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Project title: Crossing the borders: the representations of identity, madness and trauma in the plays by Indigenous Australian contemporary women playwrights

POPULAR SCIENCE SYNOPSIS

The contemporary Aboriginal theatre in Australia is a rapidly developing phenomenon, in which the presence of Indigenous Australian women playwrights is strongly marked. The aim of the project “Crossing the borders: the representations of identity, madness and trauma in the plays by Indigenous Australian contemporary women playwrights” is to study how Aboriginal identity, madness and trauma were presented in selected plays by Aboriginal women playwrights. In my project I intend to study the way of representing Aboriginal identity and madness, which can be understood as an attempt to oppose the existing racial and gender stereotypes, or as a feeling of powerlessness, or as a typical female condition. An important aspect of my study is also the concept of trauma - whether it is presented as an individual, collective or cultural phenomenon; what the connections between those types of trauma are; the relations between the particular types of trauma and the consequences of traumatic experiences.

The plays I chose for the purpose of this analysis were written by two generations of Indigenous playwrights - born in the 1960s (Dallas Winmar, Jane Harrison, Andrea James) and in the 1990s (Kirli Saunders, Nakkiah Lui). All plays were written in the 21st century, after the crucial apology (for the crimes made on Aboriginals), given by the Australian government to Indigenous people (Rickard 2017 [1998]: 260). I believe my selection of plays - Dallas Winmar's *Aliwa!* (2002), Andrea James's *Yanagai! Yanagai!* (2004) and *Winyanboga Yurringa* (2019), Nakkiah Lui's *Kill the Messenger* (2015) and *Black is the New White* (2017), Jane Harrison's *The Visitors* (2021) and Kirli Saunders's *Going Home* (2024; in production) – will allow me to take a multidimensional perspective on the problems resulting from the assimilation policy, traumatic experiences and social exclusion, as well as to capture generational differences in their understanding.