Hybridity in Australia:
A Postcolonial Reading of Oodgeroo Noonuccal's Selected Poems

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Abstract

The aim of the present paper is to explore selected poems of Oodgeroo Noonuccal, the national poet of the Australian Aborigines, in the light of Homi K. Bhabha's postcolonial theories. Using a descriptive research methodology, the present study examines the way Noonuccal's poetry fashions resisting discourse in contemporary Australia. First of all, the introductory notes on postcolonial approach, colonial history of Australia and Noonuccal are presented and then postcolonial key terms including Hybridity, Third Space and Otherization are employed to read the selected poems with the purpose of highlighting the anticolonial inclinations in them. Throughout the study, Third Space which comes as a result of hybrid cultures is emphasized as a background for reflecting and reinforcing Aboriginal tendency in Australia. The valiant attempts waging the anticolonial struggles in Oodgeroo Noonuccal's poetry include expounding a view of history from the perspective of the colonized, pointing to the disappearance of Aboriginal culture and tradition and their revival, protesting against the states' unjust policies the regarding the Aborigines, putting an end to Otherization, and issuing a call for a just integration of blacks and whites.

Keywords

Post-colonialism; Oodgeroo Noonuccal; Hybridity; Third Space; Otherization

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1. Introduction

The postcolonial era is a ramification and branch of the postmodern movement that came into prominence in the second half of the twentieth century. In order for postmodernism to reject modernism's claim of offering an objective truth, this movement gave birth to a number of *postists*, namely, poststructuralists who believed that instead of histories, it would be better to address minor histories. According to poststructuralists, there are certain aspects of the past that have been pushed to the margins and disregarded; these include the other and the oppressed. By virtue of this worldview, postcolonial thinkers tried to create a space for those voices that had been silenced and suppressed by the dominant imperialist ideologies and discourses. As one of the most prominent contemporary figures of postcolonial studies, Homi. K. Bhabha has introduced such keywords as "Hybridity", "Third Space", and "Mimesis" into this field. According to Bhabha, these terms describe the methods by which colonized people are enabled to resist the power of the colonizer. Therefore, Bhabha's terms can analyze the ways in which resistance can be conceived and materialized within literary works. As a result, his ideas and keywords can be made use of in this study to help us better understand the anticolonial and postcolonial literature in Australia.

Through analyzing the contemporary history and literature of Australia, it could be observed that the postcolonial era has given birth to new discourses in this country. The aboriginal Australians believe that the exploration of the past shall not cease, and in this way the disciples of Kevin Gilbert, one of the pioneering and most distinguished activists of the Aborigines Rights, contend that there is a heavy responsibility for the Aboriginal writers to testify to their real conditions of existence (Shoemaker 128). The colonization of the Aborigines has a bloody and long history. In 1786, the British government chose the Botany Bay as the place of exile for the convicts. This marked the beginning for the conquest of the Australian lands in the years to come. The colonizer's invasive encroachments in these years had no outcome except for war, ravages, plagues and massacres. As a consequence, colonies and protected areas were created and the Aborigines were driven out from their homelands to some smaller areas which could not properly accommodate them. Despite the fact that the colonization of the Aborigines has a history of hundreds of

years, only in the past few decades have the restrictive and oppressive regulations that marginalize the rights of the Aborigines been resisted and fought. Most of these resistances were sparked in the 60s and 70s (Woods 11). Oodgeroo Noonuccal was born and bred exactly within this contextual framework in which grand paradigm shifts occurred and crucial steps were taken to retrieve what had previously been plundered under oppression.

Oodgeroo Noonuccal (1920–1993) was an Australian poet, artist, teacher, and political activist whose fame principally rests upon her poems. Her major status in the Australian literature is dependent on the fact that she is the first Australian Aborigine to have ever published a book of poems in line with supporting the rights of the Aborigines (Miller 12). Oodgeroo Noonuccal is a fully fledged and fully scaled postcolonial poet who has allocated a great portion of her works to explicitly and implicitly highlighting the mechanisms and ramifications of colonialism for the poor Aborigines of Australia. Noonuccal's poems abound in imageries and resonances of the Aborigines. Some of her characters are Aborigines who are in the midst of their traditional activities and have no contact with people outside their tribes. These poems depict characters who are delightfully and triumphantly leading their lives and chasing their dreams. Noonuccal's other poems focus on the horrendous effects of colonialism on the Aborigines. In these poems, characters wallow in their grief, woe, seclusion and fear. The combination and accumulation of such poems offer an image of colonialism which is way more intense in their pugnacity and cruelty compared to the time these topics were attended to in isolation. In fact, her poems are illustrative of the grave fact that Aborigines were not only not benefitting from the colonization and usurpation of their lands, but were mercilessly subjugated and exploited by this inhumane enterprise.

2. Literature Review

The analysis of writers from countries with colonial histories is the recent result of the growth of postcolonial studies in literary and academic scenes. Although postcolonial studies have become a popular area of research in the Iranian universities, Australian writers, compared with the writers of other colonized countries, have received less attention and appreciation. Oodgeroo Noonuccal is the national poet of the Australian Aboriginals; however, there has been no major study conducted on her works in Iran.

The only source that was found concerning her works was a translation of her poems under the title of *Dreamtime: Aboriginal Stories* recently translated by Siavash Morshedi. In international scene, too, Oodgeroo Noonuccal's and other postcolonial Australian writers' precious works have not been duly and sufficiently attended to. The most important work in this regard that can be touched upon is *Black Words, White Page: Aboriginal Literature 1929–1988* (1989) written by Adam Shoemaker. In this book, Shoemaker places under scrutiny selected works of certain Aboriginal writers, one of whom is Oodgeroo Noonuccal that is introduced as "the doyenne of Aboriginal writers: her works, both poetry and prose, have been widely translated and are currently used as educational texts as far afield as Germany, Poland, and Japan" (181).

Ameer Chasib Furaih's article entitled "'Let no one say the past is dead': History wars and the poetry of Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Sonia Sanchez" (2018) is a comparative study in which the role of Oodgeroo Noonuccal and African American poet Sonia Sanchez in reviving their peoples' history is explored. In Furaih's examination of the selected poems from Oodgeroo's *My People: A Kath Walker Collection* and Sanchez's *Home Coming and We A BaddDDD People*, Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "minor literature" acts as the theoretical framework of the study "to demonstrate that similarities in their poetic themes are the result of a common awareness of a global movement of black resistance" (Furaih 163). Although there are some other articles and reviews that have been dispersedly written on Noonuccal, such as Sam Watson's "Kath Walker/Oodgeroo Noonuccal" (2007) and John Collins' "Oodgeroo of the tribe Noonuccal" (1994), none have critically analyzed this poet's works from the perspective of Homi Bhabha's postcolonial approach.

3. Analysis and Discussion

After the European colonizers entered the colonies, they had the intentions of reformulating, reorienting and redefining those areas and nations based on their own patters and ideological paradigms. Nevertheless, they were constantly unaware of one fact and that was the notion of the "difference" and "plurality" of cultures. Therefore, they never reached their intended goals and this feeling of "loss" was constantly changing into an excruciating threat, because according to Bhabha's theories, this "difference" caused a kind of duality and incongruity in colonial

encounters (between the colonizer and the colonized) which ultimately resulted in the revelation of the already hidden gaps concocted by colonial ideologies between the colonizer and the colonized. This can, for the colonized nations, effectuate and facilitate resistance against the dastardly colonial enterprises of the colonizer. This cultural difference can thus expose the paradoxes of power.

According to Bhabha, cultural difference pleads negotiation, not elimination or the suppression of the other; this negotiation ultimately results in the creation of a "Third Space" for the expression and creation of new chances. In such a space, the suppressed or the "subaltern", to borrow a term from Gayatri Spivak, is empowered to air their voices of grievance and protest to others (Huddart 85). This Third Space enabled Noonuccal and other Australian Aboriginal writers to express shared methods and obsessions so as to entreat justice and their territorial rights, challenge tribal clichés, deconstruct deterrent and exclusionary patterns of national identity and correct biased historical narratives which are related to progress and peaceful coexistence (Webby 29). To this end, in one of her most potently expressive and explicitly suggestive anticolonial poems titled "The Dispossessed," Noonuccal depicts the utmost rapacity, ferocity and cruelty of the colonizer:

> Peace was yours, Australian man, with tribal laws you made,
> Till white Colonials stole your peace with rape and murder raid;
> They shot and poisoned and enslaved until, a scattered few,
> Only a remnant now remain, and the heart dies in you.
> The white man claimed your hunting grounds, and you could not remain,
> They made you work as menials for greedy private gain;
> Your tribes are broken vagrants now wherever whites abide,
> And justice of the white man means justice to you denied.
> They brought you Bibles and disease, the liquor and the gun:
> With Christian culture such as these the white command was won.
> A dying race you linger on, degraded and oppressed,
> Outcasts in your own native land, you are the dispossessed. (lines 1-12, qtd. in Jose 43)

This poem and its poignant language demonstrate that how postcolonial works attend to the history and ramifications of colonialism; such a history is brimming with suppression, denial and subjugation.

In such a historical examination and reappraisal, Noonuccal deems religious ideology the main driving factor behind the triumph and predominance of the

colonizer. In "The Dispossessed," she clearly makes connection between the Aborigines' suppression and marginalization in Australian society and the imported colonial religion and culture. In fact, the Third Space enables the poet to decry against the colonial culture whose main mission has been the annihilation of native values. This way of thinking which is one of the dominant and recurrent themes and lines of thought shared amongst most Australian postcolonial writers finds its clearest and most tangible expression through the words of the Aboriginal playwright Robert Merritt who contends that Christianity has been "the most destructive force that has ever hit the Aboriginal people" (Shoemaker 135).

Linear to historical revelation, the tendency for re-creation and transfiguration is also seen within the fabric of postcolonial works (Punt 5). In other words, in anti/postcolonial school part of the question of postcolonial condition is the question of self-loss and out-of-placeness which is a kind of cultural alienation which includes the destruction of cultural traditions, history and national identity. Reaction to this alienation is part of the reactionary strides taken by colonized cultures so as to rediscover and revitalize the cultural identity (Dreese 15). In order to raise awareness vis-à-vis this profound sense of alienation, space of instability, a space which signifies the fading away of age-old traditions, changes into one of the most remarkable and conspicuous patterns in the poems of the Aborigines (Shoemaker 205).

Similar to other poets, Noonuccal touches upon the identity crisis, consummately depicting the fragility of man in the last lines of "We Are Going":

> We are the lightning bolt over Gaphembah Hill
> Quick and terrible,
> And the Thunderer after him, that loud fellow.
> We are the quiet daybreak paling the dark lagoon.
> We are the shadow-ghosts creeping back as the camp fires burn low.
> We are nature and the past, all the old ways
> Gone now and scattered.
> 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. (lines 14-25, qtd. in Collingwood-Whittick 108)

In this poem, Noonuccal expresses her regret over the lost things in the most direct possible way, remembering, enumerating and reviving various aspects of the Aboriginal culture. Moreover, highlighting the identity crisis and alienation, Noonuccal attends to the reasons behind such crises and an alternative identity for the lost and disintegrated one. In "Then and Now", Noonuccal draws a comparison between the conditions of the past and those of the present so as to emphasize the identity crisis and disintegration of the Aborigines' generation more and more:

> No more woomera, No more boomerang,
> No more playabout, No more the old ways.
> Children of nature we were then,
> No clocks hurrying crowds to toil.
> Now I am civilized and work in the white way,
> Now I have dress, now I have shoes:
> "Isn't she lucky to have a good job!"
> Better when I had only a dillybag
> Better when I had nothing but happiness. (lines 18-26, qtd. in Noonuccal 125)

In addition to identity crisis, Noonuccal, in a concerted manner similar to other Australian postcolonial writers, takes the issue of territorial and cultural crises into consideration when it comes to her reactionary poems. One of the most remarkable ones of which in this regard is "Municipal Gum" in which Gum is used symbolically to suppress the Aborigines:

> Gumtree in the city street,
> Hard bitumen around your feet,
> Rather you should be
> In the cool world of leafy forest halls
> And wild bird calls. (lines 1-5, qtd. in Mahoney 170)

Gum in this poem is considered to be part of a city which surrounds it, exactly those Aborigines who are expected to assimilate themselves into the Whites' society. But the tree is alone, a creature who has been castrated, broken and shackled by hard bitumen around its feet, set adrift and separated from its fellow creatures. This example bears a striking resemblance to many tribes and Aborigines who, as a result of colonialism, have been cut off from their fellow men and women, and a very few of them have the permission to lead a peaceful coexistence with whites:

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.
O fellow citizen,
What have they done to us? (lines 6-11 and 15-16, qtd. in Mahoney 170)

Noonuccal endows the tree with the power of speech and acts as a mouthpiece for the people and nature which have been banished to exile and seclusion by the dominant oppressors. In this poem a consistent relationship has been generated between all aspects of nature: human being, animal and plant. Noonuccal employs the image of Gum as a metaphorized device for representing the pain inflicted upon the Aborigines and she also, in the meantime, takes the relationship between the human being and nature into account. By her direct communication with the tree, Noonuccal gives the tree the power to answer. Here, Noonuccal's principle of ability lies in her attaching the Aborigines with their lands. By personifying the Aborigines alongside with the plants and animals, Noonuccal constantly emphasizes the relationship of individuals with their environment and shows that the "we" that she alludes to does not merely pertain to human beings, but also includes wider frame of reference such as their lands and traditions as well.

How are the cultural rediscovery and restitution accomplished? The cultural difference between the colonized and the colonizer leads to a negotiation and ultimately the birth of a Third Space. The result of raising tolerance for such a difference leads to the emergence of the concept of "hybridity". Bhabha contends that contemporary cultures are hybrid, and this hybridity creates a space for action, creation and change: a space in which there is no bipolar ideology, confrontation, discriminatory policy, exclusionary practice, etc. According to Bhabha "the aim of cultural difference is to rearticulate the sum of knowledge from the perspective of the signifying position of the minority that resists totalization—the repetition that will not return as the same, the minus-in-origin that results in political and discursive strategies where adding to does not add up but serves to disturb the calculation of power and knowledge, producing other spaces of subaltern signification" (Bhabha, *Location of Culture* 162). This hybridity enables Noonuccal to revive the ostracized

knowledge and traditions in her postcolonial poems. Noonuccal's poems attach people to what they already have lost and accomplish this by endowing the subaltern the right to speak, which is exactly their own oral tradition in which they relate and express whatever they exactly are. In this way, Noonuccal gives the Aborigines the confidence and optimism that their culture and traditions will not be consigned to oblivion. Traditions will not be forgotten throughout the passage of time, but will be revived through the words on inscribed on pages, just like the words that were traditionally transacted between the Aborigines. In "Dawn Wail for The Dead" she reminds her readers of the tradition of wailing:

> Dim light of daybreak now
> Faintly over the sleeping camp.
> Old lubra first to wake remembers:
> First thing every dawn
> Remember the dead, cry for them. (lines 1-5, qtd. in Mead and Tranter 106)

Attending to and reminiscing about the old memories of our elders and betters are not the traditions that have fallen into disregard and oblivion but have actually been, similar to the generation and originality of the Aborigines, robbed by the passage of time and great diffusion of Australian tribes. Therefore, by reviving this tradition, Noonuccal breathes new life into both the tradition and the Aborigines:

> Softly at first her wail begins,
> One by one as they wake and hear
> Join in the cry, and the whole camp
> Wails for the dead, the poor dead
> Gone from here to the Dark Place:
> They are remembered.
> Then it is over, life now,
> Fires lit, laughter now,
> And a new day calling. (lines 6-14, qtd. in Mead and Tranter 106)

Today, who goes on to glorify the ones who have gone to the "Dark Place" everyday? Noonuccal revives this tradition, and the poem itself somehow, whenever is read, can be considered as a kind of a wail for the dead. Noonuccal has suffused her poems with rituals and traditions that are, alongside with the Aborigines themselves, on the brink of extinction. Her aim of such an enterprise is therefore to revitalize and redeem them. By giving expression to and depicting the images in

which Noonuccal takes great pride and joy, she is able to create a shared space of understanding and solidarity between her Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal readers so that the non-Aboriginal readers of hers become more conscious and take more responsibility for the Aborigines' drowning destiny. In "Gooboora, the Silent Pool" Noonuccal bewails the Aborigines' loss and disintegration:

> Gooboora, Gooboora, the Water of Fear
> That awed the Noonuccals once numerous here,
> The Bunyip is gone from your bone-strewn bed,
> And the clans departed to drift with the dead.
> Once in the far time before the whites came
> How light were their hearts in the dance and the game!
> Gooboora, Gooboora, to think that today
> A whole happy tribe are all vanished away! (lines 1-8, qtd.in Ramraj 353)

No one has remained to relate the story of the Silent Pool. No one will know anything about Bunyip, a character who lived there and knew why "For birds hasten by as in days of old, / No wild thing will drink of your waters cold" (lines 11-12, qtd. in Ramraj, 2009: 353). This forgotten and forsaken state is one of the consequences of hybridity. In the colonized culture, searching for an original root and tradition will be futile, because so many rituals and traditions have succumbed to the ravages of time and so many others have been hybridized to other rituals and cultures, so deeply assimilated that one might never be able to tell them apart (Runion 94). Being aware of this condition, Noonuccal proclaims that without other Noonuccals, this pool would be another pool and would fall short of any cultural significance. Noonuccal talks to the pool and asks her "But where are my people I look for in vain? / They are gone from the hill, they are gone from the shore, / And the place of the Silent Pool knows them no more" (lines 14-16, qtd. in Ramraj 353). She talks to the pool in a way as if the pool is aware of her pain and in the last line asks her to share in her pain and woe:

> Old Death has passed by you but took the dark throng;
> Now lost is the Noonuccal language and song.
> Gooboora, Gooboora, it makes the heart sore
> That you should be here but my people no more! (lines 21-24, qtd. in Ramraj 353)

By reviving the powers inherent in the pool, Noonuccal resuscitates and reinstates their cultural significance and metaphorically retrieves the pool for the Aborigines. Nevertheless, in reality, this pool has been usurped and exploited by colonizers and

its name has changed into "Lake Karboora" (Buckridge 103). This act of cultural retrieval and restoration of the pool is actually an act to redeem and revive her tribe as well and is the proclaimer of its perennial place in Dreamtime. In "Corroboree", one of the conspicuous images and embodiments of dreamtime, Noonuccal depicts the images of society, family, and the relationship with the homeland for her readers, images which are not normally found in a white society:

> Hot day dies, cook time comes.
> Now between the sunset and the sleep-time
> Time of playabout. (lines 1-3, Noonuccal 40)

This image of the Aborigines is the very ceremony of their culture and history but it is more illustrative of the joy and pleasure that is gone, the reason of which is indeed nothing but the colonialism which has fractured and disintegrated the Aboriginal tribes. This type of imagery is very much recurrent among the Australian Aboriginal works of literature. Overall, when Aborigines bring themselves to the fore of emergence and fruition in the literary scene, as well as the shared experience of oppression and injustice, they emphasize the shared pleasure of life (Shoemaker 233). This type of imagery can be a kind of a clarion call for solidarity and unification among the Aborigines:

> The hunters paint black bodies
> By firelight with designs of meaning
> To dance corroboree.
> Now didgeridoo compels with
> Haunting drone eager feet to stamp,
> Click-sticks click in rhythm to swaying bodies
> Dancing corroboree. (lines 4-10, Noonuccal 40)

In line with their environment and land, the Aborigines embark upon the kind of dancing and singing to form a Corroboree. According to the Britannica Encyclopedia "For indigenous Australians, the corroboree comes closest to a modern concept of theatre, but this participatory public performance of songs and dances represents much more than entertainment; it is a celebration of Aboriginal mythology and spirituality. Groups such as Bangarra Dance Theatre bring a modern sensibility to bear on the storytelling and ritual essential to Aboriginal culture" (Corroboree). These singings and dances bring to mind the Dreamtime and communicate the knowledge

and memorialization of the history of these people. Noonuccal communicates in her poem the secondary experience of being in Corroboree to her audience and hybridizes them to the local nature of Australia:

> Like spirit things in form
> The great surrounding dark
> Ghost-gums dimly seen stand at the edge of light
> Watching corroboree
> Eerie the scene in leaping firelight,
> Eerie the sounds in that wild setting,
> As naked dancers weave stories of the tribe
> Into corroboree. (lines 11-18, Noonuccal 40)

Noonuccal suffuses this poem with melodious sounds so as to harmonize the words with the pulse, lilt, and rhythm of Didgeridoo so that during the recitation ceremony, a sense of the spark and light of fire as well as the sound of music is communicated to the reader. Catherine Berndt in her article "Traditional Aboriginal Oral Literature" maintains that since Aborigines, according to anecdotes, were not able to read and write, they received elementary education about information such as the earth and its resources via words of the mouth—not through pictures, cave paintings and visual symbols, but principally through words, dialogues and songs. Therefore, tales and songs served as one of the commonest and most conventional instruments of reviving, extending and handing down the traditions and cultures of the Aborigines (93). By recounting the tales of Dreamtime, Corroboree is constantly helping and facilitating the reiteration of the relationship between the tribe and the land about which those tales are concerned. Though cultural hybridity stifles and blunts the complete revival of the cultural of the colonized, Noonuccal selects some parts of the Aborigines' lives and incorporates them within the fabric of her poems so as to save them from falling into wanton and callous disregard. It is hoped that the Aborigines are impressed and therefore undergo some changes; they might also consign their culture and traditions to oblivion and obscurity; nevertheless, Noonuccal's works will recast them anew and keep their memories and traces alive.

The other key terms in postcolonial discourse include "self", "other", and "otherization." Otherization is a process through which the conception of a superior identity is given to the self and an inferior one is given to the other. This process is a

general tendency among different people and societies who deem themselves superior, with more civilized, developed identities, while the identity of people who are considered racially, ethnically, culturally, or linguistically different are associated with inferiority, baselessness, barbarity, backwardness and lack of civilization. Although the process of cultural otherization has existed since the olden days, it has grown more conspicuous and been glaringly perpetuated in the colonial history of the twentieth century (Kumaravadivelu 16). Being acutely conscious of the otherization process, Noonuccal has been able to air her most vociferous grievances in her resonantly remonstrative poems to call for putting an end to these iniquitous and tyrannically abusive behaviors towards the underprivileged Aborigines. For example, in her poem "Aboriginal Charter of Rights", she is striving to bridge the yawning gap between the self and the other:

> We want hope, not racialism,
> Brotherhood, not ostracism,
> Black advance, not white ascendance:
> Make us equals, not dependants.
> We need help, not exploitation,
> …
> Homes, not settlements and missions.
> We need love, not overlordship,
> Grip of hand, not whip-hand wardship; (lines 1-5 and 16-18, qtd. in Craven, 1)

By virtue of enumerating and juxtaposing the destitutions, basics, and realities of the Aborigines' lives, Noonuccal offers a vivid image of the blatant hypocrisies of the government in enforcing its misguided policies and regulations pertaining to the Aborigines. In effect, Noonuccal is seeking for equality, mutual understanding, proper assistance and education so that the Aborigines would be given the chance to lead better, freer, less discriminatory, and more productive lives in their own motherland:

> Must we native Old Australians
> In our own land rank as aliens?
> Banish bans and conquer caste,
> Then we'll win our own at last. (lines 41-44, qtd. in Craven 1)

Reminding the fact that the Aborigines are the real and rightful inhabitants of this land and have been there from the beginning, Noonuccal cements and strengthens

the relationship between her people and the colonized lands. In her petitionary demands for the reservation of the Aborigines' rights, Noonuccal proclaims that the Aborigines are able to lead their lives most fully and successfully without the government's "overlordship" and requests the retention of the possession of "homes" at the heart of the Australian nature which are way different from "settlements and missions". By depicting the frustrated desires and unfulfilled fundamental needs of the Aborigines, Noonuccal has succeeded in preserving the connection of Aborigines with their traditional place in the world and in doing so, she has preserved, enlivened and heightened the inner dignity and worth of the Aborigines against the ravages cruelly wreaked upon them by colonialism. In such an act of preservation and revival, Noonuccal has endowed the future generations of the Aborigines with a vivid glimpse of and reliable link with the past and a purposeful stride for the future so that the posterity would know who they are and what moral worth and self-esteem they are inherently possessed of:

> To our father's fathers
> The pain, the sorrow;
> To our children's children
> The glad tomorrow. (lines 31-34, qtd. in Woods 26)

The "glad tomorrow" could be sometimes achieved by building a bridge to the past and effectuating a compromise with the present. This temporal connection has a special position in Homi Bhabha's postcolonial repertoire and thoughts. Instead of conceiving and conceptualizing colonialism as a phenomenon restricted within the confines of the past, Bhabha highlights the perennial influence and pervasive presence of the histories and cultures of colonialism in the present (Huddart 1). In this regard, Noonuccal adeptly represents both the colonial and precolonial past so as to simultaneously emphasize the considerable antiquity of the Aborigines and the gross injustice they have historically suffered from. The poems in Noonuccal's later volume, *The Dawn is at Hand* (1966), chiefly arose out of her conviction that the past survives in the present:

> Let no one say the past is dead.
> The past is all about us and within.
> Haunted by tribal memories, I know
> This little now, this accidental present

Is not the all of me, whose long making
Is so much of the past
A thousand thousand camp fires in the forest
Are in my blood.
Let none tell me the past is wholly gone.
Now is so small a part of time, so small a part
Of all the rare years that have moulded me. (lines 1-11, qtd. in Shoemaker 129)

Noonuccal, together with a number of other founders and pioneers of the contemporary Aboriginal literature such as Kevin Gilbert, Jack Davis and Colin Johnson insisted on the continuity of past and present; they unflaggingly called for justice and land rights, questioned the racist stereotypes, toppled exclusionary and discriminatory models of national identity and rectified prejudiced historical narratives of progress and peaceful settlement (Webby 29). Nevertheless, Black Australian conceptions of history are not always as confrontationist or as pugnaciously polemical as the above example illustrates. The thematic characteristic of the pre-contact past can be evoked in order to put greater emphasis on other aspects, such as longevity and permanency of Aboriginal dwelling in Australia (Shoemaker 129).

4. Conclusion

In the hybrid culture of Australia there is no more any sign of the pre-colonial Australian culture. Nonetheless, the Third Space created in the very hybrid culture allows Noonuccal to revive this culture, even on paper and by words inscribed on it so as to instigate a fight and battle cry against the rapacity, greed, pugnacity and injustice of the white, supremacist, colonialist society. Some Australians today believe that Australians shall forget the injustices and oppressions of the past. Noonuccal and many other Australians however contend that such miscarriages of justices are not, by any stretches of the imagination, condonable in that their aftereffects have continued to be plaguing different layers of the colonized society of Australia. Therefore, resisting the process of otherization wherein the colonizer is depicted as superior and the colonized as inferior has become a staple and recurrent defining characteristic and thematic feature in Noonuccal's poems. Thus, her poetry overtly calls for a just assimilation of blacks with whites. Because of such fierce, reactionary anticolonial sentiments, Noonuccal has become the national poet of the Australian Aborigines. Oodgeroo had consciously and calculatedly chosen to enunciate her

political vision in poetry because she felt it was a natural expansion of the traditional Aboriginal oral culture, of its storytelling and song-making. Noonuccal's works have developed into a mouthpiece for the Aborigines' wishes and a redeeming force for their traditions, culture and rituals. Since they are written in English, the works give even the non-Aboriginal readers the opportunity to gain more insight into Aborigines' lives and see why they feel they have historically been oppressed and subjugated by the barbaric forces of the European colonialism.

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