

“Wekwek en Wokwok Mijimit Bla Faindim Dismob Stori Blanga Yurapanji”

“Working and Walking Together to Find These Stories About Urapunga”

By Lillian Tait (B Development Studies with 1st Class Honours) in
collaboration with Ngalakgan Country, Margaret Duncan and Rhonda
Duncan



Picture L-R: Lillian, Hannah's granddaughter, Margaret and Hannah at the old Roper Bar Police Station.
Photo: Rhonda 10 May 2019

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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Deborah Bird Rose.

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Abstract

Nestled between the Roper and Wilton Rivers of Ngalakgan Country in the Northern Territory of Australia lies Urapunga, a small and lively Aboriginal community predominately comprised of the Duncan family group. Tales of how the Duncans have lived on their land and re-gained ownership over it are celebrated locally. These stories are regionally unique and rich with emotion, multi-dimensional characters and embodied environments. Responding to calls within the community to record these stories, Lillian Tait and Ngalakgan and Ritharrngu Elders Margaret and Rhonda Duncan co-designed a collaborative and decolonising research project. It involved talking stories, sharing on Country, participatory creative methods, archival research and co-analysis. The stories that emerged will be the heart of a bi-lingual book to be co-authored post-thesis. This thesis documents and reflects on the process of doing this storying research together as part of a cross-cultural collaboration. By mobilising a recuperative storytelling agenda as advocated by Rose (2004) and Margaret, it engages with the way stories build connections between those living, and connect those living with ancestors, future generations and Country, in relationships of belonging, responsibility and care. The thesis demonstrates how nurturing diverse academic/non-academic and more-than human collaborations within research can challenge some of the deep-colonising legacies of academia.

Author Statement

Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself. All research reported in this thesis received approval by Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee on 15/04/2019 reference no: 5201949798248, with amendments approved on 22 July 2019. MQ HREC Ref no: 5201949799701

(Signed)_____

Date: 10/10/2019

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Glossary

Blekbala	–	Aboriginal Person
Bobala	–	Poor thing; expression of empathy
Bunggul	–	Non-sacred ceremony
Dubala	–	Them two / they/ married couple
Dumbudumbu	–	Sandalwood <i>Santalum lanceolatum</i> (bush medicine)
Gulbarn	–	<i>Melaleuca citrolens</i> (bush medicine)
Mandalurra	–	White gum tree (bark is used for dye)
Mununga	–	European person / non-Aboriginal person
Olagija	–	Altogether

(Source: AuSIL 2010)