Task for The Garret: *Finding Eliza*

**Storytelling and national identity**

- Are these myths based on any ‘real’ historical events?
  - **The Bush**: White pioneers did gradually move out into country areas during the nineteenth century.
  - **Anzac**: The Anzac myth is based on certain ‘real’ historical events (e.g. the landing at Gallipoli)

- Who are the characters featured in the myths?
  - **The Bush**: Bush workers included drovers, stockmen, shearers, fencers and so on. However, over time, the focus changed to landowners (farmers, pastoralists).
  - **Anzac**: Soldiers from the First World War, especially members of the First Australian Imperial Force.

- Who first created the Bush myth?
  - The myth of the Bush was created by Sydney radicals in the 1890s (*Paterson*, *Lawson*, *The Bulletin* magazine.)

- Who first created the Anzac myth?
  - The *Anzac* myth was created by *C.W. Bean*, the official Australian war historian.

- How are the myths endlessly recycled?
  - **The Bush**: Through films (*The Man from Snowy River*), books (*Capricornia* by *Xavier Herbert*), poems (*Judith Wright’s ‘Bullocky’*) and newspaper reports.
  - **Anzac**: Through films (*Gallipoli*), Anzac Day ceremonies, displays at the Australian War Museum, political speeches, the RSL.

- Whose interest is served by these myths?
  - **The Bush**: Rural people and especially large property owners.
  - **Anzac**: The Australian Defence Force, soldiers, politicians who support the expansion of the military.

- What stereotypes have been created to accompany the myth of the Bush and the myth of the Anzacs? (A stereotype is a one-dimensional representation of a certain group.)
  - The swagman
  - The bushman-soldier

- What icons are associated with the myths?
  - **R.M Williams**
  - **Simpson and his donkey**

- What attitudes, values and beliefs are promoted by the myths?
  - **The Bush**: development of country, hard-work, toughness and endurance.
  - **Anzac**: bravery, persistence, loyalty to flag and country.

However, as Richard White says, this version of an Australian national identity is not ‘the truth’ but rather a construction.
The big question, then, is who is excluded from this version? How can excluded Australians challenge the national identity constructed by these two myths? Can you think of any examples?

- Those excluded from this version of the national story based on the myths of the Bush and Anzac include women, Indigenous people and non-Anglo-Saxon Australians.

What connection do those excluded from the dominant version of an Australian national identity have with Larissa Behrendt’s purpose in *Finding Eliza*?

- Larissa Behrendt has set out to show that Eliza Fraser’s story is not a true history but rather a strategy to promote the colonial occupation of Australia.