public infrastructure, in her poem 'Letters of caption':

> *FEDERATED COLD STORAGE*
> *OPERATIVE PRINTERS*
> *MUNICIPAL EMPS*
> *THEATRICAL EMPS*
> *CONFECTIONERS*
> *BOOKBINDERS*
> *PLASTERERS*
>
> Brevity fabrication error
> A tantamount: noun (obsolete)

The poem, which also appears in the 2014 chapbook *Realia,* comprises a collage of object-phrases. Gig Ryan writes that 'Letters of Caption' is a 'formal term meaning, roughly, to request to bring an offender of the church into line.' Lilley 'wittily re-charges some common phrases in unpredictable contexts.' 'Unpredictable' is the best way to describe some of what occurs, broadly, but not always consistently, in *Mud Map.* By framing the anthology *as experimental*, the poets in the anthology collectively push both the discursive textures and formal parameters of their poems that little bit further, whether Hoskin's citational poetics, Brown's beat-like protestations, Burns's thumpy, matter-of-fact grammar or Lilley's unpredictable linguistic inquiry.

An anthology that certainly binds social purpose and formal invention is *Out of the Box: Contemporary Gay and Lesbian Poets* (2009), edited by Michael Farrell and Jill Jones. This anthology is both adventurous and inventive not only in its choice of poets and poems, but in its form as well: the anthology is grouped not by surname or by age but according to the aesthetic match-ups of the poems themselves. Thus poets who appear multiple times in the anthology might have a poem halfway and another at the end, etc., placed next to other poems for effect (arranged, as in a garland). What I have so far been exploring as a crossroads between experimental aesthetics and cultural politics is noted in the introduction:

> There are levels of acceptance. Just as some can't tolerate gay sexuality, others are fine with it, as long as it's not politicised. And politics is just saying what you really think. As Ice T said about gay marriage in America: 'If we're so fucking free, we should be able to marry a rock if we want to.' Marriage has become interesting—experimental even. And language reflects this change. (*Out of the Box* 9)

And language reflects this change. Precisely, in the sense that to have a cultural politics in a poem is to evidence it in its poetics. Difficult, in the case of gay marriage and the societal straitjacket still wielded over sexuality. Difficulty, then, in language. David McCooey writes that 'While the poems in this anthology are often "difficult," there is plenty of humour here, as well as eroticism, intelligence and poetic inventiveness: pretty much everything one wants from a literary anthology.'

But can 'difficult' be judged unpleasurable and if so, what does this do to our reading. Should critics be critical of difficulty? If it is about pleasure and accessibility, one might say from another perspective that here is plenty of pleasurably difficult poetry in *Out of the Box*. Scott-Patrick Mitchell, also a performance poet, gets into the word, testing the lexical segmentivities of the poem in an Adamic 'tHIS scRIBing s&'; or, 'stretto sone' embedding words (and sones) within words. In 'stretto sone' we hear:

> fire engine hens
> egg on a fertile night
>
> . stretto, the stripper
> ,strigendo sones
>
> . *whoooooooooooooo*
> they clutter, all the
>
> way down
> william. 2wice
>
> (*Out of the Box* 163).

Led by sound, Mitchell's lines thin out, similarly evident in 'pes' where Mitchell deploys a minimalist line:

> clip & clop
> to shop a
>
> gallop. her foxy
> trot a bravado
>
> canter past pigs
> locked to the
>
> spot, maws
> floored. she
>
> quests the fed
> , long in bed
>
> , sequestering
> instead snide
>
> by-&-bys who
> sigh *look at*
>
> *what*
> *she's wearing*
>
>
> .

Note the dot, as if to replace missing couplet. In the case of Gardner's 'parts of speech (built structures),' the language of linguistic and scientific inquiry:

> Euclidean geometry
> over ordinate stars   on off
> on off   motes   on
> off   points   on   beams
> open trajectories
>
> still mute text
> the underlying code
>
> (*Out of the Box* 133)

A curious gapping of lines and between words ensues, taken up also in Terry Jaensch's 'Faggot (review)':

...that's		what		he		calls		me
as	I		leave		the		cinema.	After
the		shock		of		its		opening,
his		mouth			closes			its
curtains		on		a		single		credit
makes		for		the		exit:		from
beginning				to				end,...

Left and right justified, the poem proceeds downwards, as if to track the event it describes in the form of a prose 'review.' Chris Edwards's humour infuses his poems, many of which are startlingly conversational, and generated via other means, meaning translation and citational work. Farrell's poem 'isnt he lovely' disrupts, as his poetry often does, normative syntax and punctuation to present a scorelike textual surface:

> m & an apple me & an egg me as A target with one wooden
> leg he followed)' ' me

The poem ends:

>   theres a time for
> arseholes the reals better than—the metaphor cant
>   He hurdle land with dumb grace" heres a chasm & a
> ladder To climb down put, a sock in it., go chase a
>   tomtit pure On...; the surface steeper than a chemists shelf
> sweeter
>   than mallow sheepish as rockabye: turkish delete Isnt he

The complexity of the punctuation gives pleasurable artifice. This is linguistic arrangement (or re-arrangement). The arrangement of the anthology is also inventively conceptual and thinkerly, and because poems are arranged not according to author but by their proximity to each other, the book precedes as a garland of gay and lesbian writing, less authorist, as primer.

Flowers, Garlands, Chrestomathies

What's the alternative? Despite these radical suggestions, are we simply swimming against the tide? Hasn't the anthology form has always favored the short, digestible (lyric) poem? We know that the Greek anthology grew to favour the epigrammatic style, the condensed, concise epigram as against the expansive roiling epic. In this sense the anthology impacts the scale of poetic work (and in this regard, it must be noted that the editors of the *1788* anthology do make an admirable plea for the inclusion of longer work). But the floral model reigns supreme, it would seem. In Medieval times, the *florilegia* functioned to collect extracts from Christian, philosophical and classical writing. They were, also, from the 15th century onwards, botanical treatises. The Florilegium would then flourish in the 17th century alongside the birth of what is now known as the *anthologia,* literally 'collection of flowers,' with the first comprehensive anthology being Meleager of Gadara's *The Garland.* Meleager collected epigrams from all the major Greek lyric poets, even naming them according to flowers and herbs. As lyrics, so are flowers.

Most anthologies, and certainly most Australian anthologies, can be said to follow the garland model, as an arrangement of flowers. In other words, they are proper anthologies, true to the history of anthologies. An alternative to the garland model is the chrestomathy which, in philology shows the sequential development of a language or even literary style (usually of a Nation-State). More than anthologies proper, the chrestomathy is didactic in that it instructs and informs the reader about the literary tradition and its languages. In his Preface to the 1976 *Origins: Creation Texts from the Ancient Mediterranean: a Chrestomathy* (eds. Lenowitz and Doria), the only example I know of a contemporary chrestomathy, Jerome Rothenberg writes of the importance of these untranslated pieces:

> The gathering that follows has over sixty such eye-openers . . . The change—in the language & structure, the idea in short of what a poem is—isn't peripheral but central, symptomatic of a complex of openings. (xiii)

The chrestomathy would therefore provide not a snapshot of poetry as it is, but rather a map of its changes, a rhizomic cartography that shows how aesthetics and poetics has shifted, diachronically, through time as a 'complex of openings.' A chrestomathy would also not be so ideationally sure of *what a poem is,* as Rothenberg suggests. Rothenberg goes on to say:

> if our present 'curriculum'—whatever classical curriculum remains in schools or on the great books lists—may seem not to have changed much, our actual knowledge has grown through those recoveries that have unearthed & deciphered a score of ancient languages or have revealed alternative traditions in language already known. (xvi)

This leads to the flourishing of reconstructions and translations in the nineteenth century of Near East texts, gains that Rothenberg claims barely get 'under the skin' of the originals, rather putting these texts 'into the language of our conventional & orthodox past' (xvi). He continues: 'But for all of that poetic conservatism (& the other conservatisms it has often masked), the historical, mythical, & ethnic realities have continued changing' (xvi). What results?

> These materials aren't taken as philosophy or theology *per se* but as *poesis*: the making or shaping of reality through speech . . . The narrative here is constantly in the process of defining itself: not the recollection of an ur-text but mind as witness to its own creations. (xvii)

> To get this in the open, Doria & Lenowitz let the words (both of their sources & their own) enter again into that process of becoming—as if to begin anew the old work of *formation.* (xviii)

Thus we have translations like the one below, from *GOD/gods*, a Greek text 'written in Egypt probably by a heterodox Jew sometime before the third century A.D. It forms part of a long *lysis* (a ritual of purificatory 'loosing' that took about fifty days to complete) from an older native magical tradition. Text: Papyrus XIII in *Papyri Graecae Magicae* (Preisendanz, ed.), Vol. II' (10):

the sparrow hawk :

khi   khi   khi   khi   khi   khi   khi   tif   tif   tif
in priest :
me-ne-foh-if-oth

ha   ha   ha   ha   ha   ha   ha

now [child] :
CLAP   CLAP   CLAP

go:
TSWEEEEEEEEEEEEEEETSEETSEETSEEE

SSISSISSISSISSISSISSISSISSISSISSISSISSISSISSISSISSI

(*Origins* 12)

Scored into sonic life in such inventive ways, this is, of course, translation in the field of ethnopoetics. Still, can we not find an alternative tradition in the *poesis* of the complex and changing score of language, an alternative tradition to the Great Books of the Australian (poetry) curriculum? An Australian chrestomathy might be historically-formalist, leading to unlikely match-ups across the history of material invention and poesis: Ned Kelly's *Jeriderie Letter* (1879) might appear next to Ania Walwicz or the collage works of writer-artist Robot Wireless (Robert Whyte). An obscure piece like Ah Sing's unpublished diary/journal *The Case* (1867?–1872) might appear alongside the formally radical and politically excoriating work of the indigenous poet Natalie Harkin.

It would not seek a totalising perspective of Australian poetry. We know that the field of contemporary twenty-first century Australian poetry and poetics is historically marked by strenuous discussions and debates, by negotiations and rifts, discussions around theory and form, aesthetics (its worth), the lyric(s), the choral aspects of voicing, diction, of strains of the digital and post-digital, of dictums and avoidances from and of the modern. But a chrestomathy could bridge these difficulties by charting historical coincidences of forms. Euphoria might play a role. Explicit about networks of friendship, 'coteries,' group tendencies, publishing on multiple levels (small press, 'big'-small press, independent press, mainstream press, and conservative press, all of which determine, to varying degrees, the character of groups and rough groupings), a chrestomathy would also seek to be clear about the formal-aesthetic tendencies that accompany these claims to grouphood. What might otherwise be an Oedipal

quarrel between two groups or two individuals could be replaced by a comparison of their 'techniques' or procedures. The page-as-field poets could convene and post-digital poets collude across clashing pages. Covertly or explicitly undermining the anxiety of being 'derivative,' it might be explicit about the global networking—the sociability, the cultural politics—these writers participate in, particularly the UK, USA and across the Asia-Pacific.

What role does inventive poetics play in the broader institution of poetry and its multiply-linked communities? There is some heading in that direction, but in a more generic sense, to bring poetics back into the discussion, I want to propose here that to theorise the anthology in proximity to the chrestomathy, we might more deeply theorise shifting historical and formal tendencies of Australian poetry and poetics rather than being burdened with the task of representing a national literature. More postnational, transnational, regional and hemispheric than national or statist, a chrestomathisation of the anthologising process would provide a map or cartography of the changes in form, language and linguistic texture, with attention to the role of experimentation and invention in forging these changes. With regard to the meeting points of form, aesthetics and politics, a *material poetics* is up to the task. If the chrestomathy can serve as a model, the form of the anthology might once again become a vital part of poetic invention, and cultural intervention, in twenty-first century Australian and Asia-Pacific poetry.

My argument is that a poetics-minded anthology can still provide a social model of a literary community that can exist outside of the nationalist-statist framework, while maintaining close bonds across state-lines, and across the globe. An alternative to the current anthology model, to use Anna Gibbs's words, less represents and codifies what already exists than orients towards a 'something else' that is indeterminate, and ultimately unknowable in the present. Perhaps there's a way around this. Perhaps an anthology, in theory, could be philologically aware of the *development* of poetic style; that is, *concerned with the development of a poetics*, not in fixity but in flux: something like a 'chrestomathy.' A chrestomathy in this hemisphere would be a formally didactic anthology in its treatment of literary history. It would seek a coming together of the language of the poem (poetics, prosody, philology) and its social, cultural locales.

In the twenty-first century thus far, theoretical approaches to anthology-making have generally chosen not to posit inventiveness or experimentality as central to the *critical poetics* of anthologising. We notice, also, a gap between political intent and linguistic experiment. By experimental I do not just mean in the kinds of poets and poems that are chosen, but also the way in which the form of the anthology itself is subject to experiment. Whether alphabetical, or chronological by date of birth, some kind of organising principle is required. But has the form of the anthology itself been put under scrutiny? The difficult cultural work of anthologisers who have done grunt work in unforgiving times puts futural vectors onto this evolving conceptual map. The reasons for the diminution of inventive writing, and the lack of experimentality in anthologising cultures, is no doubt a runoff from the historical and material stranglehold 'conventional' or 'received' poetic practices have on Australian poetry, but how this stranglehold is challenged in the twenty-first century has less to do with the amount, quality, or wealth of inventive literature in itself; what needs to be analysed are the material, economic, and cultural frameworks deployed to frame avant-garde practices, and how, from this, an aesthetics and/or poetics is either foregrounded or backgrounded for the anthology's marketable face.

When experimental poetry appears in those Australian anthologies that seek to represent a national literature, it often falls into the category of a 'sample' of what, it is implied, is otherwise a marginal practice. This sampling is either in 'contest with' or sitting comfortably in concert

beside, 'nonexperimental' verse (of which multiple, sometimes conflicting definitions are given). Experimental poetries are often included to offer a 'fair' picture of a variety of practices (most of them around more 'received' verse conventions). But they are not part of any investigative framework and are rarely historicised in lieu of an Australian poetics heritage. They are, as it were, just a missing history, or a marginalised one, even where renown, the cultural and literary status of the vanguardist poet, is substantial or evident. Too much, too difficult; they become stubborn poetries. Rather than being treated as crucial and central to poetic practices in Australia, inventive poetries have often been rendered minor players in the major *Grundbass*; the conventional Verse-Nation framework. Formal invention, despite the dynamics of contemporary digital formats and advances in print technology, is seen as too difficult, both logistically and textually. This, in turn, has often resulted in a 'garland model'; representation has become a substitute for critical poetics. Not just for anthologies, this is a question pertinent to the twenty-first century Australian poetic corpus. How, that is, can we be attentive to the poetics-aesthetics imperative*?* How to recognise, read, find a critical vocabulary for disjunctive poetics, radical form, rhythmics, style and diction as they link up to cultural, and ethico-political aspects of the poem? Perhaps, as the century wears on, these questions will get answered.

WORKS CITED

Aitken, Adam, Kim Cheng Boey and Michelle Cahill, Eds. *Contemporary Asian Australian Poets.* Sydney: Puncher & Warrmann, 2013. Print.

Balius, Jeremy and Corey Wakeling, Eds. *Outcrop: Radical Australian Poetry of Land.* Perth: Black Rider Press, 2013. Print.

Bellow, Paul Bradley. '"At the Mercy of Editorial Selection": Amy Lowell, Ezra Pound, and the Imagist Anthologies.' *Journal of Modern Literature* 40.2 (Winter 2017): 22–40. Print.

Benjamin, Daniel and Claire Marie Stancek, Eds. *Active Aesthetics: Contemporary Australian Poetry.* Berkeley: Tuumba and Giramondo Press, 2016. Print.

Bogue, Ronald. 'Scoring the Rhizome: Bussotti's Musical Diagram.' *Deleuze Studies* 8.4 (2014): 470–90. Print.

Costello, Moya, Barbara Brooks, Anna Gibbs and Rosslyn Prosser, eds. *Mud Map: Australian Women's Experimental Writing.* Special Issue Website Series *TEXT* 17 (April 2013). Web. Url: http://www.textjournal.com.au/speciss/issue17/content.htm

Deleuze, Giles and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia.* Trans. Brian Massumi. London: Continuum, 2004. Print.

Disney, Dan and Kit Kelen, eds. *Writing to the Wire.* Perth: U Western Australia P, 2016. Print.

Farrell, Michael. *Writing Australian Unsettlement: Modes of Poetic Invention, 1796–1945.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Print.

Farrell, Michael and Jill Jones, eds. *Out of the Box*: *Contemporary* Australian *Gay and Lesbian Poets*. Glebe: Puncher & Wattmann, 2009. Print

Fowler, Alistair. 'Genre and the Literary Canon.' *New Literary History* 11 (1979): 97–119. Print.

Hadas, Rachel. 'On Poetry Anthologies.' *New England Review* 19.4 (Fall 1998): 126–39. Print.

Harris, Wendell V. 'Canonicity.' *PMLA* 106 (1991): 110–21. Print.

Hopkins, David. 'On Anthologies.' *The Cambridge Quarterly* 37.3 (September 2008): 285–304. Print.

Huppatz, D.J. 'Interview with Ania Walwicz.' *ALT-X Magazine* (March 1996). http://www.altx.com/au/contact.htm Web.

Jennings, Kate, ed. *Mother I'm Rooted: An Anthology of Australian Women Poets*. Melbourne: Outback Press, 1975. Print.

---. *Trouble: Evolution of a Radical, Selected Writings 1970–2010*. Melbourne: Black Inc., 2010. Print.

Kinsella, John, ed. *Landbridge: Contemporary Australian Poetry*. Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre, 1999. Print.

---, ed. *The Turnrow Anthology of Contemporary Australian Poetry*. Monroe: Desperation Press/Turnrow Books, 2014. Print.

Kuipers, Christopher M. 'The Anthology/Corpus Dynamic: A Field Theory of the Canon.' *College Literature* 30.2 (Spring 2003): 51–71. Print.

Lauter, Paul. 'Taking Anthologies Seriously.' *MELUS* 29.3-4 (Autumn-Winter 2004): 19–39. Print.

Lehmann, Geoffrey and Robert Gray, Eds. *Australian Poetry Since 1788*. Sydney: New South, 2012. Print.

Lenowitz, Harris and Charles Doria, Eds. *Origins: Creation Texts from the Ancient Mediterranean: A Chrestomathy*. Garden City: Anchor, 1976. Print.

Lever, Susan. *The Oxford Book of Australian Women's Verse*. New York: Oxford UP, 1995. Print.

McCooey, David. 'Two anthologies show it is better to be interesting than to be 'right.'' *Sydney Morning Herald.* 20 March 2010. Print.

Minter, Peter and Michael Brennan. *Calyx: 30 Contemporary Australian Poets*. Sydney: Paper Bark, 2000. Print.

Nichols, John G. 'Ezra Pound's Poetic Anthologies and the Architecture of Reading.' *PMLA* 121.1 (January 2006): 170–85. Print.

Page, Geoff. 'Loaded Canons: Australian Poetry Anthologies.' *Critical Survey* 6.1 (1994): 20–27. Print.

Paquin, Ethan. 'Review of *Calyx: 30 Contemporary Australian Poets*.' *Versemag* 2004. http://versemag.blogspot.com.au/2004/06/review-of-calyx-30-contemporary.html Web.

Plunkett, Felicity. *Thirty Australian Poets*. St Lucia: U of Queensland P, 2011. Print.

Puar, Jasbir K. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham: Duke UP, 2007. Print.

ΠO, Peter Murphy, Alex Selenitsch, eds. *Missing Forms: Concrete, Visual and Experimental Poems*. Melbourne: Collective Effort, 1981. Print.

Shesgreen, Sean. 'An Exchange on The Norton Anthology of English Literature and Sean Shesgreen VIII Anthologies and Sausages.' *Critical Inquiry* 35.4 (Summer 2009): 1085–88. Print.

Shesgreen, Sean. 'Canonizing the Canonizer: A Short History of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*.' *Critical Inquiry* 35.2 (Winter 2009): 293–318. Print.

Stuart, James, Ed. *The Material Poem: An E-Anthology of Text-Based Art & Intermedia Writing*. Bondi: non-generic productions, 2007. http://www.nongeneric.net/publications/materialpoem_ebook.pdf Web.