



Janjiya Nakamarra (Liddy Nelson Nakamarra) 2002

Yumurrpa; Yarla Jukurra (Yumurrpa Country; Large Yam Dreaming, *Ipomoea costata*)*

(Etching, sugar lift painting and aquatint on two plates, on Magnia Pescia paper 300 gsm, paper size 760 mm x 560 mm; image size 490 mm x 320 mm)

© estate of the artist licensed by Aboriginal Artists Agency Ltd

An Australian Studies Symposium - Call for Papers (Un)Belonging: In Search of New Representations, Negotiations, Entanglements

There are multiple forms of belonging in Australia which derive from a broad and differentiated range of raced and gendered histories. Dominant histories of belonging (e.g. white settler-colonial belonging) have been strongly contested for many decades. For example, in the wake of the Mabo and Wik decisions, the report on the Stolen Generations, and debates about Reconciliation and a National Apology, we heard of a contemporary 'crisis of settler belonging' (Probyn 2002), of 'spatial anxiety' (Slater 2013) and 'conscious despair' (Miller 2003), as well as 'the pain of unbelonging' (Collingwood-Whittick 2007). A sense of (un)belonging became a leitmotif in cultural texts produced by non-Indigenous historians, journalists, novelists, memoirists, filmmakers and artists through the 1990s and the first decade of the new millennium. Two recent publications, Lisa Slater's *Anxieties of Belonging in Settler Colonialism: Australia, Race and Place* (2019) and Emily Potter's *Writing Belonging at the Millennium: Notes from the Field on Settler-Colonial Place* (2019), might be cited as examples of a recent revisiting of ideas of (un)belonging shaped by the cultural and political climate of that period. While it may seem that debates fuelled by the stories of (un)belonging have been fading, so long as settler-colonialist mentalities and their attendant politics remain entrenched in Australia, non-Indigenous belonging will remain problematic and ambivalent.

How is a sense of belonging on the personal, regional, national, and transnational level narrativized and dramatized by various groups in contemporary Australia? How have recent Indigenous-led political interventions, such as the Uluru Statement from the Heart, calls for constitutional recognition and treaty talk, altered debates about (un)belonging? What role(s) do global warming, Australia's climate paradox and/or Anthropocene perspectives play in shaping ideas of (un)belonging? What about renewed concern for lands, rivers, seas, and flora and fauna in the face of mining destruction, deforestation, ferocious

bushfires, cyclones, droughts, and floods? Do these environmental disasters prompt new considerations about belonging? Through posing and contemplating these questions, this symposium aims to intervene in the complex discussions of contested belongings in Australia by extending and updating these debates, drawing attention to the multiple and multi-layered ways in which claims and contestations to belong, or not, are represented, negotiated, and entangled in Australia today.

The symposium will be held from **19-21 November 2021**. Fully online, smaller in size and without parallel sessions, its aim will be to promote a thread of discussions and conversations about ideas of (un) belonging. Keynote speeches delivered by the Wirlomin Noongar writer Claire G. Coleman and scholars Christine Nicholls (ANU) and Emily Potter (Deakin University) will be complemented by regular papers and a discussion forum.

We welcome proposals for papers of 15 minutes in length, sent to belonging@phil.muni.cz by **31 August 2021**. Please attach a 250-word abstract and a short bio in one document.

ORGANIZERS:

Martina Horakova, Masaryk University, Czech Republic

Iva Polak, University of Zagreb, Croatia

Geoff Rodoreda, University of Stuttgart, Germany

This event is supported by EASA (European Association for Studies of Australia) and the Czech Science Foundation (GAČR).

*At Yumurrpa, a Warlpiri site in Australia's Tanami Desert, large, delicious yams (yarla; tubers somewhat akin to sweet potatoes), grow in abundance. Harvesting takes place during the hottest time in the Australian summer. Yarla is a staple food, consumed during initiation ceremonies. Not far away is another site, Wapurtarli, where another smaller, slender species of yam (ngarlaji; *Vigna lanceolata*) thrives.

In the Jukurrpa ('Dreaming') two Jakamarra brothers known as the Little Yam Man (owner of 'Wapurtarli' country) and Big Yam Man ('Yumurrpa'), and their respective cohorts began fighting unto death on account of the Yumurrpa brother's superior food resources and his refusal to share. At the penultimate moment, after Yumurrpa had hacked off his brother's leg, they agreed to cease fighting and thereafter to distribute limited resources, thus mandating the principle via a complex rule-bound system, and thus contributing to the developing Warlpiri kinship system.

This artwork portrays the underground yarla tubers being dug up by four women depicted as 'u' shapes, metonymically representing the shape of their buttocks imprinted on the sandy ground.