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Bonfires Besides Ink: The Revolutionary Spirit in Oodgeroo Noonuccal's Indigenous Poetry

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ABSTRACT

Modern Aboriginal Australian poetry represents a substantial shift in how Aboriginal concerns are depicted, stressing viewpoints based on Aboriginal experience. Historically, White Australians and European conquerors portrayed Native people as nomadic and savage, which justified their enslavement. Oodgeroo Noonuccal (1920-1993), a pioneering native poet and human rights campaigner, countered these misconceptions. Her poetry celebrates Aboriginal identity while also addressing important topics such as inequity and the battle for Aboriginal rights. Noonuccal's work sheds attention on the negative consequences of European colonialism for Aboriginal people and culture. Her writing encourages opposition to European colonization, promotes the preservation of Indigenous customs, and emphasizes the necessity of land and environmental protection.

KEYWORDS: Rebel Verse, Indigenous Voices, Oodgeroo Noonuccal, Sacred Land

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INTRODUCTION

Even through native Americans have already made their own recordings of their culture and customs for generations; however, their voice has often been overlooked and ignored (Harris, 1990, pp. 40–45). The collective belief cultivated by White Australian society was that Indigenous man was some lowly caste, something that beneath civilized man, an uncivilized relic and beneath the world of culture. Early representations of Aboriginal people were colored by the views of white Australian writers such as Les Murray and Judith Wright, both of whom wrote on Aboriginal themes but tended to do so through a colonial lens. The true pioneers of Aboriginal poetry were not seen until the middle of the 20th century, when Oodgeroo Noonuccal, Kevin Gilbert, Jack Davis, and Colin Johnson pioneered their reclamation of stories from colonial nations (Webby, 1989, p.8). These poets played an important role in challenging the representational power of their colonisers by changing the idea of Aboriginal people, their pasts and their hopes for the future. Their work indicates the persistence and a rich cultural heritage of Aboriginal people and speaks about the hardships and injustice that they endure. Through their poetry to challenge the dominant narrative and re-establish their voice, they paved the way to the later generations of Indigenous writers to give their own voice and tell their own stories. Their contribution has contributed significantly to the paradigm shift of the Australian literary scene and appreciation and knowledge of the Aboriginal people and their experiences.

To defend their own peoples and their own civilizations and fight European encroachments with literature, these new Aboriginal authors and activists wielded probably the most powerful weapon of all: literature, especially poetry (Harris, 1990). Contemporary Aboriginal poetry has become an important part of Aboriginal art and culture, articulating the worries, struggles, and special circumstances in the experience of Indigenous people as they interact with non-Indigenous society. Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Jack Davis are poets who have made a considerable contribution to shedding light on the struggles and oppression faced by Indigenous American peoples. Their inspirational lyrics remind us that the struggle of acceptance, equality and peace is never complete. Through their poems, they continue to dispel myths and promote an understanding of the importance of preserving Indigenous culture and history.

They provide an individual view of the complications of modern life among Indigenous people, inviting the readers to peep on the stories and memories that are commonly marginalized in the mainstream consciousness. They are poets whose experiences of life and their cultures offer a food source to the poems that challenge the status quo and give a more fair and inclusive view of a future that all Australians should have. Among those authors, Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Jack Davis, their legacy remains timeless, how much they inspire both indigenous people and non-Indigenous to demand a fairer, more just and peaceable society Over four decades

of neglect, it is the trailbreaking first poetry manuscript, We Are Going, by Oodgeroo Noonuccal, which brought Aboriginal issues into the mainstream culture and the news media. Her poems were a call to landownership, justice, abolition of racial stereotypes and injustice. The political activism that Oodgeroo engaged in during the 1960s is the foundation of her frequent visual lament of and sorrow over the violence caused by colonisation to the Indigenous peoples and territories. Her eloquent words are still motivating both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to strive to achieve social change and reconciliation. The literary and activist legacies of Oodgeroo Noonuccal remain as an indication of hope to the future generations who would want to live in a more inclusive society (Webby, 1989).

Oodgeroo reflects on the destruction of the Indigenous history, longs to take action against the white dominance, and struggles to recover land and human rights, with the help of her strong poetry. Her poetry is attempting to find a lost past and look forward to a better future - commonly with an assaulting quality against European settlers. As Oodgeroo strong words, insisting on acknowledging the evils of colonization and motivating towards justice and peace. Her poetry is a reminder that the impacts of historical suffering can be haunting and ought to be a call to act towards Indigenous rights. By drawing a vivid picture of these systemic problems in her poetry, Oodgeroo is calling on the society to recognize and respond to these problems by highlighting the intergenerational trauma Indigenous people have endured. Her words are a call to action in support of Indigenous rights and significant transformation in the context of an institutional injustice. The poetry of Oodgeroo is a ray of hope to her people and is an invitation to stand firm and to be proud despite the ongoing marginalisation and erasure.

Australian Aboriginal poetry itself can be said to fall into three camps: poetry about what the oppressed and dispossessed Indigenous peoples have suffered; poetry that wistfully recalls a time when their culture was whole, before Europeans arrived on the shores of Australia; and poetry that offers hope for a brighter future. A good number of poems weave these themes together, juxtaposing a glorious past with a promising future or a fragmented present to paint a holistic picture of Aboriginal cultures (Harris, 1990).

But there is something deeper than that in play here, a pulse that runs through every line of Aboriginal poetry, beyond the political struggle and the historical record. It is the beat of a nation not willing to lose centuries of being marginalized. Their words carve them out a niche in the world which attempted to push them down the hierarchy, behind the ancestors whose struggle was as much as possible to retain a very human legacy. Looking at the work of Oodgeroo Noonuccal, as well as her contemporaries we find that it was a literary movement, as well as an act of reclaiming identity, of ferocious assertion of being, and of deep connection to land, which is always theirs. And more than poetry is a tale of survival, a voice out of the earth itself, requiring to be honored, justice and the righteous restored to harmony.

OODGEROO NOONUCCAL'S VOICE, BOTH LITERARY AND FEMININE.

Oodgeroo Noonuccal's (1920–1993) groundbreaking work, We Are Going (1964), began the poet's life, under her previous name, as Kath Walker. The first established Aboriginal poet in Australia, Noonuccal established self-perpetuating platform of Indigenous voice. Her father, Edward Ruska, was a well-regarded member of the Minjerribah Noonuccal tribe. He supported more wages and working conditions to the Indigenous workers and his activism left an indelible mark on his daughter. Noonuccal followed his lead and was eager to adopt her background with passion and used the theme of her poems to adopt her cultural identity.

Read formed the Realist Group in Brisbane, as a practical basis for her commitment to socialism and social justice and socialist realism in Australian literature (Read, Haebich & Peters-Little 2002). Her belonging to the Communist Party testifies even more to her approving of racial discrimination and segregation. Indeed, NOONUCCAL was criticized despite her efforts, some even accusing her of being a propagandist rather than an actual poet. Some naysayers, like Katharine England, argued that Noonuccal's poetry was more about political ideas than literary artistry and suggested that her mixed race resulted in a poor poetic style (ibid)

This is still the power of the work of Noonuccal, a tribute to the tenacity and voice of the Aboriginal Australians in this dynamic between art and activism that challenges and reinvents the literary story. Poems represented not only her political and personal ideas but they were also resistance and self-determination of the Aboriginal People. Transcending the boundaries of traditional poetry, her poetry incorporated personal autobiography with politics to generate a form of writing that was as much about creative form as it was about political action. In the use of expressive language, colorful images and ideas that did not conform to the old stereotypes, Noonuccal managed to bring the reader to the core of the Aboriginal experience and struggle. Her works were critical in transforming the overall perception, creating a new understanding of the problems of Indigenous people and influencing the coming generations of Indigenous writers and activists. This fact makes the poetry of Noonuccal an important cultural artifact - the too-harvesting clashes and yearnings of her era, but which, nevertheless, remain relevant to readers today who wish to gain an insight into the complicated Australian past and identity. Her legacy can be considered the showing of the power of writing to bring social change and raise the voices of the oppressed to the center of the discussion.

ECHOES OF COLONIZATION: CULTURAL RESISTANCE IN OODGEROO NOONUCCAL'S POETRY

The colonization of the Aboriginal Australians was also a long and painful process. During the time when the British chose Botany Bay as the site to establish their first colony, aboriginal lands were seized. This invasion led to the destruction and rearrangement of

the entire fabric of the Aboriginal society due to the conflicts, illnesses, and mass murders. When the British settled in Australia, Aboriginal Australians were forced to abandon their original places resulting in their displacement and isolated confinement to places of their own, just as it was the case with prisons. The violent kidnapping of children in their residences and the massive massacre of the Aboriginal people became a demonstration of the perception that the Aboriginal race was a dying race (Harris 1990). Prominent movements in the political, social, and intellectual spheres arose in the early and late 20th centuries, demanding that Aboriginal Australians be granted their rights, which had been stolen. A key player in changing the perception of Aboriginal Australians and recovering their rights was Oodgeroo Noonuccal (previously Kath Walker, 1920–1993). Her work aided in the change of Australian laws, particularly the fight for the citizenship rights of Aboriginal Australians (Gilbert 1998).

Themes of loneliness and terror are reflected in Noonuccal's poetry, which eloquently depicts real Aboriginal experiences unadulterated by colonial influences. In an effort to highlight their suffering and promote justice, her works frequently discuss the negative impacts of colonization on Aboriginal populations. Through her writings and campaigning, Noonuccal, as an activist, made great progress toward bettering the situation of Aboriginal Australians (Charles 2006, p. p).

Mudrooroo and other critics have referred to Noonuccal's method as "poetemics," a combination of polemics and poetry that puts message ahead of conventional aesthetic standards. A significant portion of Noonuccal's poetry falls under the protest poetry subgenre, which prioritizes social, political, and cultural criticism over traditional literary themes (Charles 2006, pp. 14-15). In poetemics, there must be a return to what the adult learned as a child because of the importance of reaching as many readers as possible—including people who do not read poetry but are familiar with some of its patterns from school. The employment of these conventional patterns is crucial because it elicits unconscious connections that lead to an emotional rapport that may persuade the reader to accept the message.

Structure is equally as important as content, especially when considering it from a psychological standpoint. For socialist realist writers, especially communist ones, who used working-class verse patterns, this idea was fundamental to their methodology. Oodgeroo Noonuccal successfully adopted this tactic through her participation in this group. Since its first release in 1970, her anthology of poems, My People, has been in print and continues to outsell all other Australian poetry collections. The simplicity of the usage of such well-known and approachable poetic frameworks has been highlighted, nevertheless. This approach has been compared to the simple, unadorned rhythm of nineteenth-century hymns, yet being successful in reaching a wide audience. It is predicted, as Ruth Doobov has said, that her critic in the Times Literary Supplement would remark, "At times the metres of her poems are trite, stemming from the worst type of nineteenth century hymns." This is certainly accurate. (Doobov 1973, p.49)

The current study investigates the responses of Australian Aboriginal poets to colonialism and the appropriation of their cultural and territorial rights. It looks at how these poets responded to the environmental changes brought about by British colonists, and whether they have resisted them or not. We Are Going (1964), a groundbreaking book by Noonuccal, was published concurrently with the Australian Aboriginal civil rights movement, which was characterized by large-scale demonstrations. Noonuccal captures the pain of her people and the horrors done by colonists in the poem "We Are Going," which is also its title. In the poem's opening lines,

“They came in to the little town
A semi-naked band subdued and silent
All that remained of their tribe.
They came here to the place of their old bora ground
Where now the many white men hurry about like ants.
Notice of the estate agent reads: 'Rubbish
May Be Tipped Here’.
Now it half covers the traces of the old bora ring” (Noonuccal 1964, p. 1).

This moving image echoes the feelings of Noonuccal to raise awareness of the intense effects of colonization on the Aboriginal land and culture, which makes her a great poet and a strong advocate of the Indigenous rights. Oodgeroo Noonuccal describes a powerless village, which is at the mercy of the devastating powers of colonialism, in the first line of this poem. The town was once home to a thriving tribe but it has been ruined and contaminated by the colonists. Noonuccal is taking the metaphor of the Old Bora Ground, a desecrated symbol of cultural and religious significance, to assault European culture, and specifically European settlers. The village and its residents are referred to as "semi-naked" to emphasize their fragility and the bare necessities of life after the colonists have destroyed everything of value and left the area in ruins.

Their "Old Bora Ground," a holy area essential to their identity and cultural customs, is forcibly abandoned by the now-defenseless and mute residents. The colonists' enormous numbers, their voracious desire for devastation, and their planned, organized approach to occupying the country are all conveyed by Noonuccal's astute metaphor of ants. Indigenous people have been deprived of their social and cultural legacy, as evidenced by the colonists' behavior of discarding trash on the site of worship. The indigenous people's cultural and spiritual traditions were methodically destroyed by the colonists, in addition to taking over the land.

Noonuccal eloquently expresses the sense of loss and isolation that the Aboriginal people feel in the following lines:

"We are as strangers here now, but the
white tribe are the strangers.
We belong here, we are of the old ways.
We are the corroboree and the bora ground,
We are the old ceremonies, the laws of the elders.
We are the wonder tales of Dream Time,
the tribal legends told.
We are the past, the hunts and the laughing
games, the wandering camp fires." (Noonuccal 1964, p. 2).

As Noonuccal emphasizes, despite the physical displacement of the Aboriginal people, there is a strong spiritual connection to the land they still possess and which the colonists, even with the best efforts, could not sever. This spiritual bond is represented by the old ways, customs, and laws of the elders, which despite physical colonization of their territories, persist in spite of everything.

The corroboree, a nocturnal social event where the Aboriginal people sing and dance in costumes and body paint, is a powerful sign of cultural preservation. Through this Noonuccal underlines the perseverance of her people and their desire to hold on to their identity and practices with the onslaught of colonialism. Through this cultural resilience, the Aboriginal people are protesting and retaining their historical past which has often been relegated or excluded in the mainstream discourse.

The idea of emphasizing the long history of the Aboriginal civilization before the contact is one of the key approaches employed by Noonuccal and other indigenous writers. Through this, they honor the Aboriginal chieftains and heroes of the past and create awareness of their pride of their past. This is very contrary to the traditional narratives that downplay Aboriginal history which is often marginalized or lost. Although the Native American leaders are also well-known and can be easily named by a large number of people, Aboriginal heroes or tribes are barely known by anyone, as Kevin Gilbert (1998) notes, which demonstrates how the history of Aboriginal people is being dismissed by masses (79).

Oodgeroo Noonuccal underlines the cultural and spiritual importance of the place of aborigines called the bora ground, where the Aborigines are initiated. Essential milestones in the life of Aboriginal people including transitioning into adulthood, ritual scarification, and other rites of passage occur on this raised land. The poet underscores the importance of these customs by associating them with other more broad-based Aboriginal endeavours such as storytelling, hunting and maintaining a strong legacy. Such traditions such as the spread of family background and hero tales during campfires are essential in preserving the culture of the Aboriginal people.

Noonuccal poetry is a powerful call to remember the existence of a continuous connection between Native Americans and their ancestral territory and the empowerment of their cultural identity despite the oppression by colonists.

Noonuccal makes a contrast between rich cultural background of the aborigines and the devastating actions of the colonists who not only neglected the rights of the native people, but also neglected the significance of the land and the rituals. This opposition is eloquently expressed in the subsequent lines:

"The scrubs are gone, the hunting and the laughter.
The eagle is gone, the emu and the
kangaroo are gone from this place.
The bora ring is gone.
The corroboree is gone.
And we are going."(Noonuccal, 1964, 3).

In these lines Noonuccal laments the physical and spiritual destruction by the colonists. The disappearance of the fauna, the scrubs, and the sacred bora ring symbolizes the greater loss of Aboriginal identity and culture. Gone is a frequently used word and it is used to underline an irreversible loss which the Aboriginal people are experiencing as their traditions, songs, rituals, and even nature is simply being killed. The themes of Noonuccal in her poetry are always centered on two objects, first, she expresses her deep sorrow in the loss of her land, her traditions, and her people. On the other hand, however, she does believe in the continuity of these traditions and these things of nature, which strengthens the persistence of the spirit of the Aboriginals. Her art resonates well with the breakdown of her culture that is symbolized by the evanescent smells and visuals that encapsulates the harsh effects of colonization to the Aboriginal lifestyle.

We Are Going is an attempt by Noonuccal to be a powerful cry of help--a help that the world is hearing the cultural erasure, dispossession, and displacement which the people of the land she writes about are undergoing. She focuses on the strong sense of loss Aboriginal Australians felt because of the systematic annihilation of their land and culture and lifestyle by the colonists. According to Shoemaker (1989), this poem is a call of justice and recognition, the voices of the dispossessed to be heard (205). The question of environmental degradation and exploitation is also examined by Noonuccal in her 1966 second book The Dawn is at Hand in her poem Time is Running Out. This poem condemns the irresponsible actions of miners who ruin the planet in their pursuit

of wealth without considering the harm they cause to the natural world and the native American tribes. The poem begins with a strong metaphor:

"The Miner rapes
The heart of the earth
With his violent spade,
Stealing, bottling her black blood
For the sake of greedy trade"(Noonuccal, 1966, p. 5).

With these lines, Noonuccal personifies the earth as a living being whose "black blood" (oil) is being taken and turned into a commodity, powerfully illustrating the cruel exploitation of the planet. The phrase of greedy trade attracts the focus on the motives of profit making that leads to the environmental degradation and the image of rape underlines the brutality of such exploitation. In this poem, the author is sweeping through a condemnation of the capitalistic powers that prioritize profit over the well-being of this world and humankind, on top of her attack on the miners.

Oodgeroo Noonuccal succeeds in her poems to demonstrate the strong interconnection between the Aboriginal culture, the land, and the ongoing struggle against the environmental exploitation and colonization. Her art remains a great and heartfelt protest to safeguard the natural and cultural heritage of Indigenous Australians.

In the poem "Time is Running Out" by Oodgeroo Noonuccal, the early settlers and the Westerners are lynched as violent and destructive persons with selfish interest and greed. She creates an image of miners, who ruthlessly strip the soil out of it and poison it to earn money driven by an aptitude of power with greedy lust. The poet employs strong language which attracts attention to the contempt of the settlers towards the consequences of their action:

"In his greedy lust for power
He destroys old nature's will
For the sake of the filthy dollar,
He dirties the nest he builds" (Noonuccal, 1966, 7).

Noonuccal emphasizes the brutality of the Europeans in these words by drawing a comparison between their destructive deeds and the ease and peace of Aboriginal existence. The "filthy dollar" is a metaphor for the corrupting power of Western capitalism, which drives settlers to take use of natural resources without thinking about the damage they cause to the environment.

Noonuccal also discusses the injustice that Native Americans experience, since they are not granted access to the natural riches on their territory. Rather, the burden of the settlers' environmental harm falls on them. The poet's exhortation to her people to rise up and recover their rights implies this inequality:

"Come gentle black man
Show your strength
Time to take a stand
Make the violent miner feel Your violent
Love of land" (Noonuccal, 1966, 8).

Noonuccal is urging other Indigenous people to stand up to further exploitation by using their ties to the land as a source of strength. Noting the close ties that exist between the people and their land, she advocates for a fierce protection of their environment, heritage, and customs. Reclaiming their proper position in their ancestral lands and strengthening their people are the two goals Noonuccal is pursuing with her call to action.

Noonuccal often portrays Aboriginal people in her poems as powerful warriors and white oppression victims. They are depicted as individuals who have undergone displacement, humiliation and disillusionment but who have not lost a significant connection with their traditions and the environment. Her next poem, "Assimilation No!," brings out the idea behind this dichotomy when she condemns the idea that Aboriginal people must abandon their culture to pursue Western ideals.:

"Must the genius of an old race die
That the race might live?
We who would be one with you, one people,
We must surrender now much that we love,
The old freedoms for new musts,
Your world for ours" (Noonuccal, 1966, 6).

In "Assimilation No!," Noonuccal struggles with the imposition of assimilation of the Aboriginals into the white Australian culture at the cost of their uniqueness as a culture. The poem is very convincing about the significance of the Aboriginal culture and dispels the notion that one should assimilate and lose the roots. Noonuccal's creations provide witness to the resilient nature of her people and their will to maintain their customs in spite of the obstacles faced by colonialism. In her essay "Indigenous Text and Narratives," critic Penny Van Toorn points out that a major focus of Oodgeroo Noonuccal's poetry is examining and recording the consequences

of colonialism on Native Americans and their ancestral ancestral lands. Her poetry generally addresses the atrocities committed by the colonists, ranging from appeals to action to thoughtful reflections on the past:

Her poetry laments, examines, and records colonialism's consequences on Aboriginal people and their country in an emotive way. While some poems openly address the disgruntled white race in an angry, accusatory, contemptuous, and even pitying tone, others directly urge Aboriginal people to action. Some poems are more melancholy, recalling better days before the arrival of the white man (Toorn 2000, 30-31).

Noonuccal's poetry not only calls attention to historical injustices but also acts as a call to action for her people to fight against additional violations of their rights and cultural practices. She forges a compelling story of resistance, resiliency, and the unbreakable bond between Aboriginal people and their land via her art.

Oodgeroo Noonuccal fiercely criticizes white Australians' attempts to coerce Aboriginal people to give up their identity, culture, and customs in favor of blending into Western civilization in his poem "Assimilation No!" The poet is adamantly against this cultural blending because she sees it as a danger to the continuation of Aboriginal history. As the following lines demonstrate, Noonuccal's poetry turns into a potent protest against the loss of her people's identity:

"We are different hearts and minds
In a different body. Do not ask of us
To be deserters, to disown our mother.
To change the unchangeable.
The gum cannot be trained into an oak.
We will go forward and learn.
Not swamped and lost, watered away, but keeping
Our own identity, our pride of race"(Noonuccal, 1966, p. 10).

In these lines, Noonuccal employs the symbolism of the gum tree and used as metaphor, which is a type of Australian tree recognized for its strong roots and ability to withstand challenges, to symbolize the Aboriginal community. She stresses that like a gum tree cannot change into an oak tree, Aboriginals should not be pressured to give up their identity in order to fit into Western standards. The poet promotes a future in which her community progresses while maintaining their unique culture and pride in their ethnicity.

The poem underscored the broader plan of assimilation, aiming to integrate the Aboriginal community into the dominant white culture, ultimately eliminating their cultural heritage. Noonuccal's poem urges people to resist assimilation and stresses the significance of safeguarding Aboriginal traditions, rituals, and relationships with the land. Noonuccal conveys pride in Aboriginality and defiance against cultural erasure by utilizing the gum tree as a representation of strength and resilience.

Oodgeroo Noonuccal wrote many of her poems with the intention of reading and recited them aloud, using them as statements or speeches to assemble public support for Aboriginal rights. Because Oodgeroo Noonuccal's poetry is sometimes classified as "social protest" poem, some commentators have written off her work as having little literary merit. This classification implies that her poetry is less focused on the aesthetic elements usually connected with poetry and more focused on political and social critique. Her writing has therefore occasionally been left out of the canon of "literature," especially by those who value conventional poetry forms and topics more highly than meaning and content.

One of her most powerful poems, "Aboriginal Charter of Rights," captures this dichotomy of victimhood and resistance, in which Noonuccal speaks to the injustices her people endure while simultaneously calling for equality and respect. This dichotomy is eloquently expressed in the following lines:

"We want hope, not racialism,
Brotherhood, not ostracism
. . . . . .
Make us equals, not dependents.
We need help, not exploitation,
. . . . . .
Homes, not settlements and missions.
We need love, not overlordship" (Noonuccal, 1966, p. xx).

Noonuccal has put forward an interesting case of justice and equality in her poem Aboriginal Charter of Rights. She draw a parallel between the bleak realities of racism, exclusion, and mistreatment that Aboriginal people have undergone, and the concepts of hope, fraternity, peace, and love. The poem emphasizes the importance of evaluating Native Americans as equal beings instead of being dependents or objects of European superiority. Noonuccal champs houses over settlements, love over overlordship, expressing a vision of a decent society within which the Aboriginal people are able to live with pride and freedom. In the poems of Noonuccal we can see her unwavering allegiance to her people and to their rights. In her art, she urges future generations to continue the fight of Aboriginal identity, culture, and land as well as critically assess the unfairness of the past and present. Noonuccal ensures that the

voices of her people are not silenced and that their struggle to be heard is never ignored by using good metaphor and imagery (12-14).

This opinion has however been challenged by many people who appreciate the meaning and power of the work done by Oodgeroo. Cliff Watego adamantly protested against the limitations carried on the concept of real poetry at the Aboriginal Writers Conference in 1983, lamenting against Oodgeroo. In one of her arguments that were contained in Aboriginal Writing Today (1985), Oodgeroo should have her writing appreciated as having the ability to document the struggles, perseverance, and experiences of the Aboriginal people instead of being judged solely on the premise of the classical norms.

Watego and others believe that the poetry of Oodgeroo should be valued because of its ability to address both form and purpose in that they were used as a means of social change without compromising on their literary value. By addressing such issues as the cultural upheaval, colonization, and pursuit of Indian rights, Oodgeroo does not only consider the overall human state but makes the reader rethink the potential and the dreams poetry can achieve. Instead of being a heroine rescued to write poetry, her poem ought to have been recognized to expand the meaning of poetry to include voices and stories that were formerly underrepresented in the genre (12-18).

In this respect, the poetry of Oodgeroo can be regarded as the valuable addition to literature and the influential tool of social protest. It pushes the reader to reevaluate our standards for judging and appreciating poetry in addition to encouraging interaction with the text. By doing this, Oodgeroo's work argues that poetry may be used for purposes other than aesthetic enjoyment, such as empowerment, resistance, and cultural preservation.

In a different poem, her Poem No More Boomerang, in her second book The Dawn is at Hand (1966) is a sharp critique of the way that the culture of aboriginality has been sidelined by making a contrast between the acceptance of modern European ways and methods and the traditional aboriginal tools and practices. Rhythm is slightly similar to the rhythms of the children song "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush." Consciously or unconsciously, this resemblance can bring to you the sense of ease and familiarity of nursery rhymes. Even though the fact that Noonuccal modeled the poem after a specific rhyme is rather questionable, the simplicity of the language used in the poem as well as its rhythm and the mood it creates are reminiscent of a toddler, a sense of openness. This prepares the reader to easier assimilation and consideration of the deep message of the poem of cultural exile and loss. In this poem, she talks about the loss of cultural identity by comparing objects in the West to those native such as as firesticks, spears and boomerangs. This change is incisively conveyed in the poem's first lines:

"No more boomerang
No more spear;
Now all civilized
Colour bar and beer.
No more corroboree,
Gay dance and din.
Now we got movies,
And pay to go in"(Noonuccal, 1966, p. xx).

Noonuccal criticizes the shallowness and materialism of Western civilization in this passage, which have supplanted the intricate cultural customs of the Aboriginal people. In addition to showing how indigenous rituals have been undermined or replaced by "civilized" pastimes like watching movies and drinking beer, which are distant from the spiritual and communal practices of her ancestors, the poem conveys regret and indignation over the loss of traditional ways of life.

In the poem "Municipal Gum," Noonuccal effectively symbolizes the pain and uprooting of the Aboriginal people by using the picture of a gum tree grown in an urban setting. The poem begins with a striking description of the tree's strange surroundings:

"Gumtree in the city street,
Hard bitumen around your feet
Rather you should be
In the cool world of leafy forest halls" (Noonuccal, 1966, p. xx).

Similar to Aboriginal people, gum trees don't belong in the city; instead, they are surrounded by "hard bitumen" instead of their native habitat. Noonuccal compares the tree to a "poor cart-horse," which is shattered and castrated, to represent the persecution and forced assimilation that Aboriginal people ndure. The dejection and hopelessness of a people torn from their homeland and culture are reflected in the tree's "hung head and listless mien":

"Here you seems to me
Like that poor cart-horse
Castrated, broken, a thing wronged
Strapped and buckled, its hell prolonged

Whose hung head and listless mien express
Its hopelessness" (Noonuccal, 1966, p. xx).

The close connection which exists between the Aboriginal people and the natural environment as seen by the personification used by Noonuccal in "Municipal Gum" is as well underscored. By giving the tree the voice of its suffering, she brings out the pain that both the original inhabitants of the land and the tree endure. The changing of the tree as a symbol of the broader impacts of colonialism is a metaphor of the events that have happened to Aboriginal people who have been compelled to adjust to a new and at times, a hostile environment.

The final words of the poem are, O fellow citizen - What have they done to us? restock the pain that Aboriginal people have had to face as a community. The poetry by Noonuccal is a fierce protest against the horrors perpetrated against the Aboriginal people by the European settlers, and it is also a lamentation of the cultural and land loss. Besides her common and friendly verse patterns, Oodgeroo Noonuccal made her poems so relatable to a lot of Australians due to the fact that her vocabulary closely resembles spoken Australian English. Her art is also based upon the linguistic reality of her people, which is reflected by the use of an adaptation of the Aboriginal English with some exceptions. Indeed, both Aboriginal and the Australian English in Queensland believe in minimal embellishment and are known to be plain and laconic. This lingual choice is what makes her poetry so powerful and accessible, as well as the directness and sincerity of the message that she conveys. Such poetry as "No More Boomerang" and "Municipal Gum," among other poems in the collections of Oodgeroo Noonuccal, testify to her unswerving commitment to giving voice and voices to Indigenous people. Noonuccal also disapproves of the power of colonization that tried to cut the strong ties between people, culture, and the land and in the same breath, she skillfully portrays these ties through personification, metaphor, and imagery.

CONCLUSION

The study has concluded that the Aboriginal Australian Poetry presents a significant shift in the attitude towards the Aboriginal issues, which are not the same as the White man views them. According to the traditional view, the native inhabitants are savage hunters, nomadic people who require intelligent leaders to manage and civilize their territories. Oodgeroo Noonuccal is regarded as the spokesperson of Aboriginal people who establishes another agenda of Aboriginal concerns. She writes in a manner that is resisting making efforts to compel the Europeans to give Aboriginal lands. She demands the Aboriginal culture, traditions, ritual, songs, lands and even their trees and animals. In many of her poems, such as in Aboriginal Charter of Rights, Noonuccal places it in an extreme duality; of victim and victimizer, of dependent and independent, of equality and inequality of social life, of innocent and of the murderers. In this way, Noonaccal emphasizes the issue of divergence of the various cultures. She trusts in the simplicity of the Aboriginal culture, people, and affection to their lands. She creates a feeling of spirituality among people and the lands as it is seen in the following lines, "We are the corroboree and the bora ground \ We are the old ceremonies, the laws of the elders." Oodgeroo Noonuccal managed to popularize the message of the Aboriginal culture abroad in various forms, and one of them was her ties to her predecessors and ancestors. She struggles against modernity using her rituals of Aboriginality, Aboriginal history and traditions. Most of her poems are statement based poetry which can be presented using the podium. Her poems are marked with simplicity and easiness.

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