



Poetry of the Civil Rights Movements in Australia and the United States, 1960s–1980s

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Shows how poets like Noonuccal, Fogarty, Baraka and Sanchez collaborated with other civil rights activists in voicing the demands of their people, and how they used their poetry to reflect the realities they experienced and to imagine new possibilities.

Aboriginal poets Oodgeroo Noonuccal (formerly Kath Walker; 1920–1993) and Lionel Fogarty (1958–), and African American poets Amiri Baraka (formerly LeRoi Jones; 1934–2014) and Sonia Sanchez (1934–) were prominent in the struggles of their peoples during the civil rights movements of the 1960s and beyond. I have treated the poetries of these poets as an example of distinct poetics, which is not bounded by the borders of a territory or by geography as abstracted on a map, situating them along the lines of what Chadwick Allen (2012) calls ‘together (yet) distinct’. This literary-political relation enables the poetries of these geo-ethnically distinct poets to be read within a single critical frame, without confluencing their literary distinctiveness. The book places the poetries of these four selected poets in broader, international contexts by drawing trans-Pacific connections among them. The contribution of this book lies in its study of poetic intertextuality and common themes, and in the evaluation of the impact (direct or indirect) of African American poets, particularly those of the Black Arts movement, upon Aboriginal poets. Thus, the book should be seen as a starting point, rather than the final word on transnational exchanges between these movements.

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