

minya wunyi gu wonga

Dylan Coleman

Submitted as part of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy

Discipline of English

School of Humanities

The University of Adelaide

South Australia

December 2010

CONTENTS

CONTENTS	II
STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY	IV
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	V
GLOSSARY.....	VII
ABSTRACT	XIII
SECTION 1.....	XV
CHAPTER 1: MINYA WUNYI WONGANYI	1
CHAPTER 2: IF WELFARE GET US, WE FINISHED	7
CHAPTER 3: WHERE I BELONG?	7
CHAPTER 4: SECRET-PRETTY-THINGS	18
CHAPTER 5: LOOKIN' FOR ANSWERS	18
CHAPTER 6: NGOONGI BALA: FATHER CHRISTMAS, JESUS AND GOD	33
CHAPTER 7: GOIN' AWAY.....	33
CHAPTER 8: MUMOO JUMPIN' 'ROUND	59
CHAPTER 9: WALBIYA GU MINGA: WHITEMAN'S SICKNESS	73
CHAPTER 10: HEALIN' JINNA MINGA	73
CHAPTER 11: SOME THINGS STAY THE SAME SOME THINGS CHANGE	92
CHAPTER 12: OLD ROD RIDDLE SOLVED	97
CHAPTER 13: LOOKIN' THROUGH NEW GURU	106
CHAPTER 14: THE SINS OF THE FATHER	114
CHAPTER 15: DOLLY GETS A HAIRCUT	121
CHAPTER 16: GOIN' BACK TO COUNTRY, IN HEAVEN	130
CHAPTER 17: GOOJARB: SERVES YOUR SELF RIGHT.....	139
CHAPTER 18: GROWING CHANGES.....	149
CHAPTER 19: WASH ME AWAY	155
SECTION 2.....	190
INTRODUCTION	195
PART 1: BEYOND BLANKETING: ABORIGINAL POSITIONALITY AND SUBJECTIVITY.....	209
<i>INVITING YOU INTO OUR CIRCLE</i>	209
<i>COLONIAL TEXTUAL POSITIONING</i>	221
<i>LOOKING FOR MEANING</i>	223
<i>UNCOVERING A COLONIAL LINEAGE</i>	228
PART 2: THE CREATIVE PROCESS: WEAVING A NARRATIVE DESIGN	231
<i>UNRAVELING THE BLANKET</i>	232
<i>WEAVING THE BLANKET OF HEALING</i>	233
<i>ABORIGINAL LITERARY INFLUENCES</i>	234
<i>CHALLENGES</i>	236
<i>FINDING A LITERARY PATTERN</i>	237
<i>GLOBAL LITERARY INFLUENCES</i>	241
<i>PRIVILEGING WHITENESS: WHOLENESS AND DISCOMFORT</i>	243
PART 3: NARRATIVE AS HEALING BEYOND TRANS-GENERATIONAL TRAUMA	250
<i>THE OPENING</i>	250
<i>DARNING THE HOLE</i>	252
<i>MOVING INTO SAFE SPACES</i>	253
<i>WEAVING THREADS OF MEANING</i>	254
<i>CULTURAL MEMORY</i>	257
<i>DEATH AS THE REOCCURRING THEME IN OUR LIFE: MY STEP-DAD'S PASSING</i>	258

<i>SEARCHING FOR LOST ANCESTORS</i>	260
<i>NANA PEARL'S PASSING</i>	262
CONCLUSION	264
REFLECTIONS.....	267
WORKS CITED	268

STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

I declare that the following work is my original work.

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any given university or other degree or tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library being available for loan and photocopying.

SignedDated

Dylan Coleman

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and honor the Kurna Ancestors and People on whose country this thesis has been written. I would also like to acknowledge and honor my Kokatha Spiritual Ancestors and thank them for their guidance. Completing this PhD would not have been possible without them, and the life-long guidance and support from my mother, Mercy Glastonbury. This is her story that speaks beyond the blanket. Thank you Mum for sharing your story with me; it has been one of the most challenging and rewarding gifts in my life. Thank you also to the many family members (too numerous to mention but deeply appreciated) who have supported us in our journey.

Thank you to Aaron Williams for your enduring patience and support and for sharing with me your many theoretical ideas, knowledges and experiences from your Aboriginal male positioning. Thank you also for sharing with me your experiences of Narrative practice and for weaving meaning into our daily lives.

Thank you to Wunna Coleman-Goddard for all your supportive words, daily hugs of encouragement, and for your capacity to share this journey with your mum beyond your years. You have filled my life with love, meaning, purpose, and so much more.

To Dr. Sue Hosking, my Primary Supervisor, for the exceptional support she has provided me over the years, I say a heart felt 'thank you'. The sensitivity and understanding you have shown during the many challenging circumstances that confronted Mum and I in the development of this thesis have ensured that I've kept focused on completion until the end.

Also, thank you to my Co-Supervisors, Dr Jan Harrow, Dr Nicolas Jose, and Dr Mandy Treagus.

Thank you, Marg Bowman for your thorough mentor's report that has improved the narrative structure and content of my creative component. Over the years your skillful mentoring advice has assisted me in the development of my writing craft. Thank you to Nena Bierbaum for formatting the final thesis document.

I would like to thank Kaurna Elder, Lynette Crocker, and Patrick Byrt of the Roma Mitchell Community Legal Centre, for their much appreciated support and for sharing the journey of healing towards social justice.

Thank you to Associate Professor Jenny Baker and Professor Annette Braunack-Mayer for your support in the last six months of finalizing my PhD for which I am extremely grateful. Those within the education system that hold strong to supporting Aboriginal students and academics make a difference.

Thank you to my dear friends Susan Cole and Dr Olga Gostin who have been walking with me on this journey from the beginning. Also, to many of my friends, within and outside of the University, who have supported and encouraged me in my study over the years.

GLOSSARY

biggy gnunchu	pig
bilgy	dirty
blanketie	blanket
boi	expression for a word similar to 'show off'
booba	dog
boogardi	shoes
boonie	horse
boonry	boss
boonry boonry	very bossy person
boonu	edible paste made of flour and water
boorar	wild peach
bugadee	filthy dirty
bullocky	cow/bull, or a whiteman who gives things, often alcohol, to an Aboriginal woman
bultha	clothes
bunda	money or stone/rock
bunna	goanna
bunnii	horse
burru	meat
buyu	cigarette
digged	burnt to a crisp
djita	bird
djuda	stomach
djudayulbi	someone who eats too much
djuding	men's heavy hitting stick
djugu	underpants
garnga	crow
gibra	wild turkey
gidja	child

gidjida mooga	children (gidjida = child, mooga = plural, more than one)
goojarb	'serves yourself right'
goola goola	sexual/interested in sex
gooloo	head lice
goomboo	wee
goona	poo
goona mumpun	bum
goona oona	dirty bum
goonangidi	naked/ naked bum
gorn	expression: 'Go on'
gu	to belong to/belonging to
gubarlie	old woman
gubby	water or an alcoholic drink
gubbydja	drunk
gubbynarl	to drink
gudadee	teeth
gudgie	spear
gudie	ghost
gudji	wooden spear
gugga	head
gugga bunda	bald head
gugga urdie	hair on head
gulda	sleepy lizard
gulda marra	crabs
guling	baby
gudurl	hole
guddadu	heart
guru	eyes
guru wada	glasses (eye things)
imbarda	shame
imin	tabu

indie	isn't it so?/yes it is
ingan	play
jinardoo	Nunga person who can perform magic
jibin	stick
jidla	daggy
jilga	prickle
jindu	sun
jindu duthbin	sun going down
jinga	death, die, died
jinjie	backside
jinjie wongera	arse about face (back to front or mixed up)
jinna	feet
jinna nigardi	bare feet
joobedi	silly, stupid or idiot
jooju	song
jooju ingin	playing, song or singing
jookie jookie	chook/chicken
joongu joongu	yams
joonie thuda	pregnant stomach
jubu	side of the hip
jumoo	grandfather
junoo	snake
koka	meat
mai	food
malu	kangaroo
manardu	big
mimie	breast
minga	sick/sickness
minya	small
minyardu	cold
moodigee	car

mooga	plural, more than one
moogada	angry
moolya	nose
moona	hat
mudgie	boyfriend or girlfriend
muggah	no
mulya	nose
mulya bilgy	dirty nose
mumatha	father
mumoo	bad spirit
munda	ground
munyadi	throat
murdi	back
muroo	black
murra	hand
murra bidi	finger nail
nigardi	naked
ngindi	know
ngaarni	sheep
ngoongi	lie
ngoongi bula	telling a lie
ngoongi wadinyi	telling lie
ngoonyin	sweet edible berries
ngudgie	covetous, envious
nguggil	armpit odour
ngulu	scared
ngulya	forehead
nimi	lips
numu mai	mussels
Nunga	Aboriginal person
Nunga mooga	Aboriginal people

oorlah	boy
rabbity	rabbit
Tjidpa	name given to Superintendent
tjilbi	old man
tharldu bula	expression for, 'true that' (this is the truth)
ungoo	sleep
wada	thing
wada mooga	things
wadu	wombat
wah	face
walaba	white (woman)
walaba goona muru	white woman with a black ass
walbiya	white (man)
walbiya gu gidjada mooga	white man's children
walbiya gu minga	whiteman sickness
walbiya mooga	white people
walga	wild tomato
weena	woman
weena mooga	women
weetha	mother
wonga	talk
wonganyi	speaking
wongan	to talk
womoo	fluffy white edible substance found on malee tree leaves
wultja	eagle or policeman
wunna	ocean
wunna mai	sea food
wunyi	girl
wuthoo	makeshift shelter
wurly wurly	whirl wind
yudda	mouth

yudoo	good
yumbra	blowfly
yuree	ears
yuree bina	no ears/not listening
yureeminga	earache

In the 1990s a white woman linguist travelled to our country and interviewed my grandmother and her sister, both fluent Kokatha-speaking women. My grandmothers believed that she was recording their Kokatha language to create a Kokatha dictionary.

That linguist went away and took my grandmothers' information, appropriated it, and called it 'Wirangu' language. A so-called 'Wirangu' dictionary was produced by this linguist. Further language research projects have come out of the University of Adelaide that have built on this cultural piracy of our Kokatha language and have contributed to the perpetuation of this Indigenous Intellectual Property theft.

My Grandmother went to her grave with the belief that our Kokatha language was stolen.

This document speaks back to the injustice that has been and continues to be played out at the hands of white academics. It says we are Kokatha people, this is our language, this is our culture, that has been passed on for many generations of Kokatha ancestors and no whitefella academic can take that away from us.

ABSTRACT

This thesis consists of two works: a fictionalized biography and an exegesis. The creative work, *minya wunyi gu wonga*, is set in the 1940s and early 1950s and is based on the early years of my mother, Mercy Coleman, who grew up on Koonibba Aboriginal Lutheran Mission on the far west coast of South Australia. The narrative is told in Aboriginal English from the point of view of young Grace. Its central themes are identity and survival.

Grace is born to a Kokatha Aboriginal woman, Ada, and an already married Anglo-Celtic father, Old Rod. Old Rod's relationship to Grace and her sisters is shrouded in secrecy due to the shame of their illegitimacy. The era in which Grace grows up is one of strict government policies regulating the lives of Aboriginal people: the Aborigines Protection Act and, later, the Assimilation Policy. The lives of Grace, her siblings and her mother are also constrained by the mainstream conservative social mores of a remote rural community in the mid-twentieth century.

The narrative moves through a maze of questions, discoveries and betrayals that fuel self-loathing and shame. Grace eventually unravels the truth about Old Rod and discovers the complexity of her identity. The theme of survival is a strong and consistent thread throughout the narrative.

The exegesis documents and explores the development of *minya wunyi gu wonga* from the perspective of an Aboriginal daughter working with her Aboriginal mother to tell the mother's story. In keeping with Aboriginal traditions, the exegesis incorporates a running dialogue between daughter and mother, with reflective sequences that explore Indigenous/Black and other related texts. It also explores critical theory and its implications for their lives and the text being created.

Several connected questions are addressed in the exegesis. Can we as Aboriginal people heal from trans-generational trauma by participating in the

process of creating a literary narrative? What approaches/strategies/frameworks can be applied to research to best reach this outcome? To what extent is 're-authoring' or 're-visioning' our stories liberating and what are the implications for this process for the broader community?