



These notes may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale.

Storyland by Catherine McKinnon

Readers' Notes by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

ISBN: 978 1 4607 5232 6 RRP 27.99

EBook 9781460707166

An ambitious, remarkable and moving novel about who we are: our past, present and future, and our connection to this land.

In 1796, a young cabin boy, Will Martin, goes on a voyage of discovery in the Tom Thumb with Matthew Flinders and Mr Bass: two men and a boy in a tiny boat on an exploratory journey south from Sydney Cove to the Illawarra, full of hope and dreams, daring and fearfulness.

Set on the banks of Lake Illawarra and spanning four centuries, Storyland is a unique and compelling novel of people and place - which tells in essence the story of Australia. Told in an unfurling narrative of interlinking stories, in a style reminiscent of David Mitchell's Cloud Atlas, McKinnon weaves together the stories of Will Martin together with the stories of four others: a desperate ex-convict, Hawker, who commits an act of terrible brutality; Lola, who in 1900 runs a dairy farm on the Illawarra with her brother and sister, when they come under suspicion for a crime they did not commit; Bel, a young girl who goes on a rafting adventure with her friends in 1998 and is unexpectedly caught up in violent events; and in 2033, Nada, who sees her world start to crumble apart. Intriguingly, all these characters are all connected - not only through the same land and water they inhabit over the decades, but also by tendrils of blood, history, memory and property...

Compelling, thrilling and ambitious, Storyland is our story, the story of Australia. 'The land is a book waiting to be read' as one of the characters says - and this novel tells us an unforgettable and unputdownable story of our history, our present and our future.

'A beautifully woven story ... a devastating retelling of man's effect on the land and the native people, and offers a chilling insight into what may come to pass with climate change. Storyland is reminiscent of Patrick White's A Fringe of Leaves, Kate Grenville's The Secret River and The Lieutenant ... and even, dare I say, a bit of Tim Winton's Cloudstreet.' Books+Publishing

'Impressive ... a haunted and haunting power' The Australian

Contents:

- Introduction
- Plot Summaries
- Before Reading
- While Reading
- After Reading
- Style and Structure
- Themes
- Responding
- Comprehension and Debating Questions
- Suggested Tasks for Assessment
- About the Author
- List of References

Introduction

'Before, not knowing the world's bigness meant that tomorrow looked like yesterday.

Yet knowing makes it harder to spy ahead, as now I see tomorrows as unmade and know it will be always so.' (p 33)

'The land is a book, waiting to be read,' (p 38).

Five alternate narrators in nine parts tell these interconnected stories which range over recent and future centuries in Australian history from 1796 to 2717, and are each set in the Illawarra region of NSW. Will, a cabin boy, Hawker, a desperate ex-convict, Lola, a self-reliant woman managing a dairy farm with her half-siblings, Bel, a young and very inquisitive girl on a series of rafting adventures with two boys, and Nada, a woman whose memories hold the key to a climate catastrophe – each are connected by the land and water they inhabit, as well as by those who have come before and will come after them – by 'tendrils of blood'.

Storyland is a multifaceted title. It refers to Australian history as a source of stories; it obliquely references European fairyland and the place from which some made-up stories originate; it most obviously refers to Aboriginal culture and the stories of the Dreaming which are underpinned by the deeply embedded message 'listen to the land'.

The 'Storyland' project is how Nada's story comes to be recorded in this novel, but this title also refers to all five protagonists' stories. McKinnon's work traverses a range of genres in an innovative work of fiction which is a gripping account of Australian culture and history – via the rich and potent vein of these imagined personal histories.

Plot Summaries

The following summaries are provided as a background to the themes below.

Will Martin 1796

'This is what it is to be a man.

A man must fight.

A man must defend his own life and that of others.' (p 45)

Fifteen-year old cabin boy, Will Martin, begins the narrative, voyaging with Matthew Flinders and Mr Bass aboard the *Reliance* and being taken on an exploration aboard the small craft *Tom Thumb* to locate the head of a river located by one Henry Hacking. Servant to Bass, Will closely observes his superiors' foibles and is very aware of their motto: 'To dare is to do!' He wishes his friend, Na, had been allowed to join them, but Bass and Flinders had feared that that would have delayed their departure, given the need to seek the Governor's permission (p 28). (In retrospect, this was a foolish decision as Na may have acted as translator with the Aboriginal people.) This story reveals the miscommunication between white and black in 'first contact'. The two Aboriginals, Dilba and a friend, offer friendship, but all three visitors are suspicious of them. It shows that early explorers were often blind to the reality of the land they traversed.

Hawker 1822

'Out here a mind like flint and a gristly intent is needed to see a man through.' (p 50)

Hawker is working out his time as a convict on a property under overseer Vince Byrne who in turn answers to a Captain Brooks. (Vince and Jed Byrne are half-brothers to Will Martin who brought his mother back to Australia along with other members of their family, after his voyage with Bass and Flinders, and that they were born here to her third husband.) Hawker wants to be re-assigned to a property called Appin, so needs to remain on Vince's good side. In these desperate circumstances Hawker gleans comfort only from the sly grog Vince brings back when he travels away, and also from his lust for one of the native women. But relations here with Indigenous people, despite regular trading and bartering, have been uneasy, and neither side really understands the other. As in the earlier story, there is an arrogant white assumption that Aboriginal people are inferior, and that can only lead to further fracturing of their relationships.

Lola 1900

'Dark Dragon Ridge, Tommy Chi called it. In the starlight I see the dragon shape. The name Wollongong, I've heard it said, means hard ground near the water, or five clouds, or the sound of the sea. One group names the town for the land that is strong and solid behind it, the other names it for the water that lies before it or above it. As if one looks at how boundaries are defined, and the other at how they are blurred.' (p 95)

Lola McBride runs a diary farm with half-sister Mary and half-brother Abe, each of whom have had their fair share of tragedy. Their young friend Jewell Dempster is forbidden by her father Dan from visiting them because Lola is a 'bastard', the others quadroons, and Abe and Jewell have formed an inappropriate friendship. Tommy Chi collects their milk and is one of their few friends. The Farrells, who are neighbours, have five sons, and the eldest Connor seems to be interested in Lola. When Jewell goes missing her dad blames Abe who protests his innocence, but confesses to his sisters and Auntie that they were going to run away to the city before she disappeared. Auntie suggests that Aboriginal tracker Toorung may be able to locate Jewell. Dempster and Farrell arrive and Dempster assaults Abe. This story demonstrates that although Aboriginal land has been further eroded by white settlement, Aboriginal people still 'sense' more of what is really around them.

Bel 1998

'Bel, you have to learn when to ask questions and when not to ask,' Kristie says. It's like you've got no social radar or maybe too much social radar, and it can be funny but it can also be fucking annoying.' (pp 167–8)

Bel, daughter of academics Jonathan and Aiko, encounters two boys Isha and Tarak with their dog Zeus, and joins them on a series of rafting adventures on swollen Mullet Creek and Swamp Park. Bel's neighbours include Uncle Ray and Maxine, Nada and Sara Haddad and their parents, and Lisa and Richard who have recently sold their 'bargain swish house' to Isha and Tarek's dad, Ganesh. This multicultural street is near Mullet Creek which is polluted with toxic black sludge, obviously a legacy of the coal smelter and factory mentioned in Lola's story. The three kids discover the same rock ledge shaped like a fish, mentioned in the earlier stories, and also encounter Kristie, a troubled girl of Aboriginal heritage whom we learn is the great-great granddaughter of Mary McBride, a character in Lola's story. Kristie is employed by her brutal partner Ned to authenticate valuable Aboriginal paintings, and there is obviously corruption in the art world peopled by his associates. This story is set in suburbia, albeit in the same area explored in the earlier stories, and represents another progression in white appropriation of Aboriginal land and culture.

Nada 2033 & 2717

'All this seems unfathomable. This is not our life. Not our country.

This kind of thing happens in other places, in less civilised places, but not here.' (p 203)

Nada is being interviewed for the 'Storyland' project and a 'membank' is being taken of her recollections of the terrible cyclone, Frank, and events which followed. She recalls being isolated with her niece Esther and ailing partner Ben and how they and only four neighbours survived. The fig tree over their house on the Hill of Peace is the one mentioned in earlier stories. *'A thousand years old! That's a long time. Perhaps – perhaps this place has always been safe.'* (p 180) The coal mine mentioned earlier has closed and the creek has long since become a river. Nada and Esther trek to the medical centre for marsoral to treat Ben's potentially deadly disease, Mars, and discover that Port Kembla has gone! At the centre they enter a tense situation with people queuing for food and medical supplies, closely watched by roaming and heavily armed soldiers. Then a group of kids arrive and open fire with rifles. (Kristie and 'Ed' are amongst the crowd of people who are shot.) They return to their home and then hide in caves (those visited by Kristie in Bel's story.) Their neighbours seems to have left, but Steve returns and tells them the eagle story: *'When I was young my very old Auntie told me that the white-bellied eagle knew about the meeting of water and land./ She said, you must learn from them boy... When I saw this bird come flying in, I realised I still hadn't learnt the lesson she'd wanted me to learn. I needed to come back, if only to do that.'* (p 224) The eagle is symbolic throughout these stories of real communion with the land.

Bel 1998

'I am different but I don't know how to tell about it, and I don't know how to tell about Kristie. Too much has happened. Kristie is gone and I don't know if she will ever come back.' (p 263)

A terrible hailstorm unearths an Aboriginal skeleton which is said to be that of a Kuradji man; Uncle Ray is employed to authenticate the remains, and Bel wants to tell him about the stone axe which Kristie has hidden in the cave. Further dangers lurk in every corner – their young neighbour Nada has been hit by a car (Nada of the previous story); they visit Kristie and prevent Ned from killing her. Kristie rings her dad to come and get her, and tells the kids that she'll be back once she's sorted herself out. Bel sees the dragonfly transforming that she's waited all year for; Kristie leaves and they all feel a 'shift' in their lives. The story ends on a note of hope, but also open-endedly.

Lola 1900

'The way I see it, there's been a lot of bad weather lately and the fruit is not tasting too good.' (p 284)

Mr Farrell stops the fight between Dan and Abe. Lola, Toorong and Yardah go to a tree cave to find Jewell, whose dead body is eventually discovered by the creek. Dempster still believes Abe is responsible, and a lynch party arrives at their farm where Abe is beaten brutally by Dan. But no one is really sure who the culprit is. Was it the Farrell brothers or one of the people seen loitering near the creek? Lola and Mary are determined not to let local prejudice defeat them as landholders. As they travel to assist Abe in hospital, they 'feel' spirits in the forest, and the story ends enigmatically suggesting that these three have some connection to this place, and may survive the harsh conditions.

Hawker 1822

'What kind of justice transports a man from his land? What kind of justice treats a man like a dog? What kind of justice treats a man worse than a dog?' (p 297)

The Aboriginal women have gone and Hawker sinks into depression about his lot as a convict, and recalls the circumstances of his conviction and of his grudge against his brother. This re-ignites his despairing anger, and he contemplates killing himself and his comrades. But then he spots 'Blacks' in the corn and turns his gun on them, instead. The death of the woman he had desired is horrendously violent. Vince swears to become his blood brother, as Jed, Vince's real brother, rejects both of them. Hawker and Byrne have entered a pact with the devil and their denial of Aboriginal humanity will leave them forever isolated and bereft in this foreboding terrain.

Will Martin 1796

'And what shall I say? What will be the story of how we have met this land?' (p 358)

Dilba continues to be friendly and brings other members of his people to share the novelty of being shaved, as he had been, by Flinders. He seems desperate for them to see the lagoon, but they take fright at this suggestion, suspecting a trap, and set sail. When five Aboriginal people follow them, they take up their muskets and fire. The rest of the journey is uneventful, but Will unsettles his superiors when he suggests that perhaps Dilba was trying to show them the source of a river. They return home and the officers visit the governor but send Will off to 'meet his friends'. His Aboriginal friend Na is no longer around, which strikes another ominous note, after the encounters which have taken place earlier. Will is alone and pondering his

uncertain future as the story ends, leaving the final impression of a white person thoroughly alone in a foreign landscape.

Before Reading

- What do you know about any of the historical incidents to be covered in this novel?
- What do you know of Catherine McKinnon's other work?
- What do you know of the Illawarra region in NSW which is the setting for all five narratives?

While Reading

- Take note of major themes or issues to discuss later.
- Make a character chart listing the major and minor characters.
- Trace a 'character arc' for one of the characters, noting changes in their personalities, eg. Will Martin.

After Reading

- Choose a major theme and analyse how it is presented in this novel, choosing passages which relate to it. [See also **Themes** and **Suggested Tasks for Assessment** below.]
- Which character would you like to have seen more of and why?
- What other title or cover might this book have had? Design your own cover.

Style and Structure

Discussion Point: These stories are told in **alternate voices**, in different years, but each connects exactly with the previous one by finishing a sentence left open at the previous story's end. This technique cements the impression that stories connect us, and that the land is the place where stories originate. Discuss the voices in which these stories are written and how they connect.

Discussion Point: Each of four narratives (Will, Hawker, Lola and Bel) are told from a subjective and **personal, thus limited point of view**, in **first person, present tense**, except for Nada's in the middle story, which is written as an interview between an unknown person and Nada, the protagonist. This form of narration gives an immediacy to the narrative, with the interruption in the middle, where Nada is being forced to tell the story under hypnosis. How does the first person narration differ from Nada's?

Discussion Point: First person accounts might be viewed as inevitably '**unreliable narrators**' who force events into the shape of their own personality and background. Are all storytellers unreliable narrators? How might Dilba or Jed Byrne or Mary or Tarek or Esther have described any incident in these narratives?

Discussion Point: **Faction** is an account of real historical events, overlaid with a fictional interpretation of those events in which some characters and events may be imagined. In these five stories the setting and how it has changed since white settlement provides one real framework; the arrival of early invaders and explorers, the settlement of the land and the gradual urbanisation of Australia are true as well; Will Martin was a real character; both Hawker and Lola may be based on historical figures or events, too. What is your opinion of faction? Does it illuminate history for you?

Discussion Point: **Lyrical writing** abounds in this text which is rich with literary devices and allusions such as: '*our names will be shiny buttons on English coats.*' (p 2) OR: '*I think now that no other tale had this shiver or this shine.*' (p 14) Choose other examples of and discuss the use of such evocative language in this work.

Discussion Point: **Recurring motifs** link these stories symbolically, eg. the fig tree, the creek, the mountain, the eagle, pelicans, the stone axe. Discuss other recurring motifs which you or your students have noticed.

Discussion Point: Discuss the varieties of **genre** traversed in these accounts, each of which include aspects of Diaries and Memoir; and some more prominently of Historical Fiction and Faction (Will, Hawker and Lola); Rite of Passage (Bel); Dystopian Fiction (Nada).

These notes may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale.

Discussion Point: Each story is left **open-ended** and such gaps in the narrative are typical of history as well. Although four of these stories have a 'sequel', they too leave questions unanswered. What might have happened to each of the protagonists? What hints are left in the other stories? Read them carefully. For example, Kristie from Bel's story appears fleetingly in Nada's story with a partner called 'Ed'.

Themes

Indigenous/Non-Indigenous Relations

'Lambskin had his woman picked, I had mine, but when we went to the native camp to collect what was rightfully ours, the men stood and raised their spears.' (p 58)

Discussion Point: Each story details a different historical juncture in Australia's history of Indigenous/Non-Indigenous Relations: Will: First contact; Hawker; convict settlement; Lola: land development; Bel: suburban living; Nada: future. Discuss each of these eras in terms of the development of Indigenous rights in this country.

Discussion Point: In Will's account, the miscommunications continue throughout the journey, culminating in Dilba being friendly and trying to show them the lagoon, and them firing at a group of natives to scare them back to land. Will ponders this later and wonders if Dilba was planning to show them a river. The casual way they shoot at natives is chilling evidence of their disdain.

Discussion Point: In Hawker's account, there are hints that Aboriginal women are preyed upon by white men and the story concludes with a shocking example of their barbarous treatment of them.

Discussion Point: In Lola's account, her half-siblings have Aboriginal blood as has their aunty. This is looked down upon by Dan Dempster indicating that race relations are still problematic in this turn of the century era.

Discussion Point: In Bel's account, Uncle Ray is called upon to authenticate a burial site which has been unearthed, and Kristie is being used by Ned to authenticate Aboriginal artwork. One role suggests a growing respect for Aboriginal culture; the other suggests that some pretend respect when it suits their commercial imperatives.

Discussion Point: In Nada's account, there is an Aboriginal character named Steve, and the discovery of the stone axe hidden by Kristie, all those years ago. The stone axe has immense importance in this narrative. It is symbolic of the importance of this ancient culture and the sacred things respected in it.

These notes may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale.

Indigenous Connection to the Land

'We're part of their story, not the other way round.' (p 243)

Discussion Point: This novel is firmly located in the Illawarra district of Mount Kembla near Wollongong. [See maps at the end of the novel.] It is derived from an Aboriginal word, *kembla*, which means 'plenty of game'. See the 'Early Contact Map' and history of local people here:

'A History of the Aboriginal People of the Illawarra' *NSW Department of Heritage and Protection*

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/nswcultureheritage/IllawarraAboriginalHistory.htm>

In this history it is stated that: 'The Wodi Wodi are the Aboriginal custodians of the Illawarra who spoke a variant of the Dharawal language.' (p 5) This history also describes how as the land was cleared, Aboriginal people were gradually located in camps, sources of traditional foods were depleted, many were taken into care as 'stolen children', and as a result of many factors, their numbers dwindled. Discuss what you learn about local beliefs and connection to this land.

Discussion Point: 'The land is a book, waiting to be read,' Mr Bass says,' (p 38). How well do these white settlers actually read the land?

Colonial Society

'Yes,' I say, remembering I must agree with him always if I am to stay on the right side of his ledger.' (p 39)

Discussion Point: Colonial society is depicted in the first two stories as a brutal and divided one. It is a time of exploration which depends on either taking heed of the knowledge of first inhabitants or obliterating them. Bass and Flinders are imperialists in attitude. They are collecting information to take back to the Governor; they name sites after their colleagues; they expect subservience from Will even when they are living in a small boat without water or enough food. What does this voyage suggest about colonial society?

Discussion Point: The NSW Rums Corps were responsible for corruption in this early convict society and alcohol fuels the lives of desperate men like Hawker. How lawless was colonial society?

Activity: When Will returns from his momentous journey he is sent away from the Governor's residence by Bass and Flinders who are planning an evening of regaling the Governor with tales of their exploits. The lowly cabin boy is left alone with only his memory as comfort: *'Now I am a man, and a man is his story told. I say this out loud, but only the nightjar answers.'* (p 362) This sort of treatment is evident throughout the journey in Bass's dismissive treatment of Will. They rely on his youthful ingenuity but dismiss him without a thought once the journey is done.

Climate Change & Environmental Pollution and Destruction

'But what makes a home? Not wood, not bricks; safety, surely. The year that has just past, all the news reports protests, referendums, were about national security, or about individual safety, but as if the threat was elsewhere. Yet the biggest danger came from another direction altogether. *It came from our home itself, only we didn't know what our home was. We thought it was bricks and mortar, but a home is more than that, it is land and sea and sky.'* (p 232)

Discussion Point: Running through each of these stories, like a musical riff, are repeated descriptions of environmental damage caused by human habitation of the land. This culminates in the cyclonic incident which leaves people fighting for food and water and which destroys large tracts of Australia. The implication is that Nada has escaped a catastrophic event, and she and her interviewer are on board a floating island or ship as she or her memory are being interviewed for details.

Discussion Point: Each story shows how disconnected from the land these settlers are. In **Will's account**, they are searching for viable water, despite the fact that Indigenous people clearly know where it is; In **Hawker's account**, they are struggling to grow introduced species and breed introduced animals; the corn is being stolen by Native people, an indication that they are losing their sources of food, as a result of white habitation; In **Lola's account**, they struggle to manage a dairy farm despite their hard work, and are held victims by the weather's vagaries; In **Bel's account**, the creek is polluted and a violent storm presages the future; In **Nada's account**, a catastrophic cyclone has occurred and there is an implication that it was caused by what has gone before.

Discussion Point: The colliery and mine built in the area is mentioned throughout this novel. In 1902, it was the site of the Mount Kembla Mine disaster, which is said to be the worst post-settlement peacetime disaster in Australia until the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires. What does the novel suggest about the mine's influence on the area?

Evil/ Nature or Nurture

'Every man must leave his mark and destiny has claimed this as mine.' (pp 299–300)

These notes may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale.

Discussion Point: The novel is full of violence and evil behaviour – from casual shooting and torture of Native people by Bass and Flinders, and Hawker, to Ned's drug-fuelled attacks on Kristie and the vigilante behaviour of the hungry mobs encountered by Lola, Mary and Abe, and by Nada and Esther. Is evil innate or do good people sometimes turn bad?

Discussion Point: Hawker's actions seem to stem from frustration and anger, but are so extreme that one wonders how anyone could exonerate him. And yet his friend Vince goes along with him. Why?

Discussion Point: Sometimes love makes people commit terrible acts. Dan Dempster's rage over his daughter Jewell's death leads him to brutally beat Abe. What other acts of violence are committed in this text in the name of love?

Values

Activity: Choose a value evinced in a particular incident in this novel, and discuss it in relation to the novel's themes.

Activity: Choose a character and list the values evinced by their behaviour, eg. Kristie.

Activity: Some of the characters find themselves acting against the values they have been taught due to the extreme circumstances they find themselves in. How easy is to remain true to your values?

Responding

Read and discuss the following quotes and record the theme related to it:

Quote	Theme
'Remember this far south no man has stepped ashore,' says Mr Bass. 'Save roaming cannibals and one or two pirates who do not warrant merit as they have made no map.' (p 17)	
'Here in the new world it is like we are all just learning our letters.' (p 21)	
'Night, with the fire, with grog; this land is not a gaol then.' (p 56)	
'Take away a poor man's belief in this own potency and there are consequences.' (p 63)	
'It must be strange in their house, question after question and no answers. It would probably get extremely complicated.' (p 124)	
'Sometimes a stranger comes into your life and then they are gone and you miss them.' (p 147)	
'I'm overawed by the power of water. Its ability to change all that we are.' (p 206)	
'And then I realise what I'm doing. I've broken into my neighbour's house and I'm planning to loot all their food supplies. How quickly things change. And yet, it feels justified.' (p 217)	
'Hunger changes everyone and everything.' (p 224)	
'You can't control the weather.' (p 235)	
'Things can be forgotten, I'll give you that. They once had great waterways in Rome. Systems for getting water to houses when there was no well. No river nearby. Aqueducts they were called. But the knowledge of how to build them got lost.' (pp 283-4)	
'This is the shock of the Indians,' he whispers, 'Savage one moment, child the next.' (p 323)	
'Perhaps the void between us is too great, even for an artist such as Hogarth.' (p 325)	
'But evil exists in the civilised as well as in the savage. We English do not control it, but we do disguise it.' (p 341)	
'You have missed the point of the story,' she said. 'I have been to many faraway places, the future as well as the past.'	
'But here am I, and I have been to places beyond imagining.' (p 355)	

These notes may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale.

Comprehension and Debating Questions

- How is climate change reflected in this novel?
- Why did early settlers ignore the lessons they might have learned from Aboriginal people about managing this land?
- Which of the characters in these stories have family ties with someone in another story?
- Based on the evidence in these stories, what might have happened to any of the characters in these stories? (Will Martin was a real person but little is known of his later life.)
- Looting of other people's property is justified when you have no food, water or other essential supplies. True or false?
- Which of the characters did you find most admirable and why?

Suggested Tasks for Assessment

- Invite students to invent another character, in another year, and to write a story in another voice, which explores some of the issues outlined in this one.
- Share the picture book *My Place* (Walker Classic, 2008, 1988) by Nadia Wheatley and Donna Rawlins with your students. The style and structure of the work has some similarities to this novel. Each ten years a different character tells of her/his local area and how it has changed. A tree and a river are symbolic of the land's continuity. The voices are multicultural; and Indigenous culture begins and ends the narrative.

- Write a letter as if written by Will Martin to his mother at home.
- Sketch a picture of Bass Flinders and Will Martin aboard the *Tom Thumb*.
- Create a poster advertising the opening of the Mount Kembla Colliery owned by the Mount Kembla Coal & Oil Co. in 1883. 'Mount Kembla Colliery' *Illawarra Coal* <http://www.illawarracoal.com/mtkembla.htm>
- Choose a theme raised in this novel and research it. Then write a considered essay outlining both sides of an argument about this topic.
- Invite your students to explore references to Illawarra history in TROVE, the NLA's digitised access to newspapers. [A few TROVE references are included in the **Bibliography** below to get you started.]

About the Author

Catherine McKinnon lives in rural New South Wales and is a novelist and playwright. Most recently she was a co-winner of the Griffith Review Novella III Award, 2015. She grew up in South Australia, and, after studying at Flinders University, worked at the Red Shed Theatre, State Theatre Company, and Adelaide Festival as a theatre director and/or writer. Her plays produced for the Red Shed Theatre are *Immaculate Deceptions*, *A Rose By Any Other Name*, *Road to Mindanao* and *Eye of Another*. In 2006 she won the Penguin Women's Weekly Award for her short story *Haley and the Sea*. Her play *Tilt* was selected for the 2010 National Playwriting Festival, and *As I Lay Dreaming* won the 2010 Mitch Matthews Award. Her short stories, reviews and articles have appeared in *Transnational Literature*, *Text Journal*, *RealTime* and *Narrative*. She teaches performance and creative writing at the University of Wollongong. See also:

Evans, Kate 'Catherine McKinnon's novel Storyland' *ABC Radio National* Sunday 26 March 2017
 <<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/booksplus/catherine-mckinnon-novel-storyland/8384062>>

McKinnon, Catherine 'Is a true story always true? And approach to fictionalizing Matthew Flinders' Narrative of Tom Thumb's Cruise to Canoe Rivulet' *Ethical Imaginations: Refereed Conference Papers of the 16th Annual AAWP Conference*. Australia: AAWP, 2012, pp 1–10.
 <<http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1275&context=creartspapers>>

Morris, Linda 'Catherine McKinnon's Storyland: A Work Transcending Time' *Sydney Morning Herald* March 17, 2017 <<http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/books/the-stories-of-us-by-catherine-mckinnon-review-20170223-guk5t8.html>>

These notes may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale.

List of References

Historical Picture Books

- Giannone, Rosa *What's Your Story?* Ill. by Bern Emmerichs. Scholastic, 2016.
- Greenwood, Mark *Jandamarra*. Ill. by Terry Denton. Allen & Unwin, 2013.
- Greenwood, Mark *Boomerang and Bat* Ill. by Terry Denton. Allen & Unwin, 2016.
- King, John Anthony *An Uncommonly Fine Day, January 26, 1788* Collins, 1987.
- Marsden, John *The Rabbits* Ill. by Shaun Tan. Lothian, 1998.
- Wheatley, Nadia *My Place* Ill. by Donna Rawlins. Walker Classics 2008, 1988.

YA Historical Fiction

- Brian, Janeen *That Boy, Jack* Walker Books, 2013.
- Constable, Kate *Crow Country* Allen & Unwin, 2011.
- Crew, Gary *Strange Objects*. Hachette, 2003, 1990.
- Disher, Garry *The Divine Wind* Hodder, 1998.
- French, Jackie *Nanberry: Black Brother White* HarperCollins, 2011.
- French, Jackie *Tom Appleby, Convict Boy* HarperCollins, 2004.
- French, Jackie *Birrung the Secret Friend* HarperCollins, 2015
- French, Jackie *A Waltz for Matilda* HarperCollins (and sequels).
- Gleitzman, Morris *Loyal Creatures* Penguin, 2014.
- Hathorn, Libby *Eventual Poppy Day* HarperCollins, 2014.
- Metzenthien, David *Boys of Blood and Bone* Penguin, 2003.
- Murray, Kirsty *Market Blues* Allen & Unwin, 2001.
- Park, Ruth *Playing Beatie Bow* Penguin Australia Children's Classics, 2013, 1980.
- Rushby, Pamela *The Ratcatcher's Daughter* HarperCollins, 2014.

My Australian Story (Series) Scholastic.

Our Australian Girl (Series) Penguin.

Adult Historical Fiction

Flanagan, Richard *Wanting* Random House Australia, 2015, 2008.

Flanagan, Richard *Gould's Book of Fish* Vintage Books Australia, 2012, 2001.

Flanagan, Richard *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* Vintage 2012, 1997.

Grenville, Kate *The Secret River* Text, 2005.

Grenville, Kate *Sarah Thornhill* Text, 2011.

Grenville, Kate *The Lieutenant* Text, 2010.

Johnston, George *My Brother Jack* A&R Australian Classics, 2013, 1964.

Park, Ruth *The Harp in the South Novels* Penguin Modern Classics, 2009.

Scott, Kim *That Deadman Dance* Pan Macmillan, 2010.

Non-Fiction

Collins, David *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales* University of Sydney Digitised Text <<http://setis.library.usyd.edu.au/ozlit/pdf/colacc2.pdf>>

Clendinnen, Inga *Dancing with Strangers*, Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2003.

Two Classic tales of Australian Exploration: '1788' by Watkin Tench and 'Life and Adventures' by John Nicol. Edited and introduced by Tim Flannery. Text, 2000.

Wheatley, Nadia *Australians All: A History of Growing Up from the Ice Age to the Apology* III. by Ken Searle. Allen & Unwin, 2013.

About Historical Fiction

Crew, Gary 'Fiction, Nonfiction and the Limits of Faction' *Magpies*, Vol 19, Issue 2, May 2004, pp 8–10.

Disher, Garry & Caswell, Brian 'Looting the Past & Predicting the Future' in *Time Will Tell: Children's Literature into the 21st century: Proceedings from the Fourth National Conference of the Children's Book Council of Australia Adelaide, 1998*, edited by Sieta van der Hoeven. CBCA, 1998, pp 81–5.

Herbert, Beth 'When English Meets History Exploring the Faction Genre Through Action Learning' *Literacy Learning: the middle years* Vol 20, Number 3, October 12

These notes may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale.

<<https://www.alea.edu.au/documents/item/554>>

Rushby, Pamela 'Fact, Fiction or Faction' *Writing Queensland* October 15, 2015
<<http://www.writingqueensland.com.au/fact-fiction-or-faction/>>

Wheatley, Nadia 'History Alive' *Magpies* Vol 16, Issue 4, September 2001, pp 8–11.

Websites

University of Wollongong Research Online <<http://ro.uow.edu.au/>> contains an immense repository of digitised resources relating to Illawarra History. Some of these resources are referenced in the list below and a subject search will unearth many more.

'A History of the Aboriginal People of the Illawarra' *NSW Department of Heritage and Protection*
<<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/nswcultureheritage/IllawarraAboriginalHistory.htm>>

Alanson, A.G. 'Lake Illawarra Aborigines' *The Sydney Mail and NSW Advertiser* Saturday 23 September 1899, p 743.
<<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/163701581?searchTerm=aboriginal%20people%20illawarra&searchLimits=>>

Aussie Booklists: Australian History for Young Readers
<<http://www.mylittlebookcase.com.au/books/aussie-book-lists-australian-history-for-young-readers/>>

Bowden, Keith Macrae 'Bass, George (1771–1803)' *Australian Dictionary of Biography* Volume 1, (MUP), 1966
<<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bass-george-1748>>

'Centenary of Illawarra Aboriginal Names of Places' *Illawarra Mercury* Tuesday 24 March 1896, p 2.
<<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/132295058?searchTerm=aboriginal%20people%20illawarra&searchLimits=>>

Cooper, H.M. 'Flinders, Matthew 1774–1814' *Australian Dictionary of Biography* Volume 1 (MUP), 1966
<<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/flinders-matthew-2050>>

Duffy, Jodie 'Illawarra Through the Eyes of Early Explorers' *Illawarra Mercury* 29 November 2014
<<http://www.illawarramercury.com.au/story/2726964/illawarra-through-the-eyes-of-early-explorers/>>

Hector, Michelle 'Heritage: Tales from the Illawarra' *Illawarra Mercury* 13 April 2013
<<http://www.illawarramercury.com.au/story/405537/heritage-tales-from-the-illawarra/>>

Lindsay, Benjamin *Early Land Settlement in Illawarra 1804–1861* Edited by Michael J. Organ and A.P. Doyle. University of Wollongong Research Online, 1994.
<<http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1099&context=asdpapers>>

McDonald, W.G. *Earliest Illawarra by its explorers & Pioneers Illawarra Diary of Lady Jane Franklin 10–17 May 1839* University of Wollongong, 1966.
<<http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1016&context=ihspubs>>

These notes may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale.

McIlwain, Kate 'Bellambi Point declared an Aboriginal Place' *Illawarra Mercury* 29 September 2012
<<http://www.illawarramercury.com.au/story/365548/bellambi-point-declared-an-aboriginal-place/>>

Martin Inlet (New South Wales) *Wikipedia*
<[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Islet_\(New_South_Wales\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Islet_(New_South_Wales))>

'Mount Kembla' *Wikipedia*
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Kembla>

'Mount Kembla Colliery' *Illawarra Coal* <<http://www.illawarracoal.com/mtkembla.htm>>

'Mount Kembla Colliery Disaster' *The Week* Friday 8 August 1902, p 20.
<<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/183941174?searchTerm=mount%20Kembla%20colliery&searchLimits=>>>

Organ, Michael and Doyle, A.P. *Historical Records of the Illawarra Region of NSW, Australia 1770–1855 A Chronological Guide to Sources and Events* January 1995
<<https://www.uow.edu.au/~morgan/ilchron1.htm>>

Organ, Michael K. ed. *The Illawarra Diary of Lady Jane Franklin 10–17 May 1839* University of Wollongong Research Online, 1988.
<<http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1031&context=asdpapers>>

'Tharawal' *Wikipedia*
<<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tharawal>>

Films & Television

A subject search of the *ABC Splash* site will unearth a range of other resources relating to Australian history such as:

'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures' *ABC Splash*
<<http://splash.abc.net.au/home#!/topic/494038/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-histories-and-cultures>>

'Explorers in Australia'
<<http://splash.abc.net.au/home#!/topic/494962/explorers-in-australia>>

'Mapping the Australian Coast' *ABC Splash*
<<http://splash.abc.net.au/home#!/digibook/1594262/mapping-the-australian-coast>>

See also:

My Place ABC Series <<http://www.abc.net.au/abc3/myplace/>>

The Secret River ABC Series <<http://www.abc.net.au/tv/programs/secret-river/>>

These notes may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale.

