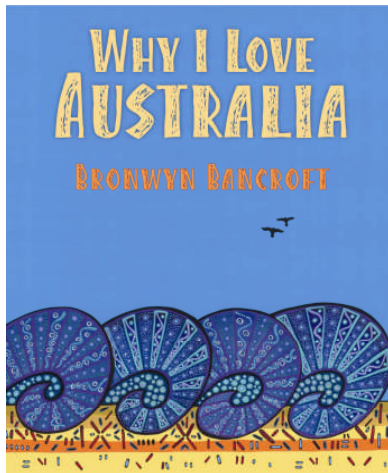


LITTLE HARE



WHY I LOVE AUSTRALIA ACTIVITY NOTES

By

BRONWYN BANCROFT

Published by **LITTLE HARE BOOKS**, 2010

Teacher Notes by **KATE MAYES**

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Reading Guide Ages 3-12*

*Please note that the recommended age range is a guide only and this book may be suitable for use outside of this recommendation.

SYNOPSIS

Why I Love Australia is a superb and unique showcase of Australia's many rich and varied landscapes. In this magnificent celebration of country, Australia's much-loved Indigenous children's illustrator, Bronwyn Bancroft uses both images and words to explore the awe-inspiring beauty of the Australian continent, and to express her feelings for it. The hope is that this book will inspire children to develop their own love of and respect for the Australian landscape – its colour, uniqueness and beauty.

THEMES

Australia

Aboriginal culture

Australian Aboriginal smoking ceremonies

Art

Country

The natural world

Animals and plants

Poetry and words

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Bronwyn Bancroft was born in the northern NSW town of Tenterfield, and her father was Bundjalung, Djanbun clan. She is a visual artist with an established reputation and has participated in more than 200 exhibitions in Australia and overseas, and her work is held in many major collections. Bronwyn's art includes a diversity of styles, including narrative works and, more recently some abstract textured paintings, but all relate to the land and to her cultural traditions. She

has produced a number of public artworks, she conducts art workshops and was a founding member and director of Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Cooperative.

Bronwyn Bancroft began illustrating children's books in 1992. Some of the many books she has illustrated include:

Fat and Juicy Place by Diana Kidd;

Stradbroke Dreamtime by Oodgeroo Noonuccal (the third illustrator since this book was first published);

Dirrangun written by Lucy Daley and Eustan Williams (a creation story from Bundjalung and Githavul language groups in northern NSW, which has contributed to the cultural maintenance of Bronwyn Bancroft's area);

Minah and *The Whalers*, both retold by Percy Mumbulla;

Dan's Grandpa and *Just a Little Brown Dog* both by Sally Morgan;

Big Rain Coming and *Leaving* both by Katrina Germein;

Malu Kangaroo by Judith Morecroft;

Sam's Bush Journey by Sally Morgan and Ezekiel Kwaymullina.

In recent years Bronwyn has also written the texts for several books, including *An Australian abc of Animals* and *An Australian 123 of Animals* and *Possum and Wattle*.

Underlying and shaping her work is an Indigenous aesthetic, based on a strong affinity with the natural world. Bronwyn states: 'Although I live and work in the city now, I know that my artistic talent descends from my Old People—they have gifted it to me—and I feel very honoured by that.'

Asked about what was important to her own learning as a child, she says that she learned by listening and observing, particularly in the Bush.

She comments about her work in *Possum and Wattle* that 'a big challenge came from trying to get the smoothness that runs through the pages, because all of these pages are actually quite different images—bush scrub to coral reefs'.* She points out that a thematic structure is needed, to allow the book to be 'fluent'.

A particular favourite with the illustrator is her picture of the Milky Way as she is 'in love with the night sky'.

Bronwyn Bancroft uses a palette of up to a hundred colours, with for example up to twenty shades of purple, in order to produce subtle colour variations. For this book she used archival paper and Matisse paint that she mixes herself.

Her hopes for this book are that children will love the colours and enjoy all the subjects and learn more about Aboriginal Australia.

Bronwyn is the 2010 recipient of the Dromkeen medal. She is the first indigenous recipient to receive this award.

'Learning the Write Stuff' by Chris Hook, Courier Mail 10.10.09

QUESTIONS/ COMPREHENSION

- Can you name all of the things that Bronwyn loves about Australia?
- Choose 10 things that you love about Australia and write a list of them. Choose 1 thing from your list and tell the class why you love that thing.
- What is your favourite page in the book? Why do you love this page?
- Choose one of the landscapes that Bronwyn writes about and create a short story set in this landscape.
- Write a list of all the describing words Bronwyn uses in this book. Can you think of other words that say the same thing as each of these?
- Who is the figure in the bottom left corner of each spread? What are they doing? (see back of the book for an explanation to give to your class or student)
- What is a coolamon? Using the library, see if you can find some other objects that are used in aboriginal ceremonies. Choose one that interests you and explain to the class what it is and how it is used.
- Why do you think Bronwyn thinks it is important to show respect to another person's country, language or land? Do you think this is important also? Why/ why not? Tell the class about what you think.

- Find a word that you did not know before, look up its dictionary meaning and tell the class about it.
- Tell the class (or write a paragraph) about how the paintings in this book make you feel. You may like to comment on the book's size, the way the artist has covered each object in patterns, and the use of colour. Which is your favourite picture or spread?

ACTIVITIES

- Choose one of the landscapes in *Why I Love Australia* and paint your own picture. You might choose a river, or a snowy mountain or even a coral sea.
- Look at some books in the library and find some photographs of the sort of animals that live in your landscape. Eg. If you have painted the sea, you might like to find photos of different coloured fish.
- Can you find out what sort of plants might grow in your landscape? What is the weather like?
- Talk to the class or in small groups about a family holiday you went on to a particular part of Australia. Describe what you saw. You might even have some photos that you would like to share with your group.
- Look at the illustration for the city. Why do you think Bronwyn says that modern city lights are like a 'jewelled necklace'? Using paint, create your own illustration of a city landscape. Perhaps you could use foil to cut out small sparkles and glue them to your illustration to create the jewels.
- Bronwyn loves using lots of colours in her paintings. Can you count how many different colours she has used in the page on the coral reef?

- Make a postcard to send to a friend or family member. The illustration for 'coral' can be used as the basis for a postcard. You will need some stiff card 220mm long by 110mm wide for each postcard (the teacher might like to prepare these pieces of card). Using crayons, draw the coral. Write a note on the other side, telling your friend about one of your favourite places in Australia.
- Art activity—brown paper and pastels are good for this. Choose a landscape that is not in the book, and illustrate it in the style of this artist, using bright colours to decorate.
- Using the library, can you find other books that have pictures of Australia in them? The teacher might like to create a game where the children have to match a photograph of a particular landscape to one of Bronwyn's paintings. You will need to find an image of a river, boab trees on a plain, grasslands, a suburb with lots of houses, a beach, a salt pan, a city, bushland scrub, ants nests in bush setting, rainforest, gorges, snowy mountain, desert sky with stars, coral reef (make sure all the photos you choose are of Australian landscapes!!)

