

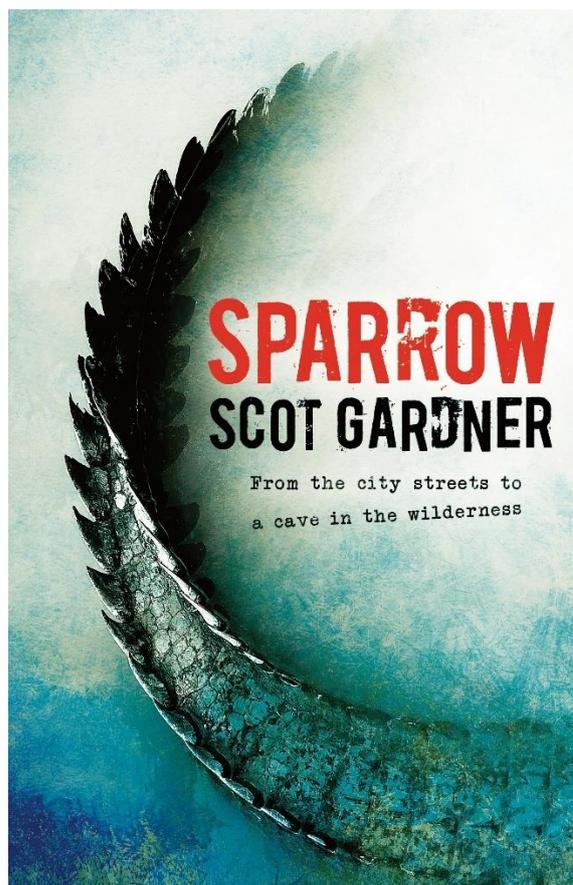
Teachers' Notes
by Ananda Braxton-Smith

Sparrow
by
Scot Gardner

ISBN 9781760294472
Recommended for ages 12-16 yrs

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Introduction.....	2
Synopsis and notes.....	2
Links to the curriculum.....	4
Notes and activities	6
English	6
'Show Don't Tell'.....	6
The idea of monsters.....	7
Every picture tells a story	10
Acting up.....	12
Verb talk	13
Cross Curriculum Priority – Aboriginal & TSI Histories & Cultures: Rock Art of the Kimberly.....	14
Health & Phys Ed - Communicating & Interacting for Health & Wellbeing: On Bending & Breaking	18
Extended study and resources	21
Monsters	21
Drawing stories	21
Survival literature.....	21
Gwion (Bradshaw) & Wandjina art	22
About the writers	23



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INTRODUCTION

SYNOPSIS

Sparrow is sixteen-years-old and wrongly imprisoned for his brother's murder. On his way back to juvenile detention, after completing a 'survival' course in the Western Australian wilderness, the boat has broken down. Now a becalmed Sparrow, eight other youths and their guards languish in the gulf off the Kimberley Coast. Sparrow takes his chance and plunges into the water, heading for freedom. The boat explodes, and Sparrow swims as hard as he can for the shore.

Sparrow is mute. He hasn't spoken since he was five-years old. Living rough around the City Beach area of Darwin, he has survived through a mix of luck, scavenging, and the kindness of locals. He has lived trying to avoid his older brother, Miggy, who was once his hero but who has become one of the city's 'ghost boys' — a paint-sniffer and sensation-junkie always dancing on the edge of violence. The boys' mother is dead of AIDS, and their father is unknown to them.

Sparrow swims ashore and crawls into a mangrove forest full of sucking mud, monster crocs and biting midges. He hears people calling him — but he doesn't answer. A rescue helicopter buzzes the shore but Sparrow lets them go. A zodiac with emergency crew arrives but Sparrow lets them go too. *Freedom is better than jail*, he thinks, and he heads for higher ground.

While living rough, Sparrow used to sleep up a fig tree and help out at the cafés along the lagoon in return for food. It felt good to be useful. Later, he had found a better place to sleep, sheltering out of sight on the roof of a covered toilet block. An old man he had met at the lagoon, Sharky, had befriended him and taught him to swim.

Those swimming lessons have saved his life. In the mangroves, Sparrow hangs on to a high branch and listens to the crocs below. His body aches, he itches all over, and he's parched with thirst. The zodiac comes back and this time he tries to stop them. *Jail is better than death*, he now thinks. But the crew don't hear him and the zodiac passes. He moves on, following a river toward an escarpment.

In City Beach, Sparrow had made a friend. Elsa was older than Sparrow and worked at one of the lagoon cafes. She was kind, she was pretty, and she said she loved his drawings. She hadn't minded that Sparrow was mute; it didn't stop her talking to him. Then one night she'd been beaten up, and when he went to see her in hospital her face was unrecognisable. She had been burned and branded too, and then Sparrow had known it was Miggy. Sparrow knew all about Miggy's burning and branding.

In the wilderness, Sparrow finds fresh water, hunts and fishes for his food, and manages the midges with bush medicine. He learns to hunt food ahead of fire. A cave in the escarpment provides him with shelter. The walls are covered with art, one image on top of another, and to this gallery he adds his own drawings. Time passes. Sparrow develops a map inside his head. His days gain a rhythm: swimming, fishing, hunting, scavenging, and making art. He begins to acclimatise. Then he finds a footprint on the beach.

A human footprint.

After Elsa had been beaten, Sparrow had gone looking for Miggy. He didn't know what he was going to do, but *something*. He'd found Miggy at Dripstone Caves with the other ghost boys—stoned, snarling, fighting like dogs. He waited outside the cave for a long time. He could hear the fight getting serious and didn't know what to do. After the other boys had run for it, Sparrow found Miggy with a broken bottle in his neck. He had stayed with Miggy's body all night.

The footprint on the beach belongs to Abby, who has also managed to survive the wreck of the boat. She is near death from the bite of a taipan and Sparrow nurses her back to life. After her recovery, their relationship takes Sparrow from a sensitive but mute, powerless boy to a young man with a

voice. The challenge the fierce Abby presents him, in terms of capability and emotional honesty, is one he must rise to—and does.

Note on Scot Gardner and a new Boys' Own Adventure:

Scot Gardner is a writer whose work generally appeals to young male readers, although this tendency neither includes all young male readers nor excludes female fans.

His work is characterised by:

- recognition of difficulties in talking about feelings
- recognition of non-verbal communication modes
- discussions of sexuality, focusing on perving, porn and double standards
- treatments of the attractions for boys of anger, competition, and violence
- recognition of the difficulty of rejecting the cultural stereotype of the tough loner guy
- naturalistic usage including dialect, vernacular and swearing, interspersed with passages of formal beauty
- a visceral experience of reading, including detailed physical ordeal and bodily awareness: created by strong verbs and high action levels
- Show Don't Tell principle of writing the emotions

Scot Gardner's books encourage boys to value emotional courage as well as physical. In writing such courage into his scenarios and recapitulating it in his themes, he insists that the emotional side of life also requires heroes. He discusses overcoming verbal reticence, developing respectful sexualities, and that pesky desire to physically master the world, embedding these challenges in adventures the goal of which is not only the acquisition of physical skills but interpersonal ones.

Gardner finds interesting ways to talk about many boys' notorious verbal reticence. He does not construct such reticence as natural although it may be the present norm. In *Sparrow* the protagonist is *electively* mute after being overwhelmed by unbearable emotion in childhood. Eventually, though, he must speak in order to heal. He must choose to speak.

Gardner's commitment to the Show Don't Tell principle of fiction helps some boys process emotional content without having to directly encounter explicit feeling. Some boys have trouble engaging with directly stated feeling. In *Sparrow* the mute, illiterate protagonist functions as a metaphor for this principle.

For much of the text, the boy Sparrow performs his emotion in dumb show, miming anger, gratitude, and humour. But without words anger, gratitude, and humour are generic emotions and as he gets older he begins to find these modes insufficient to his experience. It is the personal detail behind the generic feeling that needs words to tell it with proper meaning. The individual Sparrow must find his way to relationship with others through words.

After Sparrow decides to speak again the narrative perspective undergoes a change. After being talked *about* in the third-person 'he', Sparrow in the last chapters speaks for himself in the first-person 'I'. He inhabits himself again through the shared act of dialogue with Abby. He becomes a self in a world of other selves.

But first Scot Gardner reassures his readers that he gets it. Talking about feelings is really, really hard.

Textual features:

- 'Survival'/Coming-of-age literature
- Alternating shifts in narrative time frame
- Shift in perspective from third- to first-person
- 'Show Don't Tell' principle
- Themes of homelessness & belonging, emotional & physical resilience, autonomy & interdependence
- Representation of Australia's ethnic diversity
- Gender interrogations
- Non-verbal communication modes
- Visceral reading experience deploying strong, carefully chosen verbs

SPARROW & THE CURRICULUM: A GENERAL OVERVIEW

English

In addition to the list of textual features above, *Sparrow* is rich in intertext. A comparison of the text with traditional survival literature, such as Golding's *Lord of the Flies* or Kipling's *Jungle Book*, would deepen understanding of how writers can adjust the conventions of genre according to the time in which they live and write. [ACELT 1626, 1633, 1807] *Sparrow* plays with the survival genre conventions of 'monsters' and 'wilderness', conflating survival in the wilderness of nature and survival in the wilderness of the city. Additional intertextual interest lies in comparisons of the text's protagonist Sparrow with the 'wild child' stories of European Enlightenment literature, in which a wild 'natural' humanity is privileged above 'cultural' humanity and given form in the body of the 'noble savage'. Activities 13 & 14, listed in these notes under the Health and PE section, can also be adapted in the English classroom for character studies and the study of some of the book's themes.

History

The text will enrich formal learning in the area of pre-history. The Kimberley region of Australia is home to the art of an extinct Pleistocene people who have left their art on the walls of caves through the area. Debates surrounding this phenomena centre on attribution and age. Both scientists and artists are engaged in these debates, which are crucial to our knowledge of the migrations of humans out of Africa. The origin of these Pleistocene artists, how they arrived in the Kimberley, and where they went, is a mystery of global scope.

Visual Arts

The text supports studies of art as human heritage rather than as specialist or financial activity. Sparrow's art is an important element of his character. His drawings allow him to communicate with others on a deeper level than his mime, and provide a means of processing his feelings. *Sparrow* includes references to the cave art of ancient and/or indigenous peoples of northern Western Australia. The subject matter and general aesthetic is presented *in situ*, and without political analysis. In this way students can encounter traditional indigenous art in its original and proper context, as profound human expressions of something beyond words.

Health & Physical Education—Personal, social and community health

Sparrow is a story about emotional resilience. Coming from a dysfunctional family, the brothers Sparrow and Miggy have grown into dysfunctional adolescents. Sparrow is especially damaged in the area of communication, but he is still emotionally intact enough to respond to friendship. His older brother has not been so lucky. Miggy's experience in the family has left him broken, violently angry and drug addicted like his mother. The text provides material for discussions of effects of birth order, family breakdown, parental and sibling drug use, as well as issues arising from the death of a parent. It also provides opportunities for investigations into the diverse ways people fill missing relationships: including friendships with older people, foster parents and adoption, non-blood 'aunties', gangs, and others.

Civics & Citizenship

The text will support initial learning about Australia's legal system, including the principle of equality before the law and the right of appeal. Sparrow's muteness before the law presents an interesting complication, and his guilty verdict based on circumstantial evidence is problematic. This conversation could provide introductory material towards discussions of specific problems teens and young adults face before the courts, and a consideration of riots in youth detention centres, featured in the media just before publication of *Sparrow*.

Sparrow & the General Capabilities

The text will support learning in the following capabilities: Literacy, Critical and Creative Thinking; Personal and Social Capability; Ethical Understanding; and Intercultural Understanding.

Sparrow & the Cross-Curriculum Priorities

Sparrow has application in nurturing understanding of traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and in building respect for the notions of intimate relationship to land, significance of landform, and learning from nature. It also contains references to the indigenous cave art of northern Western Australia.

SPARROW & THE CURRICULUM: NOTES & ACTIVITIES

Vocab stop!

Explicit: Meaning [adj.] fully and clearly expressed or demonstrated; leaving nothing merely implied; unequivocal. **Origin** 1605-15 Latin *explicitus* - unfolded, set forth

Implicit: Meaning [adj.] implied, rather than expressly stated. **Origin** 1590-1600 Latin *implicitus* -involved, obscure,

ENGLISH

Literature & Language: Show Don't Tell

Sparrow stormed off to their table at the Fiddler's Green. In time, Sharky collected a chair and sat beside him, close enough that their elbows touched.

Sparrow pulled away and wiped his arm.

"What's wrong with you?" Sharky growled.

Sparrow pretended not to hear him and arranged the condiments, serviettes and beer mats in a line between them.

(p. 119)

[ACELT1620/ACELT1621/ACELT1622/ACELT1625/ACELA1529//ACELT1632/ACELT1768//ACELA1553/ACELT1635/ACELT1636//ACELT1639/ACELT1641/ACELT1642/ACELT1814/ACELT1815](#)

In the real world, human beings are predisposed to *read* other people: it's one of the things people are particularly good at, along with all primates. Authors can use this predisposition to create more profound experiences in readers. Whereas in the real world it is helpful if someone can tell you outright what they are feeling or thinking, in a fiction this sort of explicit statement robs readers of their personal literary experience. Emotion and attitude are more effectively suggested through action, in which emotion is implicit. Readers will *read into* implied emotion with deeper engagement than explicit statement. This literary strategy of using implicit rather than explicit ways of showing feeling is called Show Don't Tell.

Show Don't Tell is a challenge for every writer of fiction. Scot Gardner has used an inventive device to help keep the emotion of *Sparrow* implicit. The boy protagonist, called Sparrow, is mute and illiterate. He can express himself only through body language, mime and drawing. Readers are complicit in the creation of characters in any fiction, but the effort readers invest in characters that are not explicit makes the story more personally significant. Sparrow's mimes and pictures force readers to 'read' behaviour while they are reading words. Show Don't Tell activities help people become more emotionally literate, in that they must think about the ways in which others show feeling.

Activity 1: Feel the Way

As a class, CONSIDER the following statements:

- The dog was lonely
- Henry was furious
- Jess was silently amused

PRETEND you are editors. BRAINSTORM some ways you might change the above statements so that they are not explicit statements of feeling. DISCUSS actions, body language, and verbal expression that could show the feelings in implicit rather than explicit ways. SHARE your ideas and strategies, and note how differences in ways of doing feelings help to build developing characters. (People are not the same in their expression of feeling.)

For instance, a character called Henry might be furious, but how would he let us know and what does it say about him:

- Henry smiled but his lips were pale and tight. (Henry is a guy who pretends not to be angry)
- Henry’s face went purple and he rose, tipping over the table and bellowing into the room. (Henry is a guy who responds physically and immediately to anger)
- Henry tried to protest but he stuttered, spluttered and burst into tears instead. (Henry is a guy whose anger turns quickly to despair.)

NOTE that the Henry of the first statement is a different Henry to that of the second and third. Anger is generic, but each Henry’s way of doing anger fixes his character in our minds.

Activity 2: Write Two Ways

CREATE a character using the Show Don’t Tell principle.

Spend five minutes IMAGINING and PLAYING on paper. PICTURE your character in your mind. DRAW their face. DRAW their shoes. DRAW their earring, or their tattoo, or their scar. WRITE in dialogue bubbles some characteristic words or phrases they use when they talk.

DECIDE what feeling you’re going to write.

DECIDE a quality (or lack of quality) in your character that you’d like to show.

WRITE your first paragraph, in the third person perspective, in which your character experiences one *explicitly* stated strong feeling.

WRITE a second paragraph, in the third person perspective, in which your character experiences one strong feeling to which he/she responds in a *characteristic* way. As in the examples in Activity 1, show what it looks like from the outside for this particular character to be experiencing this feeling.

SHARE your two paragraphs in small groups. READ them both, in order.

NO COMMENTS until both paragraphs are read.

ASK questions about the listeners’ experience. Which paragraph did the group prefer hearing? Why? What did they know about the character after the first paragraph? What did they know about the character after the second paragraph?

ASK questions about the writers’ experience. Which paragraph did they prefer writing? Was it more difficult to write one paragraph than the other? Why? Did they find it difficult to fill out the first paragraph — was there much to say after they’d stated how the character was feeling? Did they find more to say when they were showing rather than telling?

Literature & Language: The Idea of Monsters

[ACELA1536/ACELT1619/ACELT1620/ACELT1621/ACELT1622/ACELY1721//ACELA1547/ACELT1626/ACELT1627/ACELT1628//ACELA1561/ACELA1553/ACELT1633/ACELT1635/ACELT1636//ACELT1641/ACELT1812/ACELY1749/](#)

Sparrow understood, from experience, that violent thoughts never escaped his brother's skull, they hung there and incubated until they erupted from his hands and feet — kicking and punching until the monsters had been appeased — but they were never gone.

(p. 133)

Monsters are an irresistible and well-loved element of most world literatures, giving metaphoric form to human fear. From the Minotaur lurking in the Cretan labyrinth to the bloodthirsty mermaids of Arnhem Land, monsters speak to communal fears. The things people fear at any particular time are both the same as in the past—death, suffering, loneliness—and different to the past in some specifics. For instance, dying in Nazi gas chambers would have its specific as well its general horrors. The most effective literary monsters speak to the particular fear of a specific time. Monsters that fall into this category include Mary Shelley's 1831 creature in *Frankenstein*.

European communities of the 19th century were living through the social changes connected with the Enlightenment. People were struggling with the replacement of religion with science as the accepted way of knowing. Earlier, in the 1700s, a natural philosopher named Luigi Galvani had experimented with animating dead frogs using electrical charges — a process he called *galvanism*. Later, his nephew Giovanni Aldini tried galvanising a human being, passing electricity through the body of hanged murderer George Forster. (Witnesses saw Forster's eye open, his right hand raise itself, and his legs stir!) Mary Shelley knew of these stories when she wrote her novel, the subtitle of which was *The Modern Prometheus*. Mythological character Prometheus stole fire (knowledge) from the gods and was punished terribly for his hubris. [<https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/the-science-of-life-and-death-in-mary-shelleys-frankenstein>]

Knowledge of mysteries was morally suspicious. Knowledge coaxed, or ripped, from nature by experiment, was viewed by a Christian public as an illicit tearing away of veils. It was against God. Early scientists' attempts at restoring life were particularly anxiety-inducing. People asked what happens to the soul when a body is reanimated by science. Victor Frankenstein's 'monster', with its mechanistic body and animalistic utterances, can be read as the embodiment of anxiety about loss of the soul, scientific hubris, and God's anger, experienced by people living through this time.

Traditionally, a hero overcomes the monster. In addition, from killing the monster, heroes win something that they take back to help their community, called the *boon*. The traditional boon could be anything from a kiss that wakes the princess to a goose that lays golden eggs to a sword of power. Contemporary heroes, however, tend to disarm monsters instead. The *boon* they bring home is then a radically changed self, or a now-domesticated 'monster' that often turns out to have been just a hidden or fragmented part of the community all along. The return of the monster is then the boon.

Contemporary culture contains many types of monster. The traditional creatures are still there; the uncanny creeping things, the bloodsuckers, and the flesh eaters. Zombies are enjoying a renaissance. However, amoral or 'broken' human beings are now some of the most terrifying monsters at large. Consider this review of the Australian movie *Wolf Creek*:

With a plot predictable by generic definition (it's a slasher movie), Wolf Creek's only context is other movies like it. The victims become monstrous to fight their abductor. The monster plods on, incessant, cruel, ordinary.

[<https://www.commonsemmedia.org/movie-reviews/wolf-creek#>]

Another contemporary use of the monster trope is the inversion. A successful example of the inverted monster can be seen in Tim Burton's film *Edward Scissorhands*, in which the monster seems to be the deformed individual, but is in fact the suburban culture that lies to itself about its own nature.

[See Resources, below, for links to monster material]

Activity 3: Beginner Monster Studies

The text of *Sparrow* uses most of all possible monsters, including those that arise from within.

Beyond the shark net that keeps Sparrow 'safe' within a physical limit, there are menacing sharks and sly stingers. Beyond the community, deep in the wilderness, there are huge crocodiles and ferocious wild pigs; within his community, there are killers and dead-eyed ghosts. His mother has been eaten by the monster of addiction, and his older brother by a monstrous masculinity. Also, Sparrow lives within a culture that allows its children to struggle for survival, and punishes them when they fail. In this way Sparrow also lives within a monstrous idea.

3a. Explore the metaphor of the monster through its manifestations in Sparrow.

READ CLOSELY the following passages of *Sparrow* that depict **nature as monstrous**:

- monsters in the gulf (p. 2)
- monsters in the mangroves (p. 8)
- fighting the monster croc (p. 159)

WRITE a short TEXTUAL ANALYSIS of these passages.

COMPARE the following textual elements:

- language use (list the verbs and the adjectives and consider their effects)
- structure (look at sentence and paragraph length)
- character reaction (Sparrow's response to the monsters)

DISCUSS the effects of these elements. Include a PERSONAL RESPONSE.

ASK yourself:

- Are these encounters with 'monsters' written using similar types of language? How would you characterise the verbs? Note the descriptive language: does it repeat across the passages? What are the similarities?
- Does the sentence or paragraph structure change in these 'monster' passages? Are the sentences shorter? Longer? What is the effect of these changes in structure? What effect does the change in rhythm have upon you?
- Note the specifics of Sparrow's response at each encounter with these 'monsters'. Does his response change?

3b. Sparrow also locates 'monsters' inside people as well as the wilderness.

READ CLOSELY the following passages that depict **people as monsters**:

NOTE language features and Sparrow's reactions, as with the previous analysis. How are the people who are behaving monstrously described? LOOK particularly at representations of their physicality; at facial expression, words and sounds, and at their quality of movement. NOTE their actions, and the words in which these actions are described.

- the ghost boys monster Sparrow (pp. 53-4)
- the drawing of the croc, and Miggy and the ghost boys arrive (p. 59)
- what the ghost boys did to Elsa (p. 93)
- drug addiction turns people into monsters (Mum p. 87, Miggy p. 106)
- and the smugglers' blood sports (p. 163)

WRITE a COMPARATIVE TEXTUAL ANALYSIS.

COMPARE and CONTRAST your notes with your analysis of the previous passages. Are there similarities in the representation of the monsters? If there are differences, what are they? Include a PERSONAL RESPONSE.

DISCUSS in class. Which monsters are scariest to you? Why? What particular fears do the various 'monsters' generate? Do you SHARE these fears with other people?

Do you feel that the monsters are embodiments of contemporary fears, such as the fear of homelessness and community fragmentation?

If you're interested to go further with this deconstruction of textual monsters in Sparrow, consider the trope of the 'monster' in the following passages:

- *Monsters as a game*: playing 'shark' with Sharky (pp. 44-5)
- *Monsters inside*: a 'not hungry' Sparrow goes on a killing spree in the wild (pp. 112-115)

Activity 4: Further Monster Studies

CHOOSE one of the classic monsters of literature. LOCATE the first description of the monster as it appears in the text. READ CLOSELY. Pay attention to physical description. Some classic monsters are found in:

- *Frankenstein's Monster, or the Modern Prometheus* by Mary Shelley (Victor Frankenstein's unnamed 'creature')
- *Dracula* by Bram Stoker (Count Dracula)
- *The Hobbit* by JRR Tolkien (Golem)

You may choose to consider monsters in FILM instead. The activity remains the same except that the monsters are analysed visually rather than literarily. As in the literary activity ANALYSE the physicality of the monster. CONSIDER each body part as a metaphor.

What does the body of the monster suggest about people's fear/s?

Some classic film monsters are found in:

- *King Kong* originally by Edgar Wallace (King Kong the giant ape). There are remakes of this film
- *Alien* (1979) by Dan O'Bannon (the 'alien'). This was the first Alien film. The alien monster gets increasingly interesting over the series. Choose a later film if you prefer
- *Terminator* (the Artificial Intelligence called Skynet) by James Cameron and Gail Anne Hurd. The first film was released in 1984

As another alternative, students may choose to consider monsters in COMPUTER GAMES.

Language & Literacy: Every Picture Tells a Story

[ACELA1764/ACELY1724/ACELY1722//ACELA1542/ACELA1548//ACELA1560/ACELA1551/ACELY1745//ACELA1572/](#)

Communication is necessary to relationship. In *Sparrow* the protagonist's story is told in third-person ('he') throughout the text. It is only in the last few chapters, when he decides to talk again, that he becomes a first-person protagonist ('I'). Until that point he can communicate only basic experience and generic emotion.

Sparrow has been electively mute since he was five-years-old when he decided that talking made 'no difference'. His chosen forms of communication include body language, intentional mime, and kissing and hitting — but as he grows older this is not enough. Once Sparrow discovers drawing his

art acts as a bridge to other people, slowly drawing him into a web of communication and inevitably, relationship.

Activity 5: Reading Sparrow's Drawings

Sparrow's drawings are expressions of his personal feeling and thought. They are unique to his worldview, uncompromised by schooling or commercial interest. Through reading his pictures we learn more about Sparrow, about the depth of his feelings and the landscape of his inner world, than he is able to show through mime. We read his drawings for clues to this inner world.

READ CLOSELY the following passage.

There was no question it was a crocodile, but it looked nothing like the photograph from the paper. He'd filled the square of card with a close-up of view of the animal's open mouth, its stone dagger teeth and its eye, complete with a menacing, vertical slit of iris.

(p. 59)

CONSIDER the following elements and what they say about Sparrow's inner world:

- Sparrow's crocodile is 'nothing like' the crocodile in the paper even though his task was to copy that image
- Sparrow fills the square of card entirely with his picture. There is no white space
- Sparrow chooses two elements of the crocodile to draw: its teeth and its eye
- Sparrow enlarges these elements, working to make the teeth into 'stone daggers' and the eye, 'menacing'

Activity 6: Drawing Your Stories

Advisory note: *Drawing is a means of communication and a way to express emotions that are hard to talk about. It is also way of knowing yourself. Art is neither primarily a commercial practice, nor is it a practice of excellence. It is human heritage. Fear, love, anger, and any other feeling we contain can all be communicated through imagery, as can all the stuff of our non-verbal dreams and nightmares. The following drawing activity doesn't have to be clever or good, or make sense to anyone but you, in order to be considered successful. [This activity should not be marked.]*

DRAW a strip of six empty squares like a small comic strip. Give each square a solid black outline. (If you prefer, you can draw empty circles or stars, or any other shape.)

CONTEMPLATE the heavily outlined squares, while allowing incidents from your life to drift through your mind. CHOOSE one incident in which you experienced strong feelings. Use no more than eight squares.

Using scrap paper, SKETCH images from your story into the squares. EXPERIMENT. Try to tell the story in the simplest way. CONSIDER elements such as object placement and colour palette, in order to emphasise a textual element or create a mood. Use SURREALISM or FANTASTICAL elements to give a 'voice' to indescribable feelings. DO NOT INCLUDE WORDS.

When satisfied with your experiments:

DRAW your story into your squares.

SHARE your story strips with friends you trust. [[See Resources for link to Drawing Story material](#)]

Language & Literacy: Acting Up

ACELY1721//ACELA1541/ACELA1548/ACELY1730//ACELA1551/ACELA1770/ACELY1741//ACELA1571/ACELY1749

It hadn't been a conscious decision to stop talking. He'd begun to speak less and less, as though the words were evaporating from the floodplain of his existence. He began to speak with his hands. His mother and brother treated it like a game to begin with, then one morning as he tried to wake her from a drug sleep, the words wouldn't form at all, as if he'd forgotten ...

(p. 55)

There are many ways to communicate with other people: speaking, writing and reading, drawing, singing, dancing, and mathematical code, are a few. These are relatively complex modes of communication, dependent on living in a culture with language and art and maths. The languages of the deaf have developed convention and syntax, without speaking. They rely on a set of physical signs, and both conventional and inventive mime.

Sparrow uses non-verbal language for much of his communication. Some forms of his body language like kissing and hitting, arise naturally. The other form, mime, is intentional. Mime calls for a consciousness of our audience; to consider what they will understand in the matter of gestures, just as talking and writing calls for a similar consciousness of words and audiences.

Mime involves using our bodies in expressive and inventive, and fun, ways. The body has its own language.

Activity 7: Charades

SPLIT the class into two teams. You can split into smaller groups if the class is very big. You can even hold an Olympic Charades with heats and finals.

DECIDE CATEGORIES for the charades. Typically, the categories for charades consist of well-known film, book, theatrical production, or song titles. You could include blogs, or computer games, or even sports events, as long they are well-known. Avoid arcane knowledge from the depths of Black Metal albums, for instance, unless your class is a group of black-clad fans, in which case all the titles can involve Black Metal in some form. Charades can be based on in-depth knowledge of one subject as well as what is called general knowledge.

DECIDE on a time limit for a person to act out a title. CHOOSE a timekeeper.

In your team, LIST TITLES for the opposite team to mime and guess.

Teams TAKE TURNS playing.

GIVE a title to a member of the competition. (DO NOT LET their team mates see it, or let your team whisper it to each other.)

When it's your turn, ACT OUT the title in whatever way seems best to you, without speaking or making sounds. Your team will call out words as they think of them, until they guess the title. Or, if they run out of time, until they don't guess the title.

There are conventions to help playing this game. Here are some:

- Showing with the fingers the number of words in the title
- Miming turning a page, for a book
- Miming using a video camera, for a film
- Miming singing, for a song
- Miming throwing a spear, for Shakespeare

You may choose to use these conventions, or you could devise your own with the class.

Language & Literature: Verb Talk

ACELA1536/ACELA1782/ACELT1621/ACELT1803/ACELT1805//ACELT1627/ACELT1768/ACELA1553/ACELA1561/
ACELT1636//ACELA1571

One two three breath one two three. The waves were slight and they urged the boy on. His shoulders burned, his heavy arms slapped the water and his salt breath grazed his throat raw.

(p. 7)

Verbs are the workhorses of a sentence. They carry the action, moving the story forward. Without them a story would only consist of a bunch of characters sitting about waiting for something *to do*, or for something to *happen*.

However, verbs are not merely 'doing' words; they also carry tone and voice. This makes them part of a creative palette as well as part of a mechanistic system of grammar. Strong verbs lift a passage from a generic statement of what happened, into a more precise and more emotionally engaging event.

Activity 8: Ruin this Sentence

Scot Gardner has a penchant for strong verbs. Writers choose verbs carefully because they render adverbs unnecessary. Adverbs weaken textual effect. 'Burning' arms 'slapping' into water signify not only exhaustion but a certain *type* of exhaustion. Through the specific action of Sparrow's arms we can recognise the exhaustion of swimming too long; the particular burn of having had to lift our arms too often and for too long. Through Gardner's verbs we enter this specific experience in our imaginations.

This is a WHOLE CLASS activity. Responses may be called out for a rousing shared game to break up a dull afternoon, or written quietly as part of a competitive game scoring on the number of workable answers.

HERE are phrases from *Sparrow* that use a strong, specific verb. REPLACE the verb with a more generic verb and an adverb.

NOTE that there are NUMEROUS ways of ruining these sentences.

[Example: 'His shoulders burned' > 'His shoulders ached burningly'.]

- The air sparks with screams of pain
- He flails at the edge of the water
- He thrashes at invisible jaws
- He thrusts to the surface
- The water murmurs
- His fingers paw at the mangroves
- He snaps awake
- The sun bites at his neck

Activity 9: Save this Sentence

This activity not only gives practice in recognising weak phrases but also in strengthening them. It teaches *specificity*, in that there are verbs that belong to specific occupations and activities. For instance, boats are 'sailed' through water, not 'driven', and are 'moored' at a jetty, not 'parked'.

HERE are a collection of phrases using a generic verb and an adverb. REPLACE the verb in each instance with a strong, specific verb.

[Example: She walked quickly toward the exit > She marched out.]

There are NUMEROUS ways to save the sentences.

- The bees flew thickly about her head
- She took the bread and ate it hungrily
- The stars shone brightly
- The car moved rapidly toward the finish line
- She sang loudly
- They worked hard
- He spoke quietly
- She laughed a lot

Activity 10: Editing for Effect

After ruining and saving sentences, people can apply this awareness of verbs in their own writing. Much strengthening of verbs is done in the editing process. Strong, specific verbs are crucial to effective non-fiction writing as well as fiction. For the following exercise people may CHOOSE whether to write persuasive non-fiction, or fiction.

HERE is a list of subjects and scenarios that require verbal specificity. (You can MAKE UP your own subjects and scenarios if you don't like these.) WRITE one paragraph in class.

Non-fiction subjects:

- To parkour or not to parkour?
- AFL or soccer. Which requires more skill?
- Cosmetic surgery. Which procedure is most frightening?

Fictional scenarios:

- Animal activist liberates chickens
- Contestant loses nerve on 'The Voice' TV talent competition
- Skydiver loses ripcord while falling to earth

CROSS CURRICULUM PRIORITY - ABORIGINAL & TSI HISTORIES & CULTURES: ROCK ART OF THE KIMBERLY

ACAVAM118&119/ACAVAM120/ACAVAM121&122/ACAVAR123&124//ACAVAM125/ACAVAM128/ACAVAR131

The entire smooth wall of the cave was covered in artwork—layers of ancient images in faded black, red and white. There were stencils of human hands, full-bodied stick figures wearing elaborate headdresses and tassels from their waists and arms, the outlines of animals—a turtle, a snake, a kangaroo—and eerie, mouthless faces with dark, almond-shaped eyes.

(p. 51)

There are two major types of rock art found in the north-west Kimberley region of WA and Scot Gardner has included them both in *Sparrow*. They are the approximately 4000-year-old 'Wandjina' tradition, to which the eerie, mouthless faces belong, and the art that became known as the 'Bradshaws', named for the pastoralist who found them in 1891.

N.B.: Bradshaw/Gwion: There are as many Aboriginal names for the Bradshaws as there are indigenous languages in the Kimberleys, but 'Gwion Gwion' and 'Giro Giro' are two of the most common. I will be using the term 'Gwion'.

In the main, the Gwion shows human figures, often dancing, with elaborate hair styling and clad in tasselled clothing, sashes and headdresses, and bags. It usually consists of groups of human figures painted across panels of rock, rendered in reds and ochres along with black and white. Some works remain that show original pale blues and yellows.

Some determined people have travelled to the Kimberley to study the Gwion. Amateur archaeologist Grahame Walsh worked in the Kimberley from 1977 up to his death 2007. His work locating and recording the sites facilitated the creation of a database of 1.5 million rock art images, and recorded 1,500 new sites. Walsh also studied the sequences of the paintings and claimed that Gwion can be dated to a time before the Pleistocene. [Walsh, Grahame. *Bradshaws: ancient rock paintings of north-west Australia*, Geneva: Édition Limitée 1999] The paintings cannot be dated more precisely because radio carbon dating techniques need organic matter, and none of the original pigment has been found remaining. [<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/arts/bradshaw-gwion-gwion-rock-art#axzz4IH3CSXtE>] In fact, much of the art keeps its rich colour only because it has been symbiotically colonised by red bacteria and black fungi. However, a fossil wasp nest found covering the art has been dated at 17,000 years old, which is four times the age of the Egyptian pyramids, and comparable to the age of the Chauvet rock art found in France. And that would be only a minimum age for this art. [<http://www.convictcreations.com/aborigines/bradshaws.htm>] [<http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-12039203>]

The artworks are a mystery. Their original purpose cannot be known due to their immense antiquity. Many modern Aboriginal people say that the Gwion were painted by people who were here before their ancestors arrived in Australia. Others, such as the Mowanjum people (see below) claim the Gwion are part of their history. There are diverse opinions about the Gwion's age and attribution; the art has become part of the global story of human migration out of Africa. Many of the works have been vandalised, whether accidentally or intentionally, and they have been systemically superimposed by rock art of later periods. Such superimposition is often by art of the *Wandjina* style.



'Wandjina and Gwion Gwion Rock Art'
Kevin Waina [Ochre on canvas]

[<https://www.aboriginal-art-australia.com/artworks/kevin-waina-wandjina-gwion-gwion-rock-art-2a/>]

Wandjina: Images of Wandjinas (pronounced *wannias*) are indigenous to the Kimberley region. To the Mowanjum people, the Wandjina is the original creator and spirit of the land, closely allied to the weather and to fertility, and also gave Mowanjum their law. The Mowanjum have been painting the figures for millennia.

Wandjina is a generic term. There are specific Wandjina such as Jundart the Lightning Wandjina. [<http://www.reddesertdreamings.com.au/red-desert-dreamings-blog/wandjina-from-the-kimberley>] They are humanoid figures shown as either full body or head and shoulders, with large black eyes, a 'beaky' nose and no mouths. The figures are rendered onto a white background made by blowing white pigment from the mouth onto the surface. The outline is usually black or red, and decorative patternings are applied over the white background in red, yellow, orange or black. This device of applying all the colour over a white background makes Wandjinas 'glow' and appear to be emerging from the rock. [<http://press-files.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/p14881/html/ch10s05.html>] Ornate headdresses represent both the hair of the Wandjinas, and clouds. Lines radiating from the head represent feathers and lightning. [<http://www.aboriginalartonline.com/regions/wandjina-art.php>]

Traditionally, Aboriginal art exists as part of system of sacred activity and is not merely decorative. Nor is such art traditionally commercial, and most modern Aboriginal artists walk a fine line between what is respectful and what is not, according to culture and law. Wandjinas are sacred images to the Mowanjum; they are figures from the *Dreamtime*.

The Dreamtime stories refer to the genesis of Aboriginal peoples and land, and are about powerful creation spirits and prototypical humans. They also describe sets of art practice and spirit-ritual concerning these creation stories. Traditionally, only people who have gone through years of initiation and learning of the law are allowed to paint Wandjinas.

[<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/arts/what-are-wandjinas#axzz4IH3CSXtE>] Those original Wandjinas that are found in caves are particularly sacred. After creating the land, plants, animals, and people, Wandjinas are said to have lain down in the cave and turned into paintings.

According to Leah Umbagai, a Worrora language woman of northern WA:

The Wandjina is a supreme being that created the country, gave us the laws of the land, and we have to obey and follow it. The Wandjina is not just a big picture on the wall, it's the trees, it's the rocks, it's the water, it's the seasons, it's everything ... it lets us Wandjina people know who we are, and how to live our life.

[<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-12-05/aboriginal-people-move-to-reclaim-sacred-wandjina-drawings/8049978>]

Activity 11: Quantitative Research – Look Broad

RESEARCH a range of Aboriginal artists online. BROWSE widely, following what interests you. NOTE any particularly compelling elements or features of the artists' lives and work, researching towards a more focused project on a single artist. GATHER INFORMATION on the artists' style and tradition, their history and attribution, and the cultural significance of their works. CONSIDER the perspectives of many artists, including those working in contemporary and overtly political styles.

DO NOT ASSUME ANYTHING. For instance, the classic 'dot' painting style is thought by many people to be the archetypal historic Aboriginal style. In fact, Aboriginal painters developed the 'dot painting' technique in the early 1970s, encouraged by a white school teacher Geoffrey Bardon.

[<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/arts/are-dot-paintings-traditional-aboriginal-art#axzz4IH3CSXtE>] There are also reports of the dots being developed to obscure from foreign eyes and minds the sensitive, sacred material in artworks.

Some artists:

Respected Aboriginal artists of the last century include William Barack (1824 – 1903), and more recently the figurative artist Albert Namatjira (1902 – 1959).

[<http://australianartnetwork.com.au/regions/urban/>]

Contemporary Aboriginal art is generally considered to have begun in 1971 in [Papunya](#) in the Northern Territory. Two of the movement's successful practitioners were [Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri](#) and [Kaapa Tjampitjinpa](#).

Aboriginal artists working with the Gwion & Wandjina styles include Kevin Waina, Dorothy Djanghara and Lily Karedada.

Contemporary Indigenous textile production centres thrive in Ernabella Arts, Utopia Arts and Keringke Arts.

Rover Thomas represented Australia at the Venice Biennale in 1990 and 1997.

[Emily Kngwarreye](#)'s work [Earth's Creation](#) was the first Aboriginal artwork to sell for more than 1 million dollars, in 2007.

Activity 12: Qualitative Research – Look Narrow

CHOOSE one artist from your wide-ranging quantitative research in the above activity. INVESTIGATE the artist's life and work, gathering information from a range of sources such as reliable online sources, libraries (where the librarian can help you) and if there is time, museums and/or galleries. Most museums and galleries have virtual galleries online but encountering at least one artwork face-to-face is advisable. Many works have as part of their experience qualities that cannot be reproduced online, such as size or texture or luminosity. Look for exhibitions or collections in your LOCAL AREA.

RESEARCH in DETAIL the following information on your chosen artist:

- Biographical information, including family & clan or language group identifications, education
- First works, later works
- Subject matter, themes, stories and law attached to subject matter
- Materials and techniques
- Statements from the artist on intention, purpose, material & technique

RESEARCH tribal customs surrounding reproduction of the images. INCLUDE IMAGES only if their display is in accord with the spirit of the law. SEEK ADVICE & PERMISSION from localised Aboriginal bodies, or contact the Koori Heritage Trust. [[See Resources for links to Aboriginal art material](#)]

Extension for Years 9&10:

Research TWO aboriginal artists from two areas of Australia: compare the worldview, material, technique, and purpose of the artworks paying particular attention to tradition and law. Avoiding abuse of the images

HEALTH & PHYS ED - COMMUNICATING & INTERACTING FOR HEALTH & WELLBEING: ON BENDING & BREAKING

ACPPS074/ACPPS075

“I don’t know where they hide. They creep home in the middle of the night and empty the fridge like stray dogs. Can’t expect too much from them though, eh? They had it rough when they were younger.”

(p. 104)

Vocab Stop!

Resilience: Meaning [noun] the ability to recover quickly from illness, change or misfortune; buoyancy [<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/resilience>] **Origin** 1620s: ‘act of rebounding’ from the Latin [<http://www.etymonline.com/>]

Sparrow and Miggy are streetkids and have lived hard childhoods segueing into harder youths. Sparrow is younger than Miggy and this has mysteriously protected him from the worst fallout of their broken family. This emotional resilience has meant he has fared better than his older brother, Miggy. Sparrow’s stoic and optimistic character propels him toward people and activities he senses are good for him: befriending the old man Sharky and learning to swim; connecting with the café owners at the Lagoon for whom he works for food; and playing with the tourist children instead of stealing from them. This resilience also propels him to avoid people who are bad for him, such as the ghost-boys. He is still curious to learn, keen to master, and hungry to succeed. In contrast, Miggy is broken and suffers a sort of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. He has sunk into paint-sniffing and drinking, gang life, and violence. Having been shown no regard as a child he has none for himself. He does not know how to treat himself well. The responsibility of euthanasia that he assumed for his mother has led him into a life of self-punishment.

Together, by the end of the story Sparrow and Miggy have experienced:

- family neglect and physical abuse
- drug-addicted mother/absent father
- mother’s death (from AIDS and with help from Miggy)
- homelessness
- substance abuse (paint sniffing)
- loss of schooling
- loss of each other
- violence/murder
- legal ramifications/imprisonment

For most people the family is a safe place. Our first relationships are experienced in our first families, in which we were children. Our attitudes to ourselves and basic feeling about life are formed therein. If that first family is safe and supportive enough, we develop sufficient self-regard to go on to develop emotional resilience to hardship and disappointment. Sufficient self-regard and emotional resilience are connected.

Such resilience is not the capacity to ignore emotions: it is the capacity to experience the emotion without losing all hope, losing all confidence, and finally losing our capacity to care for ourselves.

Never being sad is not emotional resilience: it is emotional denial. Resilience is also the capacity to overcome the *effects* of suffering or shock, which can include Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, anxiety disorder, depression, and substance abuse.

Some people are more resilient than others.

Evidence regarding the genetic basis for resilience is still ambiguous, but social correlations are well established. [<http://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2011/06/mind-matters-resilience#note1>] A child needs to receive enough in the way of 'unconditional regard' (love), freedom to try new experiences (open-ended learning), and at least one primary relationship in which s/he both feels heard and learns to listen to others (two-way respect). In addition, children who are taught to help others, to set goals and *enjoy* moving toward them, and understand that in life change is inevitable, tend to be more resilient in the face of hardship. [<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/resilience.aspx>] All of these understandings are learnt through family relationships.

After traumatic events the two strongest predictors of recovery have been shown to be 'mastery' and supportive relationships. Mastery is the feeling a person has of having agency in his or her own life. [<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/good-thinking/201503/why-some-people-are-more-resilient-others>] Sparrow has developed some mastery in his homelessness and it is this which carries him through his ordeal in the wilderness: 'He felt so small. /So free /He'd find food and water. /He always did.' (p. 16) But it is the healing relationships he forms with Sharky and later with Abby that finally return him to himself and the community.

Activity 13: Mum & Miggy

Sparrow has barely survived his first family. His mother lied to, and physically hurt, Sparrow and his brother Miggy has learnt to do the same. Ten-year-old Sparrow nursed his mother up to her death from AIDS, and then watched his brother smother her with a pillow to 'stop her suffering'.

Activity 13a: Sparrow & Mum

"You wait here with your brother. I'll only be a few minutes."

Hours would pass and when she returned, her eyes would be all iris and all her conversation shouted.

"Who's up for some KFC?"

And he'd forgive her, right there and then. Stupid kid.

(p. 87)

Sparrow and Miggy's Mum was an addict. She was a sole parent. She was poor, a fringe-dweller and a chancer. Motherhood happens in a social context and her context left her incapable of creating safe spaces, for herself or her children. Sparrow's feelings for her are complicated. Sparrow loved his Mum but she hurt him, burning him with lighters when he was 'naughty'. When Sparrow was five he stopped talking because he felt it made no difference; when he was ten, his mother died of AIDS. She was suffering and his brother smothered her with a pillow.

READ ALOUD the following sections.

DISCUSS Sparrow's relationship with Mum.

- Sparrow watches Mum lie and steal (p. 87)
- Mum physically and emotionally abuses Sparrow (pp. 197-8)
- Death of Mum (p. 203)

Activity 13b: Sparrow & Miggy

Sparrow was bullied by his older brother Miggy. Both Miggy and Mum used to hurt him in the same way, branding Sparrow's skin with the hot metal of a lighter. Miggy used to say he was toughening Sparrow up, and if Sparrow made a noise he would burn him again. Sparrow avoids Miggy and his

gang, the ghost-boys. From his mother, Miggy learnt to abuse others and himself, and also to self-medicate. He is violent and angry and still sometimes hunts Sparrow down to bully him. Sparrow's feelings about Miggy are complicated. He loved him once but now Miggy is too unpredictable. Although the brothers live on the same streets of City Beach in Darwin, they mostly live as strangers.

READ ALOUD the following sections.

DISCUSS Sparrow's relationship with Miggy.

- Sparrow becomes aware of Miggy's paint-sniffing (p. 106)
- Miggy leaves Sparrow to nurse Mum alone (p. 106)
- Sparrow feels powerful causing Miggy to fear him (pp. 123-5)
- Death of Miggy (pp. 136-7)

Activity 14: Sharky & Abby

Sparrow is lucky enough to form some healing relationships. Although he has retained enough self-regard and trust to manage in his community of City Beach, Sparrow is still too alienated to make a life beyond this. The healing relationships he forms over the course of the text save him from this alienation turning to long-term failure.

Activity 14a: Sparrow & Sharky

One of these relationships is with an old man called Sharky who regularly comes down to the lagoon to swim. Sharky teaches Sparrow to swim, and challenges his silence. He also introduces Sparrow to drawing, and cares about his physical wellbeing without interfering.

READ ALOUD the following sections.

DISCUSS Sparrow's relationship with Sharky

- Sparrow and Sharky meet (pp. 20-21)
- Sharky and Sparrow and swimming (pp. 55-56)
- Sparrow plays at being Sharky writing and reading (p. 57)

Activity 14b: Sparrow & Abby

Abby and Sparrow have both been in juvenile detention and she is one of the youths who survived the boating accident. After he has been alone in the wilderness for some time, Sparrow finds Abby near death from the bite of a taipan and nurses her back to life. This intimate act creates a bond between them. They share the experience of what it is to live in troubled families, and with her Sparrow feels both sympathy and empathy. He feels understood. It is Abby who convinces Sparrow to leave his cave and live among people again.

READ ALOUD the following sections.

DISCUSS Sparrow's relationship with Abby.

- The sick Abby reminds Sparrow of Miggy (p. 142)
- The sick Abby reminds Sparrow of Mum (p. 142)
- Sparrow holds the responsibility for her nursing (pp. 142-3)
- Sparrow realises he hasn't had physical contact in years (p. 144)
- Abby teaches Sparrow about respectful sexual contact (p. 197)
- Abby teaches Sparrow about scars and stories (p. 198)

EXTENDED STUDY & RESOURCES

MONSTERS

A list of Australian Aboriginal monsters and their stories, with links to further material
<http://theconversation.com/dreamings-and-place-aboriginal-monsters-and-their-meanings-25606>

An informative website containing historical context for the text of *Frankenstein: the Modern Prometheus* by Mary Shelley
<https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/the-science-of-life-and-death-in-mary-shelleys-frankenstein>

A list of ten most terrifying monsters from Greek myth, including the Medusa and the Cyclops
<http://classicalwisdom.com/top-ten-terrifying-monsters-greek-mythology/>

BOOK: Joshua Gray, *Beowulf: A Verse Adaptation with Young Readers in Mind* Zouch Six Shilling Press 2012. A retelling of the Anglo-Saxon epic 'Beowulf' with its classic monster Grendel (and the even more terrifying Grendel's mother), retold with great artwork throughout
<https://www.amazon.com/Beowulf-Verse-Adaptation-Young-Readers/dp/0985175400>

Analysis: [Asa Simon Mittman, Professor of Art History, California State University]: Enjoyable visual analysis of Giger's *Alien* monster
<http://theconversation.com/gigers-alien-as-close-as-a-monster-can-get-to-perfection-26680>

Article [Becky Little]: Overview of the origin and usage of vampires, including the historic communal belief that tuberculosis and other wasting diseases were the result of vampire action
<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2016/10/vampires-europe-new-england-halloween-history/>

Article [Dheeraj Jangra]: Review of the 2005 remake of *King Kong* discussing three of the major social analyses of the Great Ape as they are played out in this version as well the original 1933 film
<https://toistudent.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/news/top-news/the-symbolism-of-king-kong/19282.html>

What is a golem and how can you make one?
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-golem>

Plot summaries of *Edward Scissorhands*
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0099487/plotsummary>

DRAWING STORIES

Easy and fun starter advice and ideas for making comics and links to other helpful stuff
<https://marekbennett.com/comicsworkshop/diy-comics/>

SURVIVAL LITERATURE

R.M. Ballantyne *Coral Island* (1858) A group of British schoolboys are shipwrecked on a South Pacific island. They survive and remain civilised through the effects of Christianity and British imperialism. The novel emphasises adherence to hierarchy as a major survival strategy, and locates evil outside the boys. This text is imperialistic and old-fashioned but it was the model against which *Lord of the Flies* was written.

William Golding *Lord of the Flies* (1954) In the middle of a nuclear war, a group of British schoolboys is shipwrecked on an island. Slowly but surely the boys descend into savagery. Evil is located within.

Rudyard Kipling *The Jungle Book* (1894) *The Jungle Book* is a selection of moral allegories set in the Indian jungle. The boy Mowgli, or 'frog', appears in three stories in which he is raised by wolves. Eventually he returns to human community, but does not settle well.

Olaf Baker *Shasta of the Wolves* (1919) An abandoned Native American child is raised by a she-wolf in the American wilds. He learns to speak to wild animals but Shasta prefers the wild and is never fully socialized into human company.

Louis Nowra *Into That Forest* (2012) Two girls are lost in the Tasmanian wilderness, and adopted by a pair of thylacine. They survive but their return to human society is deeply traumatic.

GWION (BRADSHAW) & WANDJINA ART

Introduction to the age of the art and mysteries surrounding it

<http://www.bradshawfoundation.com/bradshaws/introduction.php>

The Bradshaw Foundation rock art archive

<http://www.bradshawfoundation.com/bradshaws/index.php>

Collection of images from the Pleistocene: the Chauvet cave art of France

http://www.bradshawfoundation.com/chauvet/panel_of_the_lions.php

A collection of artists and their work on the Mowanju people's website

<http://www.mowanjumarts.com/portfolio>

Mowanjum artists working at their communal studio

<http://www.mowanjumarts.com/studios>

Interview with Mowanjum woman Leah WHO about white responses to Wandjina

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-12-05/aboriginal-people-move-to-reclaim-sacred-wandjina-drawings/8049978>

Good introduction to the place of art in Aboriginal culture

<http://www.aboriginalartonline.com/art/art.php>

Excellent introduction to the historical and contemporary faces of Aboriginal art

<http://australianartnetwork.com.au/regions/urban/>

ABOUT THE WRITERS

SCOT GARDNER

Scot Gardner became a writer after a chance meeting with a magazine editor while hitchhiking in eastern Australia. Magazine articles led to op-ed newspaper pieces and eventually novels. Scot's first fiction for young adults, *One Dead Seagull*, was published after he attended a writing camp with John Marsden.

More than a decade later, his many books have found local and international favour and garnered praise and awards for their honest take on adolescent life. They include books like *White Ute Dreaming*, *Burning Eddy* and most recently *Happy as Larry*, winner of a WA Premier's Book Award for young adult fiction, and *The Dead I Know*, winner of the CBCA Book of the Year Award for Older Readers.

Scot lives with his wife and some chickens in country Victoria.

ANANDA BRAXTON-SMITH

Ananda is a community journalist and author. She has written four books for young adult readers. These include a history of the bubonic plague from 1347 - 1900 entitled *The Death: the horror of the plague* (2009), and the novels of the Secrets of Carrick series: *Merrow* (2010), *Tantony* (2011) and *Ghostheart* (2013). *Merrow* was a CBCA 2010 Notable Book, and was also shortlisted for a 2010 Aurealis award. She has also published a novel for younger readers, *Plenty* (2014). With her husband she sings in a bluegrass band called the HillWilliams, and lives in Victoria's Dandenong Ranges with him and two young adult sons.