Ameer Chasib Furaih. ***Poetry of the Civil Rights Movements in Australia and the United States, 1960s–1980s*****. Anthem Press, September 2024. 270 pages.**
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The United States and Australia are said to share a special relationship (such that it must be "reset" every few years). This mercurial connection has been the backdrop for several transnational studies of Australian and American literatures, such as of Allen Ginsberg's 1972 visit to Arnhem Land (Duncan, "Essential Gossip"), Christina Stead's transplanted Washington-Bexley landscape (Morrison, *Christina Stead and the Matter of America*), or Shirley Hazzard's cosmopolitan stay in New York (Olubas, *Shirley Hazzard*). As Roger Osborne and David Carter point out in their recent book, *Australian Books and Authors in the American Marketplace* (2018), Australian writers published in the United States across the 20th century, a history often obscured by more familiar transatlantic, modernist, and wartime currents. This lack of engagement has historically narrowed attention to Australia's negotiation of American influence in the twentieth century. As Paul Giles puts it in *Antipodean America* (2014): "Whereas issues surrounding the Americanization of Australia have become almost a cliché in twentieth-century Australian history, questions about the Australianization of America are much less common" (37). On the other hand, as Giles points out, Australia's national borders have also defined its transnational and comparative connections; he likens Australia's national research priorities to those of the popular television program, *Border Security* (483). The aim then, of contemporary studies of American and Australian connections, is often to unsettle, pace Giles, "the exceptionalist premise" of national literatures by drawing out "complex global interactions with other countries and continents" (37).

Ameer Chasib Furaih makes an ambitious contribution to contemporary studies of American and Australian literary connections in *Poetry of the Civil Rights Movements in Australia and the United States, 1960s–1980s* (2024). Writing on the subject of the Civil Rights era, a period often romanticised in nation-bound studies of progressive politics, Furaih concentrates his focus on the historical and literary connections between poets who were oppressed *within* the national borders of the United States and Australia: Aboriginal Australian poets Oodgeroo Noonuccal (1920–1993) and Lionel Fogarty (1958–), and African American poets Amiri Baraka (1934–2014) and Sonia Sanchez (1934–). At the same time, Furaih argues that these poets challenge their circumscription in national and cultural frameworks by appropriating "the language and literary form of the dominant culture," and not reproducing "Australian or American literature" (21). The book is therefore structured in opposition to dominant narratives of progressive nationalism, aiming to resolve what Furaih views as the "underestimation" of the history "of political struggle between both peoples . . . by many critics and teachers in both countries" (32; see also Foley, "Black Power in Redfern 1968–1972").

Furaih's challenge to the national and the transnational reflect an interest in alternative methodologies of rhizomatic, nomadic, and trans-Indigenous connections. These methodological moves point to the salience of Pierre Joris's book, *A Nomad Poetics* (2003), from which Furaih derives the idea of the nomad poet or NOET: "No stands for play, for no-saying & guerrilla war techniques . . . ET stands for et cetera, the always ongoing process, the no closure . . . for the continuous state of 'being outside'" (Joris 31). Furaih also draws on Chickasaw scholar Chadwick Allen's trans-Indigenous methodologies from the field of Global Indigenous studies, which encourages focused juxtapositions of Indigenous texts, contexts, and cultures "together (yet) distinct" (xiii). Drawing these ideas together, Furaih argues that each poet contributes to a "distinct poetics, which is not bounded by the borders of a territory or by geography as abstracted on a map" (224). This methodology informs both the spatial and historical focus of the book as well as its close analysis. Fogarty's work is regarded as "a

deterritorialised version of standard Australian English," a "revolutionary, 'minor' poetry" (199). Scaling out, Noonuccal, Fogarty, Baraka and Sanchez evoke "lines of transnational connection that rhizomatically link to the rest of the global Black world" (31). These points of connection are variously spatial, synchronous, ideological, or intertextual, including, but not limited to Fanon, Malcolm X, early 20th century union movements, Négritude, the Black Panthers (their Ten-Point platform), nomadism, trans-Indigenous methodologies, the Beats, the Harlem Renaissance, the Black Power movement, jazz music (jazzification), the Black Arts Movement, the Aboriginal tent embassy, and so on. These nodes of connection, Furaih suggests, upend Benedict Anderson's concept of a nation as an "imagined community," in highlighting a rhizomatic likeness on the basis of the recognition of a shared oppression, an "awareness that they were, and still are, being oppressed by relatively comparable socio-political, economic, and cultural forces" (216).

A significant aspect of this book is the role of the poet in the Civil Rights movement. Furaih argues that the role of poetry has been "overlooked in historical narratives of Australia and the United States during the 1960s" (213). This is a delicate line to tread, given the extensive number of poetry anthologies and critical essay collections connecting poetry and progressive politics (for instance, *The Cambridge Companion to American Civil Rights Literature* [2015]) and the number of transnational studies of the two regions (Giles draws Australian–American Civil Rights connections through the poetry of Yusef Komunyakaa). However, to my mind, this is the first monograph to seriously consider the transformative potential of poetry and activism in Aboriginal and African American literatures simultaneously, although it does risk modelling poets in patterns of political and literary influence. Oodgeroo emerges as a particularly important conduit for the use of African American literary and political approaches in Australia. Furiah notes that Oodgeroo Noonuccal adapted Black Panther principles for the Aboriginal Black Panther Party in the "What We Want" and "What We Believe" program (see also Lothian 188), along with Martin Luther King's principles of nonviolent protest, which he evidences through records of the Aboriginal Black Panther Party (37). Oodgeroo also suggests that Jack Horner read *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation* (1967) by Charles V. Hamilton and Stokely Carmichael. These connections are then traced forward: Furaih credits Oodgeroo with influencing Fogarty's political education through her son, the prominent activist Denis Walker. Oodgeroo's multiple interests as a speaker, historian, activist, performance poet, and appropriator of literary and cultural devices exemplify an "interdisciplinary poetics" (65), a framework repeated for Baraka, Sanchez, and Fogarty.

While there are gains and losses that come with modelling a poet in this framework, Furaih usefully points out that both Oodgeroo and Fogarty used poetry to link international political and poetic models with their local political realities. In an interview with Furaih quoted extensively, Fogarty recalls drawing upon Marx and Engels in his speech-making and poetry:

> I wouldn't say influenced by Marxism, but I'd say fascinated by Marx and Engels. . . . I think Karl Marx was a very fascinating person in terms of the way he wrote about proletarians and what is an egalitarian society. I came close to understanding what a dreamtime reality [was] before the white man came to this country. (Fogarty, in Furaih 58)

While Furaih doesn't fully comment upon the implications of the quote or the context of this statement, Fogarty's expressions, "close to," "I think," "I'd say," "I wouldn't say," present a distance and a creative remaking of Marx within a "dreamtime reality," rather than a straightforward engagement with communist philosophy—an intriguing example of Fogarty's interest in uprooting standardised world narratives of sequence and place.

Furaih's selection of four poets provides a concentrated picture of individual positions within different political and literary cultures. All four poets disavow their relation to dominant representative schools of thought: early hostile criticism labelled Oodgeroo's work as propaganda rather than poetry; Baraka experienced racialisation in the Beats movement; Sanchez rejected the patriarchal politics of Black Nationalism; Fogarty faced difficulty in getting his poetry published, with his partner and publisher Cheryl Buchanan noting that "no publisher wanted to touch such 'heavy political material'" (Shoemaker 188). All four poets can be traced *in*, but not *of*, major political and literary movements, such as Négritude, the Australian Aboriginal Progressive Association (AAPA), the Beats, the Umbra group, the Black Panther Party, and the Aboriginal Tent Embassy (again, to name but a few). Furaih expresses this non-essentialising participation most clearly in his portrait of Baraka's participation in the Beat movement (1957–1963), Black cultural nationalism (1965–1974), and Marxist Leninist-Maoist thought (post-1975). Furaih's concentrated focus on four poets will hopefully draw attention to other potential political and literary connections to come. The 2008 publication of *The Macquarie PEN Anthology of Aboriginal Literature* edited by Anita Heiss and Peter Minter, alongside online resources such as the *Poetry Foundation*'s Poetry and the Civil Rights Movement collection, may underscore other connections between Maya Angelou, Audre Lorde, James Baldwin, Alice Walker, Jack Davis (who visited the U.S. in 1970 alongside Maza and McGuiness), and Kevin Gilbert, as well as with lesser known figures published in anthologies in and of this time, such as Gerry Bostock of Australia's National Black Theatre (1942–2014) or Joe Timbrey of La Perouse (1912–1978).

Furaih's attentive study of political and literary connections highlights the complex power relations between oppressed groups—what Sara Ahmed describes as the relationship between "'this other' and 'other others'" (558). Early in the book, Furaih points out that, "like African American 'slaves' in the United States, many Aboriginal peoples were also enslaved under indentured labour regimes or forced to work for little or no pay" (3). While Furaih usefully analyses these intersections, he does not analyse the continuation of these connections in scholarship. For instance, Furaih analyses Evelyn Araluen's analysis of internal and external colonialisms in the essay, "Resisting the Institution" (Furaih 1): "the concurrent processes of settlement, subjugation and empire" in colonisation, border protection, and "the kidnapping and enslavement of South Sea Islanders in the nineteenth century" (n.p.). However, one might go further to analyse the connections Araluen makes to Eve Tuck and K. Wang, whom Araluen cites. Tuck and Wang's U.S. Indigenous and decolonising scholarship show a further dimension to Australian and American histories of forced labour, extending the historical focus into the textures with which we understand and read poetry in Australia. Furthermore, these power relations could be defined in relation to other recent works on the subject, such as Quito Swan's account of anti-colonial and Black Power ideologies in the Pacific, *Pasifika Black* (2022), Jane Lydon's examination of the intercolonial development of forced labour and settler-colonialism in *Anti-Slavery and Australia* (2021); Cassandra Pybus's attention to the presence of Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean convicts in Australia's early colonial period in *Black Founders* (2006); and Jamaican Sydney novelist Sienna Brown's fictive representation of these same presences in her novel, *Master of My Fate* (2019). While Furaih is critical of unidirectional flows of culture and communication ("bringing Fogarty into the same framework as African American poets is not meant to introduce an argument about a unidirectional impact" [186]), the vast majority of examples narrate the reinvention of African American culture in Aboriginal poetry and politics. This reflects Furaih's understanding that "Aboriginal poetics and politics was an integral part of a global Black resistance in which African American poets and activists had a noticeable role" (186). Furaih does note a number of cases of direct meetings between these groups that challenge this one-way narrative, such as the correspondence between the Négritude movement and the Australian Aboriginal Progressive Party (33;

Maynard 12); Australian-based meetings between Aboriginal activists and African American servicemen during the Second World War (35; Shoemaker 33); Roosevelt Brown's visit to Australia courtesy of an invitation of the Aborigines Advancement League President Bob Maza and employee Bruce McGuiness, as well as a reciprocal visit by Maza, McGuiness, Patsy Kruger (later Patsy Corowa), Jack Davis, and Sol Bellear; and Oodgeroo's (1978–79) and Fogarty's (1976) trips to North America during this period.

Furaih's non-essentialist analysis foreshadows a view of poetry and politics as a constitutive whole, "as two sides of the same coin" (25), a "balance" of poetics and politics (177) that unsettles deterministic readings of poets such as Fogarty, whose work, as Araluen points out, "is rarely interrogated beyond its more didactic political demands; his linguistic defiance is usually explored from positions which ultimately privilege English as a poetic standard" ("Resisting the Institution"). From this perspective, Furaih's multidisciplinary approach to poetry and politics provides a useful response to Jonathan Dunk's provocative question in "A Rising Tide":

> So, if experimental writing is still stuck within the closure of social history, and literature's allotted function within it—what Jameson called the symbolic resolution of material contradictions—what does radical, or politically experimental writing look like? (n.p.)

Dunk proposes a theory of negative lyricism, which he defines elsewhere as "a poetic praxis situated in and towards the finite materialities of history, politics, and language, practised without commitment to the coherence of the subject" (1792). Furaih similarly theorises an understanding of experimental poetry "that crosses the boundaries of history and politics" (189). He highlights the political implications of formal variations in the use of the lyric "I" (as in Baraka's writing to African cultures under oppression) or "we" and "our" (such as Fogarty writing to Malcolm X). These granular differences speak to Furaih's argument that the response to "political upheavals . . . was anything but monolithic" (214). All this makes for a varied and formally interesting series of readings, a variance reflected in the range of terms used: noetics (nomadic poetics), war machine poetry, aesthetic war machine, guerilla poets, guerrilla warfare, distinct poetics, counter-poetic history, relational poetics, historicising appropriated poetics, interdisciplinary poetics, politicised poetry, disfigured poetry, linguistic pluralism, rhizomatic poetics, jazzification, projectivism (and postprojectivism), and avant-gardism. Orality is also treated to significant effect, drawing on both speeches and published works by all four poets, including rare performances, such as the *Australian Bookshow* documentary on Fogarty in 1995 (in which Fogarty appears alongside his children reciting his poem, "Su and Du") (Furaih 205).

To my mind, the book's most valuable contributions are grounded in tracing direct historical and political connections. Furaih gives an arresting reading of Fogarty as "the Aboriginal Malcolm X" by working from Fogarty's engagement with Malcolm X's autobiography towards his repetition of the word "necessary" from Macolm X's slogan "By any means necessary" (193). This usage, I think, is exemplary of Fogarty's "aspiration to link the local struggle of his peoples to the international Black resistance movement" (Furaih 193). Furaih also locates the origin of Fogarty's engagement with the Black Panthers in reading materials his partner Cheryl Buchanan had brought from overseas in 1971—a time where their purchase and sale was illegal in Australia. On the subject, Fogarty stated in his interview with Furaih: "[I]t was my ex-woman Cheryl Buchanan, herself a part of the Aboriginal Black Panthers Party, who sent me African American Panthers' newspaper, in which I read the song of Stevie Wonder and adopted the title of his song into my poem" (208). This suggests Fogarty had already listened and was familiar with jazz and blues music prior to Buchanan's and

Fogarty's travel to North America in 1976 to the Second International Indian Treaty Council in South Dakota, expanding a historical framework that I recently highlighted in *The Literary Mirroring of Aboriginal Australia and the Caribbean* (2024). That Fogarty received these materials at a time of political censure illuminates an intertextual milieu formed in resistance to the delimiting and policing of transpacific recognition—a non-bounded distinct poetics developed in resistance to the political violence of the nation-state. Furaih's contextualised, interdisciplinary approach to reading Fogarty makes a valuable contribution to what Philip Morrissey calls "Fogarty studies" in his introduction to *Lionel Fogarty in Poetry and Politics* (2025):

> The publication of Lionel Fogarty in Poetry and Politics is the material sign of what is now, in a sociological sense, a field of study. . . . Where once essays on Fogarty's work had a somewhat incidental status, the establishment of a field of "Fogarty studies" provides the conditions for Fogarty readers with diverse but interconnected research interests to speak to each other. (3)

Furaih makes a significant claim for the constitutive relation between poetry and politics animating Fogarty's poetry. In justifying this argument, Furaih cites a 2018 review I wrote on *Lionel Fogarty: Selected Poems 1980–2017* (2018), "Such a polemical reading may highlight the role of poetry in the political struggle of Aboriginal peoples but overlooks the literariness of Fogarty's work" (177). In that review, I also sought to challenge deterministic politicisation of Fogarty's poetic practice, which "misleads us from the real conditions of writing, . . . obscuring [his] literary production" ("Dashiell Moore Reviews Lionel Fogarty"). As Kyle Kohinga has pointed out since then ("Soil Is a Toil Needing All to Recoil"), the diminishment of Fogarty's poetry to a political demand not only obscures the breadth of his literary experimentalism and prolific output over forty years, but also obscures specific activist contributions in an overarching ideology of resistance (Kohinga gives the example of the introduction of cashless credit cards in Ceduna in 2022). Similarly, Furaih draws out Fogarty's "multivalent poetic characteristics," as multilingual, relational, political, historical, and oral, in correspondence "with the disfigured poetics adopted by Baraka and Sanchez during their Black Arts phases" (177). Furaih's analysis parallels another recent claim for Fogarty's poetic multiplicity in A. J. Carruthers's recent book, *Literary History and Avant-Garde Poetics in the Antipodes* (2024). Unlike Furaih, Carruthers locates Fogarty in a global literary avant-garde movement, while making similar comparisons to Baraka, Sanchez, and Afro-futurist musical and aesthetic influences such as Sun-Ra, briefly citing Furaih's earlier article on the subject (x–xi, 220), in addition to the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets of the late Civil Rights period. Carruthers argues that this contradictory range of influences reflects Fogarty's "aesthetic ideology, and the gap between the vanishing or expanded sense of the present, set against the past and the future, that . . . forms the crux, or triadic temporality, of Fogarty's liberation poetics" (267). Read in conversation, Furaih's book clarifies Carruthers's argument by contextualising the extent of Fogarty's direct engagement with African American and avant-garde literary movements in his early writing.

The comparison with Carruthers also highlights an unexplored connection between Australia and the U.S. in the prominence of anthropology in Civil Rights era avant-gardist and experimental literary movements. While this may appear a significant departure from the topic, Furaih does associate the Black Arts Movement with avant-gardist figures such as poet, translator, and ethnologist Jerome Rothenberg, who "radically reappraised the definition of poetry" in resistance to "the restrictive canonical traditions which Black Arts poets [contested] during the 1960s" (Furaih 9). These "radical reappraisals" were at least in part inspired by Rothenberg's global engagement with Indigenous oral traditions, leading to the formation of

experimental poetic schools like ethnopoetics in the early 1960s (see Wood and Dowding, "White Engine against Black Magic"). In 1963, Rothenberg defined ethnopoetics through the influence of earlier "primitivist" movements, regarding his upcoming manuscript, later published as *Technicians of the Sacred*, as in "roughly the same relation to modern poetry as primitive to modern painting and sculpture" (New Directions Publishing Records). In this sense, primitivism may be considered as an unspoken undercurrent across this book, itself a loose influence behind the concept of nomadism used as a methodology. In a recent monograph on the subject, Barbara Glowczewski argues that nomadism was directly inspired by Deleuze and Guattari's engagement with comparative Indigenous ethnographies. Guattari's avid enthusiasm for ethnological research on Warlpiri peoples was "stimulated, by, among other things, the fact that the kinship system seems . . . to favour social strategies that prevent centralised structures of domination" (Glowczewski 118). I've drawn out these connections here to suggest that there is no easy separation of radical or experimental poetry and the material context in which knowledge is gathered. While this intertextual history supports a central thesis of Furaih's book in that transpacific connections unsettle universalist and unidirectional models of literary and political development, I also want to highlight that methods and means are equally shaped by a constitutive, internodal context, in which models of influence can jar with what is represented as 'together, yet distinct' in a trans-Indigenous approach.

All comparative work attends to particular focus-points, blindspots, and scales of attention. This statement speaks, for example, to my own recent monograph on Aboriginal Australian and Caribbean literature, *The Literary Mirroring of Aboriginal Australia and the Caribbean* (2024). In writing that book, I was conscious of the limits of highlighting literary *and* historical continuities at the expense of others, leading to my decision to ground literary analysis against historical evidence of intercolonial immigration. I bring this up not only to explain my own wayward perspective as a reviewer, but also to suggest that this book may also represent a world through a particular prism: a contemporary reckoning with the actors, influences, and dynamics of the Civil Rights Movement. This focus necessarily sidelines other topics, such as anthropology, primitivism, intersecting colonial interests, and voices of resistance from regions surrounding Australia and the United States. On the latter, Furaih gives a brief account of the Négritude movement: "[T]he decline of the African American Harlem Renaissance and the migration of some of its intellectuals to the Caribbean colonies gave rise to the 'Negritude' movement of the 1940s and 1950s" (8). While Furaih cites Aimé Césaire and Leopold Senghor as the founders of Négritude, his use of the words "gave rise to" suggests a one-way process of cultural transmission that does not fully account for the undeniable significance of the triangulation of the Caribbean, continental Africa, and Europe in Négritude (Furaih refers to a number of Caribbean writers with unexplored connections to Australia, such as Kamau Brathwaite, Édouard Glissant, Roosevelt Brown, and Ralph de Boissiere). Rather than read this as a gap, I offer these openings in recognition of the impossibility of a "complete" reading, and in the hope of future studies of Indigenous and Afro-diasporic historical and literary connections.

Furaih's resistance to literary universalism at the level of politics, form, region, gender, and environment will make an invaluable contribution to the study of transnationalism and Blackness, the global history of the Civil Rights era, United States and Australian literary connections (ironically enough), the relationship between poetry and politics, and individual studies of each poet. The book's defining characteristic is its careful, persuasive argument against "literary universalism" in favour of poetries that come together "within the same political/literary framework, without blurring their distinctive literary specificities" (xii). Challenging the rigidity of hierarchical structures, Furaih re-characterises the Civil Rights era and the transpacific through a dialogic process of engagement across avant-garde movements,

political manifestos, oral traditions, mainstream music, and modern technologies. In the process, the book transforms the “special relationship” of the United States and Australia into a transformational continuum that displaces singular models of literary or political origin or development towards the heterogeneous.

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