Of Blood and Terror in the Queen's Own Land: Violence and the Poetry of Lionel Fogarty

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In his landmark 1958 study of the making of the "Australian legend" (Ward 1), Russel Ward describes the free-ranging frontiersman, managing cattle in remote bush or semi-arid regions in the late nineteenth century, as the most noble of bushmen (104). Indeed, this cowboy—or 'drover' in Australian English—remains a legendary figure of white Australian nationalism. Australia's most fabled drover goes by the name of Clancy, the titular character in A.B. 'Banjo' Paterson's 1889 poem "Clancy of the Overflow." In Paterson's romanticized outback, the bush that Clancy inhabits is a peaceful, friendly, pleasurable place. Clancy marvels day and night at a wondrous landscape, noticeably empty of Indigenous people. Early in the poem we learn that Clancy has gone "to Queensland" (Paterson l. 8), prompting the speaker's vision of him driving cattle along the "Cooper" (Creek) in outback Queensland (l. 10). This, then, is the location of quintessential Australianness: the idealized hero of the Australian bush is associated with the Queensland frontier in Australia's national imaginary.

     The north-eastern state of Queensland continues to market itself, within Australia and internationally, as a sunned, barrier-reefed, tropical paradise. But this Queensland/Australia of laudable legend and contemporary quaintness is not the Queensland/Australia of Lionel Fogarty. Born on an Aboriginal reserve in south-east Queensland on Christmas Day in 1957, Lionel George Fogarty is, like Paterson, a poet. But where Paterson's Clancy finds "kindly voices" to greet him on a splendorous river-strewn plain (l. 13), Fogarty finds "the smell of blood in the waters" and "cut open" bellies filled with stones (Fogarty 227, ll. 5, 25). Where official histories boast of the "triumph of the white man" in "his taming of the [Queensland] tropics" (Cilento and Lack xiii, 1), Fogarty looks back on "weary years of / Dying in white reigns" (Fogarty 234, ll. 27-28).

     Fogarty has been writing, performing and publishing poetry for more than forty years, although his work as a political activist stretches further back: in the 1970s, while still a teenager, he became involved with the Australian Black Panther Party, which was founded in 1971 (Morrissey, "Biography" 289). His first volume of poetry, *Kargun*, was published in 1980. Four other volumes followed over the next decade. The publication of his *New and Selected Poems: Munaldjali, Mutuerjaraera* in 1995 extended his readership and "established him as a national and international poet" (Morrissey, "Biography" 290). Six

more books of poetry have been published since 2004. These twelve volumes in all mark Fogarty as among the "most innovative, outspoken, and prolific" of Australia's Indigenous poets (Alizadeh 129). Leading Australian poet and critic John Kinsella maintains that Fogarty is in fact the country's "greatest living" poet (190), who has consistently produced

> a poetry of linguistic uniqueness and overwhelming passion. In resisting the colonizing force of English, he has reterritorialized the language of the invaders and made of it a language that speaks for his people. […] A liberator, an innovator, and a writer with a purpose […] Fogarty is at once verbally affronting and celebratory of his identity. […] It's a poetry to which all of us should listen. (Kinsella 190-91)

My focus in this essay, for this Special Issue on "Global Literature and Violence," is on violence as I see and hear it reflected, refracted and articulated in Fogarty's poetry. In particular, I will examine the violence of Queensland's past and present—both systemic and personal, acknowledged and elided—as it resonates not only through the content but also through the form of Fogarty's verse.

I need to divert briefly here to talk about Queensland, within a global context, as a place of horrific violence. Established as a colony of the British Empire in 1859, Queensland not only turned a legal blind eye to the indiscriminate killing of Indigenous people by white settlers on the colonial frontier—as those Indigenous people fought to resist invasion—it also funded a special police unit, the notorious Native Mounted Police, to 'mop up' where settlers had failed to quell Indigenous protest. The Native Police operated with devastating effect up until the 1910s, though its lethal peak was in the 1860s, 70s and 80s (Evans and Thorpe 26). Always led by a white officer, Native Police units usually comprised six to eight Aboriginal men, drawn from areas other than those where they operated. They were well-trained killers, excellent with horses, experts in the use of rifles, pistols, axes and knives (Evans and Thorpe 27). Their sole purpose was the "immediate and brutal suppression of any Indigenous resistance to European colonisation" (Richards 12). Essentially, they "were used as death squads to remove the Aboriginal inhabitants" from pastoral territory (Bottoms 5).

In their recent book on violence, colonialism and empire, Philip Dwyer and Amanda Nettelbeck point out that a "tipping point in the capacity of Indigenous peoples to resist colonisation came with technological advances in modern warfare, which gave European colonisers the upper hand" (6). This is particularly relevant to assessments of the brutality of (undeclared) frontier war in late nineteenth-century Queensland, where Native Police units were given state-of-the-art weaponry. Snider breech-loading rifles, for instance, were issued to the Native Police in 1874 (Richards 55), increasing their killing capacity as Sniders could fire five times faster than the muzzle loaders they replaced (Evans, "The Country" 29). It is noteworthy that the romantic figure of Clancy, in Paterson's famous poem, carries no gun—at least, no weapon is mentioned—instead, he sings as he drives

an unhurried stream of cattle through outback Queensland, clearly in tune with a benign and peaceful land (Paterson l. 11). This kind of imagery belies the fact that the outback at this time, particularly in Queensland, bristled with guns. As Eric Rolls puts it, "[a]ll stockmen, almost everybody travelling in the country, carried shotgun, rifle or pistol to shoot Aborigines, to shoot game, as a protection against the plentiful bushrangers" (114). Shootings were ubiquitous, unscrupulous, terrorizing, and, for Indigenous people, unrelenting and indiscriminate in the foundational years of Queensland, making this region of the world "arguably one of the most violent places on earth during the global spread of Western capitalism in the nineteenth century" (Evans, "Plenty" 167-68).

This history, its legacy, its traces in contemporary Queensland, as well as its elisions and disavowals, is often refracted and contested in the thematics and aesthetics of Fogarty's poetry. For instance, in the poem "Four Wise" (Fogarty 113), the colonial frontier becomes an Armageddon for Indigenous people, as Fogarty appears to invoke the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: "Four wise men galloped" as "ungods in winds" and brought "banging death" (ll. 1, 5, 6). These riders usher in the "birth of un-nation" (l. 22). Importantly though, the Apocalypse fails as "four wise women" survive to "BIRTH" a "Murri [Indigenous-Queensland] woman" at the very end of the poem. Many other poems speak to the contemporary violence of the criminal justice system, Indigenous incarceration and racial discrimination, as well as the ongoing "epistemic violence" of colonialism (Spivak 280).

I will proceed from here by analyzing a number of poems published in Fogarty's latest volume, *Lionel Fogarty: Selected Poems 1980-2017*. Most of the 174 poems in this book are taken from his previously published collections but seventy-two of these poems have not appeared in print before, providing a rich reservoir of 'new' work for readers. The volume's editor, Philip Morrissey (with assistance from Tyne Daile Sumner), invited Fogarty to work and teach with him and his students at the University of Melbourne, and later worked with Fogarty to compile this sweeping overview of his oeuvre.[1] Morrissey notes that Fogarty's work "has been to an extent overdetermined by the interpretive frames of resistance, activism, anger and protest" (19). In other words, Fogarty's poems are too often or too narrowly read for their politics—although Morrissey is quick to acknowledge that, after all, "the politics of emancipation [is] fundamental in forming Fogarty as a man and poet" (19). The present investigation of various representations of violence in Fogarty's work would appear to be in danger of succumbing to similarly limited readings. However, my aim is to examine the lyricism, language and stylistics of these newly published poems alongside their politics of protest and resistance.

I should also stress that at first glance Fogarty's verse is a strange and estranging read. He refuses to comply with respected, expected standards of English. Indeed, he renders English *opaque* by doing violence to the laws of grammar, syntax and convention. The critic and novelist Colin Johnson (also known as Mudrooroo) famously called Fogarty a 'guerrilla' poet, who wields "a black pen [...] against

the genocide inflicted on his language and the tyranny imposed on him by a foreign language" (48). There is strategy in this, in wielding a "black pen" to render the colonizer's language opaque. The Caribbean writer and poet Édouard Glissant calls for "the production of 'opaque' works" (*Caribbean* 154-55), which might allow the colonized to "resist the alienating notion of transparency" (155), to defy "a universalizing and reductive humanism" (133). Importantly, Glissant points out that "[t]he opaque is not the obscure, though it is possible for it to be so and be accepted as such. It is that which cannot be reduced" (*Poetics* 191). Returning to Australia, the production of opaque works is a strategy adopted by Aboriginal writers today, according to Michael Griffiths, as part of a "politics of refusal" (17), later also explained, with reference to Glissant, as a "politics of opacity" (177). This amounts to an exercising of the "right to refuse visibility" and, thereby, white appropriation (Griffiths 16). With regard to Fogarty's verse, it is not just the misspellings, the sentences without verbs, the questions without question marks, the inconsistent capitalization and punctuation, the "unconventional, unabashedly anti-grammatical language" (Alizadeh 130) that partly render his work opaque or even obscure, it is also the ostensible bricolage of thoughts seemingly piled on top of one another that can confound first-time readers. Words, phrases and images appear splashed on the page like dabs of thick, multi-colored paint applied here and there to a canvas. Certainly, there is a thematic thread in each poem, a distinct line of thought that emerges, sometimes immediately, at other times gradually, though rarely consistently or conveniently. But as Morrissey puts it, Fogarty appears to have learned English backwards, "starting with poetry and moving back to grammar rather than vice versa. His poetry is constructed from the weight of words and silences rather than in recognisable syntactical or metrical units" (26). Fogarty's English might be considered an example of what the Nigerian writer Ken Saro-Wiwa refers to as "rotten English," a politically purposed English with "no rules and no syntax [that] thrives on lawlessness," deliberately "disordered and disordering" (Saro-Wiwa vii). Saro-Wiwa emblematically embraced this term in the subtitle of his 1985 novel *Sozaboy: A Novel in Rotten English*. More recently, Dohra Ahmad has argued that rotten English is part of a wider "literary tradition that disdains propriety" and is "anti-institutional by nature" as it sets about "reclaiming and valorizing codes […] presented (even, frequently, by their own speakers) as substandard" (Ahmad). If we accept Roman Jakobson's view of poetry as "organized violence committed on ordinary speech," in terms of its effect on readers' expectations (Hollander 147-48), Fogarty's foggy art, in all of its opaqueness and rottenness, yields fine poetry.

Blood in the Water: Subjective Violence (I)

"We Failed to Hide" is a poem that feels and reeks of the horrors of nineteenth-century frontier violence as experienced by Indigenous people (Fogarty 227-28), both before and after many of them were

herded into church mission stations. The first half of the poem pits flowers against muskets on skin, as waterways yield to blood, and bullets besiege brains:

> We failed to hide in scrub flowers
> clumsy flint locked modern
> muskets still touch our
> skins
>
> the smell of blood in the waters
> sprang up in the marauders society
> today
>
> missiles numbered the fires made
> at huts we blacks made
> verdicts besieged many natives
> brains
>
> every lease devoiced intelligence
> for passing history's
> sentences (ll. 1-14)

So many words and compacted ideas dance with double meaning, juxtaposition and paradox here, as Fogarty ostensibly recounts tales of violence from the early days of the colonial frontier. Reference in the first stanza to the use of "flint locked … muskets" in the "scrub" carefully dates this violence. The flintlock musket was the "main firearm used on the Australian frontier" up until around 1850 (Connor 18), after which rifles started to replace them. Given that frontier-pastoral expansion in (what later became) Queensland only began in 1840 (Evans, *A History* 51), Fogarty is indexing quite early frontier massacres of the 1840s when muskets were still in use. Whereas a sense of touch, of cold deathly steel on skin, pervades the opening stanza, it is "the smell of blood in the waters" that dominates the second. In the third stanza, sight or the visual imagery of massacre comes to the fore. Read as a verb, "fires" in line 8 conveys the image of a sudden flash of gunfire; here, firing "missiles" besiege "brains." The speaker then halts the assault on the senses to comment on loss, stating that every new pastoral "lease" issued by the colonizers from this time onwards "devoiced" all "intelligence" of the history of the land and its original owners. We might also read these lines to mean that no intelligent voicing of history becomes possible from this time. Legal references, such as "verdicts" issued by gunfire, the "lease," and the "passing [of] sentences," serve to include colonial jurisprudence into the machinery of frontier killing. This is state-sanctioned or at least state-tolerated violence.

Yet it is not a violence relegated solely to the colonial past. While the use of simple past tense dominates the poem, muskets that "still" touch skin and the smell of blood in water "today," jolt the reader into the present. For Fogarty and other Indigenous Australians, the spectre of violence is still here, now. This Derridean "hauntology" emerges again and again in Fogarty's work, and when it returns it "is always a *revenant* [a return of the dead]. One cannot control its

comings and goings" (Derrida 11). Fogarty draws no distinction between then and now, no convenient segregation between the *experience* of violence there and then from the lingering *memory* of it here and now.

The second half of "We Failed to Hide" begins with the announcement of a date, "in 1846" (l. 15), from when "natives" are herded into "chapels" to be tested in the art of "singing / their hymns more / perfect" (ll. 15, 16-18). This is the age of protectionism, of a life confined to (and objectified as) "mission property" (l. 22). But what is so important about 1846? It is not a particularly noteworthy date in standard histories of Australia. But it is for Fogarty. Positioned in the very middle of the poem it marks a break in the speaker's narrative of Indigenous dispossession and signals its importance in the struggle with pastoralists over land. The reference to "lease," three lines before, provides a clue to the date's significance: it was the Waste Lands Act of 1846 that gave pastoralists in the Australian colonies the right to obtain a more secure lease (rather than a mere licence) to large swathes of land for farming and grazing (Kitson). This Imperial Act effectively "'locked up' the land on behalf of wealthy pastoral interests" (Wright and Buck 13). The Act was also meant to protect Aboriginal interests in fishing, hunting, dwelling and otherwise subsisting on leased land (Reynolds 38). But local authorities ignored such provisions and colonial governments later rescinded such 'protections' (see Reynolds; Reynolds and Dalziel). For Fogarty's speaker, the violence continues unabated, post 1846, as Aboriginal mobility is thwarted across leased land and on missioned property:

> motive us here to cut open our belly's
> and fill with stones full to the brims (ll. 25-26)

The poem ends with dispossessed Aboriginal people in seeming disarray:

> poor rains fall on
> begging, straying
> blacks in total
> confusions (ll. 27-30)

The direct physical violence referenced in this poem is what Slavoj Žižek calls subjective violence, "violence performed by a clearly identifiable agent" (1) or what Jan Philipp Reemtsma calls *autotelic* violence, that which "seeks to damage or destroy the body" (56). It is a violence that is primarily enacted in the initial struggle over land.

Unseemly Murders: Subjective Violence (II)

Another form of direct, subjective violence referenced in a number of Fogarty's poems is the violence of the police and violence inflicted on Aboriginal people held today in custody or in gaol. Indigenous people are excessively, disproportionately incarcerated in Australia. Although they comprise 3.3 percent of the population, they account for 29.6

percent of prisoners ("Estimates"; "Corrective Services"). Indigenous Australians are more than six times as likely to die in police custody and 10 times as likely to die in prison than non-Indigenous people, due to rates of incarceration (Allam *et al*.). Despite a major national inquiry into Aboriginal deaths in custody more than thirty years ago—aimed at reducing suicides, fatal bashings and violent mistreatment in police cells and prisons—at least 475 Indigenous people have died in custody in the intervening period, around sixteen people every year (Allam *et al*.; Grant). As Indigenous commentator Stan Grant puts it, "[i]ndigenous people [are] burying their dead too young, mourning deaths in custody and seeing another generation lost to prison" (Grant). Fogarty himself was arrested as a juvenile and gaoled in an adult prison in connection with his 1970s' association with the Black Panther Party of Australia (Morrissey, "Introduction" 20). He was later acquitted of all charges, but the experience had a "formative effect" on him (20). In 1993, his younger brother Daniel Yock died in custody, after being arrested and thrown into the back of a police van (Browning *et al*.).

In "Wild Falls of a Dead Black Jailed," Fogarty addresses the violence and despair associated with Black deaths in custody (Fogarty 226). But the poem also appears to critique the uncaring, *fait accompli* way such deaths are now reported, catalogued and historicized as almost normalized affairs, after which nothing changes. In the opening stanza news of yet another death "[b]ravely finds my people contained in sheer horror" (l. 4). The "deep tears" and "black loves" of those who mourn appear to be contrasted with unaffected "white emotion" (ll. 7, 10), as the speaker then declares: "Black Death is intensely personal unto all blackfellas" (l. 11). In addition, such deaths need to be properly defined as "unseemly murders" (l. 13). If the title of the poem is evocative of a shrill newspaper headline announcing the next "Black" to die in custody, possibly due to a wild fall, the question in line 17 that marks the volta in this 28-line poem (as well as the lines that follow) might be addressed to that headline writer:

> And shall free deaths be supported by your established forms?
> Tunnelling through the history stacks of clinical pollution
> Our explanation is you the primitive man living terrors
> Now at a death we roar in a frenzy of modern fears
>
> Black deaths are scattering devoid of race
> Perhaps gleaming in the night light
> You all will feel a passage of enchantment
> Aborigines ready in incredible life colours (ll. 17-24)

Here the speaker appears to contest the clichés of reportage and documentation of Black deaths, which now seem to follow "established forms," having become events "devoid of race," that is perhaps to say bereft of political meaning or consequence. The death is now forgotten in the public domain, replaced by an enchanting spectacle of Aboriginal people in full roar (perhaps in mourning, perhaps protesting in the streets) in "incredible life colours." The final stanza adopts a more contemplative tone, with a reminder that an end

to black deaths remains an "illusion" but also with a defiant appeal: "Modern death must not go on" (l. 26).

It Seeps Through: Structural Violence

In the poem "Struggle," Fogarty constructs a link between less obvious, less overt violence of the past—the spread of deadly disease—and the oppression of contemporary law.

> From corners to the centres
>   Deliberate poisoned diseases
>   Explorers violently imposed.
> Now, white man's violence
>   Still seeps through upon doors and floors
>   You walk on.
> Laws. (ll. 1-7)

While new research reveals that up to 100,000 Indigenous Australians were massacred across Australia's colonial frontiers (Daley), many more Indigenous people were killed by the spread of European-imported diseases. Smallpox is now known to have been "the major single cause of Aboriginal deaths" between 1780 and 1870 (Campbell 227), although Noel Butlin points out that venereal diseases such as gonorrhea and syphilis, as well as measles, whooping cough, influenza, and, later on, tuberculosis, were also extremely effective killers (12-13). Importantly, Fogarty counters the rhetoric of settler passivity and detachment in relation to the spread of such diseases. These are "Deliberate" poisonings of people, first along the coast and then inland (from "corners to the centres"), and diseases are not 'brought' or 'introduced' to populations but "violently imposed" by specific colonizing agents, namely "Explorers." Disease is specifically identified as another form of "white man's violence." It is also insidious as it "seeps" through barriers into contemporary domestic space, acting like an invisible liquid or vapor. And then, with a single-word sentence at line 7, the poem turns: "Laws." These are the diseases, the poisonings, the vaporous violences of today, as the following lines demonstrate:

> Your laws keep us oppressed
> Difficult the legality
> Don't mean we don't understand it's racist.
> Loaded with high powered bullets
> Shot gunned in our babies' heads. (ll. 8-12)

The guns and bullets of the colonial frontier have returned in the guise of laws aimed at maintaining the repression of innocents. More laws are created, professing "FREEDOM" (l. 17), but still, the speaker proclaims, "we are not liberated" (l. 19). The final lines of the poem, however, suggest victory over the machinery of the law, as the "struggle of our people […] Will come forth, to crush you" (ll. 20, 23). It is not law that frees the people, at least not in this poem; instead, *à la* Frantz Fanon, "[t]he colonized man liberates himself in and through

violence" (Fanon 44). The prophetic language is also characteristic of what Morrissey calls Fogarty's "tradition of curse poetry, where words themselves are acts of justice and revenge" (23).

"Struggle," written no later than 2011, appears to be an earlier version of a longer poem written in 2013, titled "Improved Justices Barks Made the Laws" (Fogarty 262-63), which concentrates less on the spread of disease and more on the spread of the oppressive apparatus of colonizing law.[2] A number of lines as well as particular words and phrases from "Struggle" are repeated in the latter poem, but there are also significant differences. Whereas "Struggle" simply professes in generalized terms that the "struggle of our people" will "crush you" (l. 20, 23), "Improved Justices Barks Made the Laws" suggests victory will occur via the re-emergence and ascendency of stronger, more just Indigenous law. The speaker proclaims:

> Black red and gold will come forth to rewrite bespeaks laws
> And crush your oppressed enforces by choices by our write rights laws
> (ll.31-32)

The three colors refer to the colors of the Aboriginal flag, a synecdoche here for Aboriginal political power, which will "rewrite" colonial law. This will become "our write rights laws," a trademark Fogarty play on words, their spellings and their double-meanings; this allows for multiple interpretations. One reading is that Indigenous law will become 'our own, self-written, correct and proper law.' Another reading, if "write" is read as "right," is that Indigenous law will become 'our right (human) rights law.' In any case, in this more recent, more expansive poem on laws "violently imposed" on Indigenous Australians (l. 16), it is an Indigenous legal codex that will "crush" the "maggot laws" of the colonizer (l. 34). Importantly, the "Barks" of the poem's title is a reference to various bark petitions sent to Australian governments since the early 1960s demanding recognition of Indigenous title to land.[3] It becomes a metonym in this poem for Indigenous law, but, apart from its prominent use in the title, it is used only once in the poem proper, in the last line: "Bark and paper will make us unite, but whose laws" (l. 37). Two laws, two distinct polities, are contrasted here, Indigenous law and "paper," a metaphor for colonial law. Their coming together will invoke a unity of sorts, but 'whose laws will ultimately rule or win out?' the speaker seems to ask. The earlier euphoria over the crushing of an oppressive legal structure seems to have given way to uncertainty. Still, "Bark" has at least achieved a previously unrecognized parity with "paper." The sovereignty of Indigenous legal structures and polities appears to have been recognized.

The type of violence that Fogarty gives clear voice to in both "Struggle" and "Improved Justices" is not direct or subjective or autotelic violence but what Žižek calls "systemic" violence, "the often catastrophic consequences of the smooth functioning of our economic and political systems" (2). Johan Galtung first termed this phenomenon "structural" violence (170), which he described as a condition of "social injustice" (171). Galtung argues that structural violence is

"silent, it does not show" and in some societies may appear "as natural as the air around us" (173). For Willem Schinkel structural violence is also "diffuse, hard to account for, and […] hard to recognize" (188). In other words, structural violence is noiseless and invisible. As Marieke Mueller explains, "[t]heories that seek to highlight structural violence aim at making invisible forms of violence visible" (140). The word "theories" might justifiably be exchanged for the word "poetry" in relation to the work done by Fogarty: the violence diffused in laws that keeps Indigenous Australians oppressed seeps into habitable space to become something more tangible, more foundational than Galtung's "air," for it is grounded in the very "floors / You walk on" (ll. 5-6). Structural violence is felt not in each breath but in each step.

You Will Never Erase Me: Epistemic Violence

The structural violence of the colonizing project that begins in Australia with the establishment of a British colony in Sydney in 1788, is accompanied by what Philip Mead calls the "linguistic terror" of the legal documents that established the colony (406). The first governor is commissioned to conciliate the affections of the natives, Mead points out, at the same time as he is ordered to assert British law as sovereign over Aboriginal land. This marks the beginning of the "violent contradiction in language at the core of settlement […], the linguistic terror of colonising double-speak" that has been perpetuated ever since (Mead 408, 417). For Aileen Moreton-Robinson, such linguistic violence is also at work in the construction of binary oppositions that help to establish colonialism's enduring structures:

> Binary oppositions and metaphors had by the eighteenth century represented blackness within the structure of the English language as a symbol of negation and lack. Indigenous people were categorized as nomads as opposed to owners of land, uncivilized as opposed to being civilized, relegated to nature as opposed to culture. In Australian history books the violence continued in written expression by denying Indigenous sovereignty through portrayals of peaceful settlement, not invasion and war. (26)

Gayatri Spivak calls such terror "epistemic violence," which she argues is found in "the remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other" (280-81). Further, such knowledge systems work to obliterate "the trace of that Other in its precarious Subjectivity" (Spivak 281).

Fogarty's poetry exposes and counters the violence of colonial knowledge systems imposed on Indigenous peoples. In his 1984 poem "Standardized" (Fogarty 110-12), Fogarty begins by re-writing the 'discovery' of the 'New World' and then proceeds to lampoon imperial epistemologies of history, botany, education, bureaucracy, land management, language and rhetoric. The poem opens with the following lines: "In 1492 Colombus didn't discover history / but history found them" (ll. 1-2). Standards are broken immediately with the misspelling of Columbus.[4] The great discoverer is belittled, made insignificant here, in a misnaming exercise that inverts the countless

misspellings, misplacements and misnomers of colonial nomenclature of peoples and places in the 'New' World. In any case, the old and the new are inverted, as it is not "Colombus" who discovers anything; instead, "history"—a metaphor for more established Indigenous traditions—discovers the European. Delivered in the form of a single-stanza, 75-lined dramatic monologue, "Standardized" is a dismissive, harried, outright rejection of homogenizing European epistemes. Fogarty emphasizes that imposed knowledges and technologies, in line with Spivak's assertion, work to obliterate traces of Indigenous subjectivity:

> Did sanitation of our household
> do private business, fucking up
> the fruitfully social-political
> useful things my people put in. (ll. 14-17)

Such "co-oercing structure[s] … are nonsense" (ll. 58-59). Instead, the speaker declares that "land exchanging old established ways / validated personal meaning" (ll. 63-64). The poem ends with a return to the trope of discovery (or lack thereof) introduced in the opening lines:

> Ha. Fucken migloo behaviour   [migloo = non-Indigenous]
> impression by history, linguistically
> relatively didn't discover us yet
> theory or practice … (ll. 72-75)

The closing ellipsis suggests there is more to come or that the speaker is holding something back, that there are epistemologies the "migloo" will never learn anything about. Much has been obliterated, altered, waylaid, lost, but some sovereign Indigenous knowledges—whole theories and practices—survive.

In the more recent, 2017-published "Nomination to Adapt" (Fogarty 247), both the voice and the focus shift from the transnational, communal and broadly analytical to the personal and prosaic, as a lyrical-I becomes the voice of a poet being told to adapt or even "erase" his/her forms of expression (l. 2). The suggestion throughout the poem is that the poet would be nominated for prizes or win higher acclaim if he/she were less "militant" or produced more verse "beyond the angry" (ll. 3, 20). But from the start this poet will not be persuaded to adapt to "*They whites*" (l. 16):

> They will never paraphrase me
> They will never part nor erase me
> The militant will always mingle (ll. 1-3)

The anaphora or parallelism of the opening lines asserts the unwavering defiance of the speaker; the epiphora in these same lines emphasizes the personal affect of the attack. The echo of "paraphrase" in the "part nor erase" of the next line links two concepts homophonically and therefore conceptually. The suggestion here is that a paraphrasing or re-writing of the poet's work, in the context of what follows, will amount to his/her partialization or erasure. The

"militant" edge to the poet's work is presumably the element that "They" wish to partition or paraphrase out of it.[5] The poem continues:

> Lifeless imitations are dictions
> The eerie works will never embody
> My body they recite in expressions (ll. 4-6)

Paraphrases become "Lifeless imitations" in line 4. They are "dictions," in this case mere words on a page, lacking authorial embodiment. They remain ghostly or "eerie," can only really be brought to life in somatic application—though not just through anyone's body. In the juxtaposition of "embody" at the end of line 5 with "My body" at the beginning of line 6, the lyrical-I claims his/her own body as the rightful embodier of words he/she wrote. A particular corpus of works becomes equated with the material body that produced them. What's more, considering line 6, poetic works are only brought to life and made one's own in both their oral recitation and in the literal expressiveness—facial, vocal, gestural, etc.—that accompany them. Fogarty draws attention here to the orality and the performativity of poetry in general as well as to his own trademark recitation and performative practices. The lyrical-I goes on to affirm the militancy of his/her verse:

> But I'm here to ignite black insights
> *The society of love can come offered*
> *Indeed with revolutionary liberation* (ll. 7-9)

The poet has a mission, cannot write in any other way. Black insights might yet kindle liberation, and the poet will seek to fuel them. The violence of a threatened erasure is countered here with the possibility of black revolution. The final stanza of the poem repeats the parallelism of the opening lines:

> They will never torture a verse paraphrase
> They will never partake nor worsen me
> The crisscrossed information I'll bash away (ll. 24-26)

The act of paraphrasing verse is now equated to "torture," once again highlighting the violence of the epistemological act of writing out or writing over. Any paraphrase becomes a degradation, a worsening, and will not happen. And if the militant is merely mingling in the opening lines, in the last line of the poem he/she gets to work. "Crisscrossed information" might be read as the attempted erasure of the text referred to in the opening stanza, a literal crossing out of words on the page. This will be metaphorically bashed away—the erasure will be counter-erased—to presumably allow the original to re-emerge, to be liberated.

I say, very fiercely: Afterword on Violence

Lionel Fogarty does violence to the English language, deliberately so, radically so. His is a poetic language that "is personally signed, grammatically and syntactically […] a-lyrical, 'disordered', unlike

common speech" (Mead, *Networked* 433). Reading some of his work for its representations of violence, as I have sought to do in this essay, begins with a recognition of the *stylistics* of "organized violence"—to quote Jakobson again—that Fogarty imposes on English as a language and poetry as a literary form. In this sense, form is very much reflective of content, because a lot of the content of Fogarty's poetry is about violence. In particular, Fogarty's poems speak vehemently and forthrightly to the violence of colonial-era and present-day Queensland, his home state in Australia. As Morrissey explains, "Queensland has a violent colonial history, and part of Fogarty's achievement lies in taking the haunted world of Aboriginal Queenslanders—their subjectivities and histories—and singing it into poetry" (26). In a poem titled "To Dundalli" (Fogarty 31), published in his first book more than forty years ago, Fogarty pays tribute to Dundalli, a lawman and resistance fighter from (what became) south-east Queensland, who was captured and hanged publicly in 1855 (see Fogarty 293):

> Old man Dundalli
> We must fight
>   for the rights
>   for our race.
> […]
> Until we've won.
> Our laws come again
> Making us live again in our way
> […]
> I say, very fiercely, slowly, we have no choice but ……………
> Strangle the white scoundrel and ruthless murderer to death (ll. 3-6, 16-18, 25-26)

The speaker's appeal here to subjective violence, to strangle the white murderer to death, is not necessarily an imperative repeated with the same passion and candor in later poems. But it does represent a recognizable positioning in relation to violence that pervades Fogarty's work. (Witness the desire to "bash" and "crush" expressed in poems written much later than "To Dundall.") In a study of the influence of the African American Black Power movement on Fogarty's poetry, Ameer Chasib Furaih argues that the "radical political transition from non-violent struggle, as represented by the Civil Rights movement, to the violence of the Black Power movement is represented in the political and literary ideologies" of Fogarty's work (1). This is certainly the case. However, by the 1990s the poet himself was becoming more reflective about what he called the "militancy" of his earlier activism. In a 1993 interview he told Philip Mead:

> I don't believe in a guilt complex, where you base your struggle on 'You done this to us long time ago, you done this to my people long time ago,' that kind of guilt conscience thing. I don't do that any more. Once in my teens I might have, but now today I understand that you don't do that […]. There's a lot of militancy in my writing, but there's a lot of spiritual writing too […]. I want readers to walk away, not with a tear on their face, not with an angry hatred. No way. I want them to walk away with a profound smile, not even of fascination with Lionel Fogarty's writings, but with the

To return to Fogarty's 1980 ode to Dundalli, what also needs to be acknowledged, beyond the lyrical-I's appeal to strangle the white scoundrel, is that it is preceded by a broader appeal by a communal-we voice to "fight / for the rights / for our race," for "Our laws [to] come again." This is an appeal for more equality, for collective, societal, *systemic* renewal. Fogarty's poetic voice continues to speak in multiple registers, and, in relation to violence, to address, scrutinize and critique both direct, subjective violence and structural/epistemic violence. For many though, he will always be Australia's original 'guerrilla' poet who has captured the language "in a guerilla [sic] action and made it over into a free zone of the Aboriginal spirit" (Johnson 54).

Notes

[1] I was given this book, *Selected Poems 1980-2017*, by Philip Morrissey at a conference in Barcelona in January 2018, not too long after its publication. Subsequent exchanges with him on Fogarty's work, including Morrissey's input in a (live, virtual) Research Colloquium hosted by the University of Stuttgart in July 2020, have guided me in my interpretation of Fogarty's poems. Any possible mis-readings or ill-informed interpretations of Fogarty's poetry are entirely my own.

[2] Both poems are published for the first time in the 2017 volume, but a listing at the back of the book places "Struggle" among a set of previously unpublished poems from 2011 (Fogarty 316), while "Improved Justices" is listed as previously unpublished from 2013 (319).

[3] The first and most famous of these bark petitions was produced by Yolngu elders in northern Australia in 1963. It was sent to the Australian government to protest against a proposed mining project, and demanded a recognition of Aboriginal rights and interests in land. In 1988, the so-called Barunga Statement, also inscribed on bark, called on the government to negotiate a Treaty with Indigenous peoples, which would recognise their prior ownership, continued occupation and sovereignty over the land. (See NITV; O'Brien.)

[4] The name 'Columbus' is spelt in various ways. His Italian birthname was Cristoforo Colombo; in Spanish he was Cristóbal Colón. He has also been named, among other things, Christofferus de Colombo. (See Phillips and Phillips xi-xii; Flint.)

[5] I am well aware that my own interpretive work on this poem (and others in this essay) might be seen as enacting the very paraphrasing (=erasure) work Fogarty vehemently writes against in this poem. It is

possible that the "*whites*" (l. 16) who seem to be the focus of the speaker's disdain might also include people like me, literary scholars. (I am a non-Indigenous Australian; I am not a person of colour.) However, the "They" principally targeted in this poem appears to be publishers or editors or critics who want the speaker to adapt or re-write the radicality (among other things) out of his/her verse.

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