



## Contemporaneity of English Language and Literature in the Robotized Millennium

Vol: 4(1), 2025

REST Publisher; ISSN: 2583 7370

Website: <https://restpublisher.com/journals/cellrm/>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46632/cellrm/4/1/2>



## Pacifism in the Poems of Judith Wright and Oodgeroo Noonuccal

\* K.P. Bakhya Seema

Wavoo Wajeeha Women's College of Arts & Science, Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu, India.

\*Corresponding Author Email: [Ceema1722@gmail.com](mailto:Ceema1722@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** *Two renowned and popular Australian war poets deal with war and its drastic effects on humanity in their poems. These two poets have witnessed Second World War. Ramification of society, and politics during their time was recorded as they were inspired with these thoughts and feelings. These two poet's poems are comprised of poetic expressions that have insights of destructions, wickedness, of war, countless killings of human beings who are innocent. Fabrications of these thoughts are expressed in an intellectual and rational way in the poems of these two poets. Peaceful world gets transformed into an inhumane bandedomium by the cruelty of war. The fang of horrific war has influenced many peoples sensory art. Wright and Oodgeroo are of the opinion that War is an evil which has no place in the lives of simple, innocent human beings. As a result, the poets attempt to suggest solution to eradicate war that is an evil on earth. To put it in a nut shell, a note of Pacifism is present in the poetry of these two authors that appeals to humanity to have no more war as it leads to bloodshed, dejection and hostility. The poets advocate an end to war which is an attempt to attain Peace and harmony.*

**Keywords:** *Poetry, war, humanity, pacifism, harmony, bloodshed, inhumane act, Peace.*

On all ages, writers are always influenced by war. War has a major concern affecting writer's sensibility and receptivity. Poetry composed on war comes down from ancient times technically and substantially. War and Poetry are inimical actually on the surface level. In one way, war destroys what poetry would make; Poetry combats the elements from which war springs. The reaction to war is that, yet, suggests, that wars very violence stimulates more poetry. If poetry is not written in response to experience, it has little significance. On the other hand war lends, raises open arena to objects on which the poets perceptions are exercised. The poems of war by Judith Wright and Oodgeroo Noonuccal are potentiated by their experiences of war and its suffering.

Both poets are witness to Second World War and their thoughts have ramifications of social and political feelings of time. Towards Barbarism, man's progressive advancement is and one of the major themes of war poetry is bloodshed. Wickedness of war, destructions, and countless skillings of innocent human beings, become the themes of war poems. Poet's experiences and overview of war have been translated in to poems. As the experience of war, world-view of many has been strongly affected by war. In the poetry of wright and Noonuccal's poetic sensibility, the impact of horrors & happenings of war period are witnessed.

Poetry with the corpus of war was penned up by wright. A series of threatening wars like world war II, Vietnam war, Korean war, Germanys invasion over Japan, Spanish Civil War, Nepalam War become the substantial pivot point of the poetry of wright. During the first world war wright came to the world. She has witnessed many wars and has been influenced by its impacts that Australia has involved herself in. During the beginning of Second World War, she returns to her father's station to help him during the shortage of labour. It is during this period of time, Wright develops a sense of attachment and motivation to land and its people. A sense of empathy is shown by Wright towards those, who went to war and those who were left behind. By 1979, in an interview, wright is able to recall her childhood days growing up through two world wars. Her description of childhood in a

vivid way has memories as being other burning of an effigy of Kaiser after World War I an enormous and terrible white clad figure.

Toppling in to a bonfire. In the opinion of Wright, any sort of violence towards fellow human beings is inextricably linked to Violence towards land. The main Corpus of Wrights war poetry always is devoted to cruelty of war that demeans human life. Oodgero Noonucal (Kath Walker then) too have her own experience of war. She is also a volunteer for war service in 1940, spending her four years as a member of Australian Women Army service. She has her training as a telephonist and later promoted to corporal. She has been given an additional responsibility of training new recruits too. Another surprising thing to her expectation is that she did not experience any racial discrimination in army. Some of her intimate friendships developed in the army. At the time of her war service, "*Oodgero noticed big s difference in the way she has treated once she had enlisted. She experienced social equality.*" (Dolphin 45).

Unfortunately, her middle ear infection made her end her services in war and she has been invalided out Later on, her service extended as a book keeper and participation in the Army rehabilitation scheme by training secretarial work. Her parents also helped soldiers by providing their home. They also rendered their help to construction workers too. The two poets are aware that war is an evil and played their part during the time of war. Everyone knows that war is a pure evil that increases suffering to humanity ending it in a whirlpool of mess. Wright and Oodgero comprehend three suggestions to overcome the drastic effects of war. The best things that can be done about war are, fight it, ignore it or protest it and so the two poets protest it.

The trauma of war highlighted Wrights' poetry of life. The grim, Sombre picture and side of war which leads to merciless killings, chaos of human values summoning human cries by spoiling social atmosphere are depicted with reality. The poem "*The Train*" portrays the dark side of war,

"Strange primitive piece of flesh, the heart laid Quiet,  
hearing their Cry piece through its thin-walled cave  
recalls the forgotten tiger  
and leaps awake in its old panic riot;  
and how shall mind be solver.  
Since bloods' red thread still binds us fast in history? (CP 12)

The Poem "*The Trains*" is a meditation during the time of world at war. The symbol and symptom of a broader human crisis that displays pain, terror, grief, loss are in the form of war. Social riots are the results of horrifying wars. As a result cities become streams of blood and torn flesh.

In the poem, Spring After war, life seized with ceaseless turmoil 'rattles and the 'bones'. Mortals pain are reflected in the wailings and mournings brought by war. "*The years of death rattle their bones/the ewe cries in the pitiless rain /the mortal cry of anguished*" (CP 33). The knowledge of life and death along with the effects of war which are translated successfully in to a poem of Wright is very well captured by the author. She writes thus "*My generation is dying after long lives / Swung from war to depression to war to feeliness*" (CP 419). The pain, anguish, associated with separation is reflected in Wrights Poems, " we meet and part now over all the world " (CP7). An air of bitterness prevailing in the social environment due to instability of life gets a projection in the poem "The old Prison". Man cries out this grief through "the flute of stone": Each in his cell alone/ cried as the wind cries now/through this flute of stone" (CP53). In land human beings share emotional bond which is torn away completely by war resulting in brutal killings and countless death. "*We should have trained you / in using weapons*" (CP 285] says Wright with deep regret.

If one goes through the pages of Wright, her autobiography reflects the violent strokes of incessant wars and its wickedness that becomes the epitome of terror and pain resulting in the paralysing of smooth stream of life. From the following quotes, depiction of war and its aftermaths bring pain when the author confesses Heridith was just two month old when on 1950, the Korean war erupted We watched developments in horror as Jack tried to persuade himself that surely Australia would refuse to enter a war in which for the first time it would not be under British pressure to do so. Also the war and menaces of atomic bomb pressed down, we saw little discussion of the basic causes of the Malaise in western thought" [clark 261].

War becomes a fundamental tragedy for Oodgeroo Noonucal. She is shocked to see the inhumanity of man; war is at replica of brutal denial of human values and extinction of human Potentialities. The poem Dead life talks of dead People who sacrifices their lives worthlessly roaming on in war without worthlessly roaming on the, "*The streets/ Screaming obscenities/ cursing, damning*" [MP52], the effects of War. She refers war everyone and

everything. Devilish mind, leading an evil fiend who demolishes Nar always over powers the two death of millions of lives:

In a span of life  
Ten millions lives are lost  
And few found (MP52).

War, an evil Committed against humanity is what Noonuccal highlights in her poetry. She distresses over the fact, that the west has brought such a debacle discarding the principles of values and engaging in a senseless and fratricidal Conflict. "Custodians of the Land is a speech delivered by Noonuccal. In the speech, she expresses her concern regarding the war games played by warlords which in turn have wasted youth as so many young men rushing to senseless deaths "we have lost too many sons and daughters to the war games their wards lords play [MP107]. Such loss brings pain and tears, "*Pain there must be and tears, /sorrow and death*" [MP 74]. The poetess is of the opinion, that man can do bear discomfort in life but not at cost of intolerance, unkindness, cruelty that he chooses from "*the mean and base which Nature never made/ But we alone*" [MP74]. This idea is depicted in the poem Gods' one Mistake which is an appeal to save man

I who am ignorant and knows so little,  
So little of life and less of god,  
This I do know  
that happiness is intended and could be  
thall all wild simple things have life fulfilled  
Save man  
That all on earth has natural happiness.  
Save man. [MP14].

Barbarous nature of man and unquenchable thirst for blood shed that germinates in man's deadly beastly nature becomes the prime theme of the poems of Wright. This deadly beast nature traps killings of same we species, man. The poem Lament for passenger Pigeons laments over the warring nations, thus, "*Trapped in the fouling nest of time and space, .../and it is a man who lends a deafening ear./ and man who thickness round like a stain*"[CP. 319].

Both the actions authors want to make the readers see destructive reality of war. By penning their poetry, they instruct, create awareness and warn to all who read their poems, about what men are doing to each other in the name of scientific advancements. Universal bond of sympathy, empathy, brotherhood and sisterhood are being destroyed by these scientific advancements.

"*Man only, the book tells, knows evil and wrong*" (MP5) writes Noonuccal.

AnIronic statement is being made by Noonuccal in her poem No more Boomeran on civilization which has made man barbaric. There is no belief to man in sharing. He is now all civilized. She caustically remarks that the progress exposes man towards destruction.

Lay down the woomera  
Lay down the Waddy  
Now we got a tom-bomb  
End everybody. (MP31)

Noonuccal strongly opposes destruction of mankind and nature as Judith Wright. Both the poetess appeal with establishing of the armed neutrality of Australia. The two authors believe strongly that man's endless Quest is to be happy which cannot be achieved with the present crime waves and A-bomb plans. (MP76)

To conclude are the poetry of Judith Wright and Oodgeroo Noonuccal on war depicts torture, trauma and turbulence increased during war time. Wright is seen as a minute observer of wars and its aftermaths. This becomes the prime reason why her volume of poetry on war is bigger than Noonuccal. However both of them, share the dehumanizing effects of war and show the after effects of war are harrowing.

They consider as a way to human destruction. Noonuccal attaches at a philosophical touch in her Poems. As Siegfried Sassoon, both of them use poetry to convey outrage at the continuous prosecution of war. Like Wilfred Owen, they bring out wastage of war. The Readers can find a note Pacifism in the poem of both poetesses that appeal no more war leads to destruction, dejection, hostility. End of any war may be an attempt to Peace, harmony, tranquility according to these two Poets.

## **REFERENCES**

- [1]. Clarke, Patricia, ed., Judith Wright: Half a life time. Melbourne: Text publishing, 1999 Print.
- [2]. Dolphin, Gina Oodgeroo Noonuccal (1920 - 1993).
- [3]. Australian History Museu Macquarie university. web. 14 March 2014.
- [4]. Noonuccal, Oodgeroo. My People. Queensland: the Jacaranda Press. 1990. Print
- [5]. Wright Judith. Collected Poems: 1942-1985. Sydney. Angus & Roberston. 1994. Print (Quoted as CP).