

Bias, Propaganda, and Manipulation

Media literacy must include explicitly teaching skills in



Deconstructing

Deconstructing media messages



Understanding

Understanding purpose, target audience, and techniques used



Identifying

Identifying persuasive tactics and emotional appeals

How emotional manipulation is taught in the Australian Curriculum

- We do it by default
- Great for creative writing
- An absolute hazard for non-fiction

Australian Curriculum English Year 10

Creating Literature:

“creating a range of students’ own spoken, written or multimodal texts, experimenting with and manipulating language devices for particular audiences, purposes and contexts “

Interacting with others –

“adapting voice effects, such as tone, volume, pitch, pauses and change of pace, for their specific effects such as putting forward a point of view or attempting to persuade an audience to a course of action”

Texts in context

“analysing the ways socio-cultural values, attitudes and beliefs are presented in texts by comparing the ways news is reported in commercial media and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media”

Australian Curriculum Literacy Year 5-6

Express opinion and point of view

- use subjective, objective and evaluative language, and identify bias

We make sure children can use language to manipulate early as well as to know when this is happening to them, but there is no precision to it.

Linguistic tools and manipulation for profit

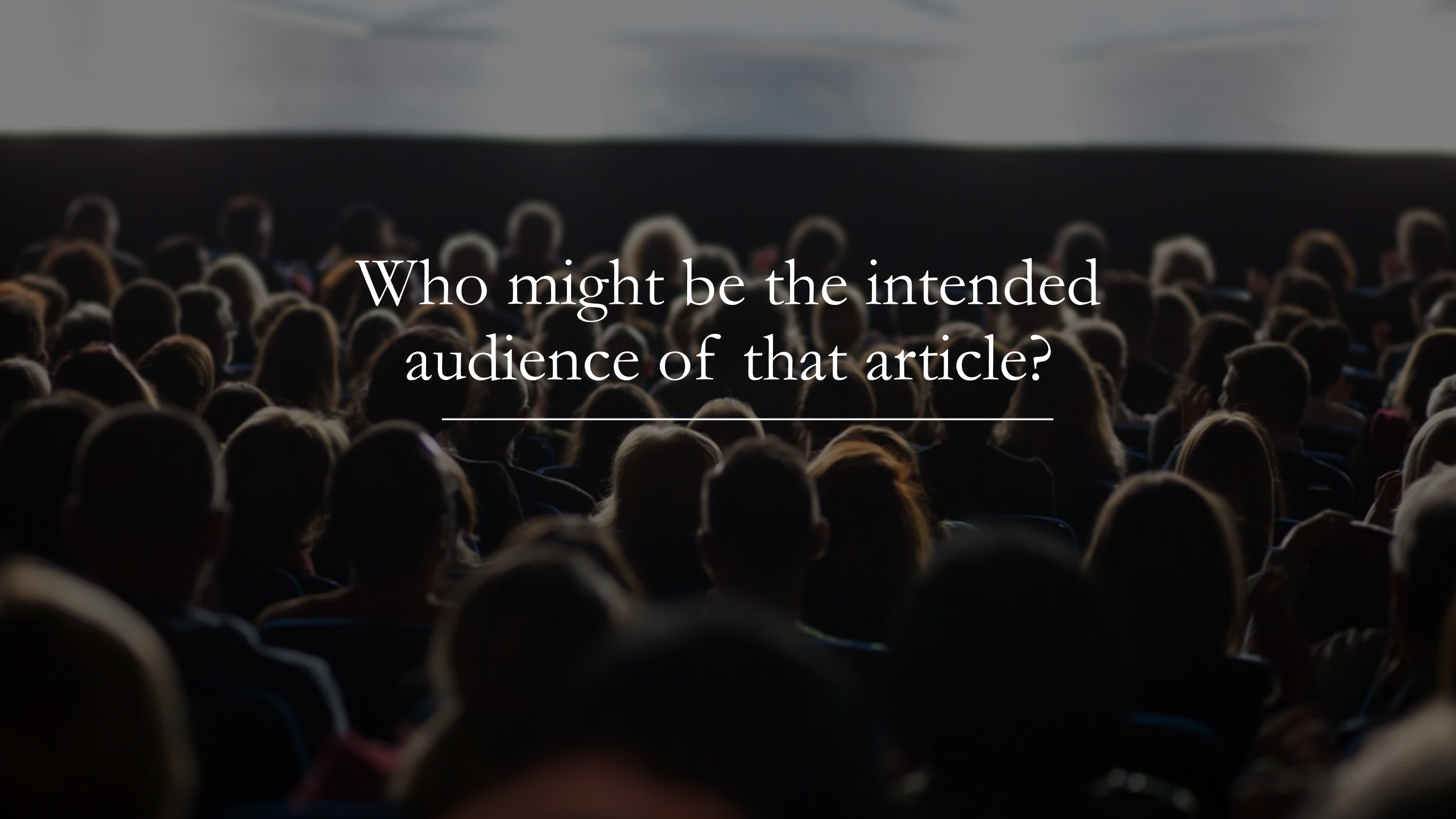
Thompson Speaks Out Against "Cancel Culture" at Rally

Mount Gravatt, QLD - In a move hailed by supporters as a brave stand for free speech, conservative city council candidate Sarah Thompson took the stage at a rally yesterday and defiantly declared she would not be silenced by the "woke mob" of cancel culture social justice warriors.

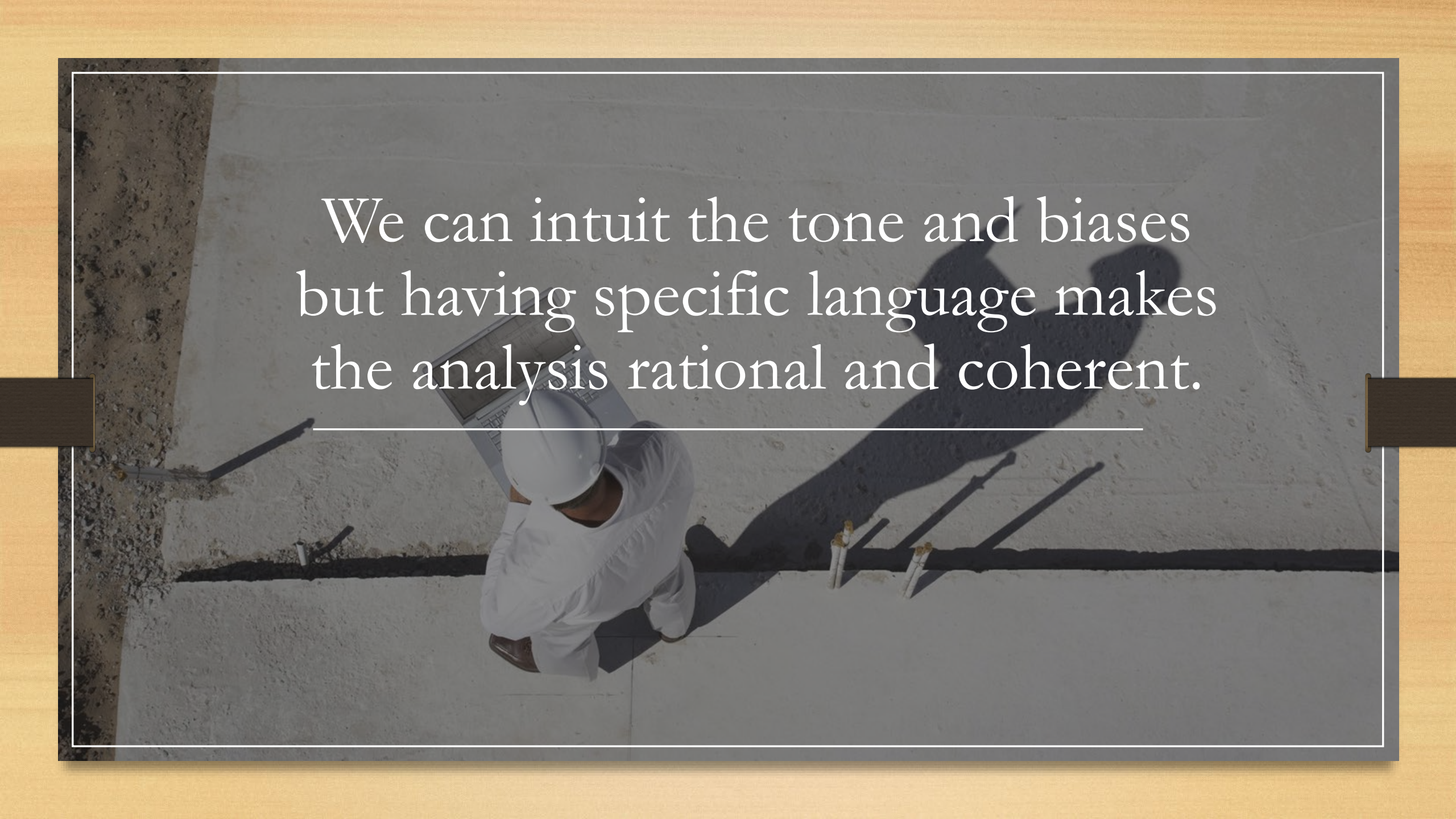
The controversial comments came after a video surfaced last week showing Thompson making disparaging remarks about her opponent's ethnic background at a private fundraiser. Local progressives quickly condemned the statements as racist and hateful.

But rather than apologizing, the defiant political newcomer doubled down in front of a roaring crowd of hundreds.

"The radical left wants to cancel anyone who doesn't agree with their agenda of indoctrinating our kids and erasing our values," Thompson proclaimed, her voice booming through the convention center speakers. "But I'm here to tell you today - Sarah Thompson will not be canceled!"



Who might be the intended
audience of that article?



We can intuit the tone and biases
but having specific language makes
the analysis rational and coherent.

The complexity of bias

Bias is a non-rational influence on our thinking. Sometimes they may be harmless and even useful (e.g. an optimistic leader creates a positive work culture in their organization).

But “non-rational” and “critical thinker” go together like oil and water.

All people are biased – we are in cultures and have experiences and make sense of the world through narratives that make sense to us.

Bias is only a problem if we:

(1) aren't aware of this perspective and

(2) aren't willing to incorporate information that opposes our point of view.

Thompson Speaks Out Against "Cancel Culture" at Rally

Framing

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Single perspective

What about implicit biases?

1. What were the biases in play?
2. In what ways did bias affect the interview?
3. What was the purpose of this interview?
4. What would be a more balanced way of conducting this interview?



What does this term mean to you?

*Politically
correct*

What does this term mean to you?

W O K E

Dog whistles

- These are coded language terms that signify a belonging to certain groups
- The most dangerous nazi is the one who is smart enough to avoid letting most people know they're a nazi or risk losing power and credibility
- These terms have ambiguous or vague meanings to most people, but clearly mean "I am one of you"
- Children may use terms, memes or other iconography inadvertently and normalise these things



Some common dog whistles

Traditional /
family values

Law and order

Silent majority

Real Australian

Cultural
Marxism

Environmental
extremists

Propaganda



DEFINING BIAS,
STEREOTYPES, AND
PROPAGANDA



IDENTIFYING
EXAMPLES IN MEDIA

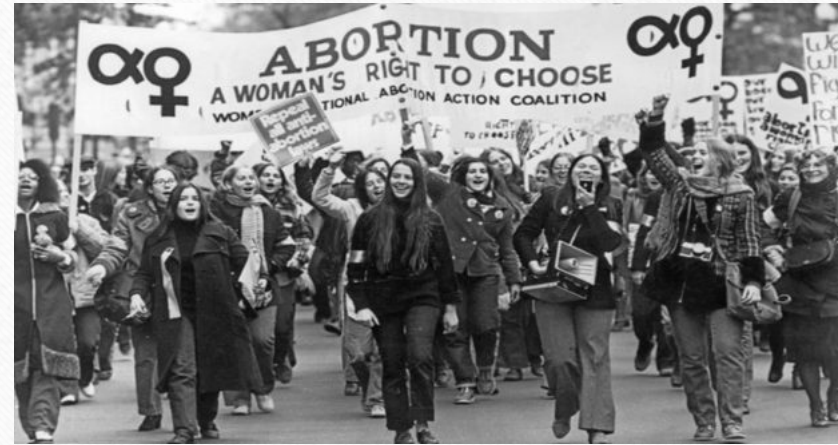


PROMOTING MEDIA
REPRESENTATION
AND DIVERSITY



DOG WHISTLES

What are some issues that you have heard propaganda on?



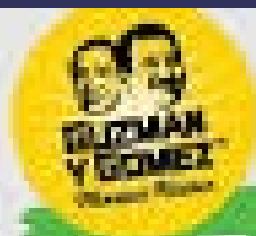
Does this count as
propaganda?



Politics

'He's a walking disaster': Dutton skewers Immigration Minister

Peter Dutton has hit out at Immigration Minister Andrew Giles as the Opposition Leader outlined his plans to fix the housing market by tackling inflated migration levels.



CLEAN *IS THE NEW* **HEALTHY**



NO ADDED PRESERVATIVES

NO ARTIFICIAL FLAVOURS

NO ADDED COLOURS

NO UNACCEPTABLE ADDITIVES

IN OUR FOOD.

AS LONG AS YOU TWEET,



WE CAN'T FAIL!



Analysis by Matt Martino

Labor has just broken its third major promise. Here's why it's unlikely to be the last

By RMIT ABC Fact Check's [Matt Martino](#)

The government's promise to maintain the Coalition's tax cuts is the third to be broken this cycle. But as RMIT ABC Fact Check's Matt Martino writes, there are others that are in trouble you may have missed.

29 Feb 2024





A stack of rolled-up newspapers is shown in a close-up, slightly blurred perspective. The papers are white with some blue and red accents. The word 'HERALD' is clearly visible on the front of one of the rolls. The background is dark and out of focus.

What separates
propaganda from news?

Protecting the kids – direct actions

- Age-appropriate resources and activities
- Digital safety tools (e.g. wellbeing app limiting time on certain apps)
- Monitoring and guiding media consumption
- **These are less important than** the media literacy tools – they limited by your influence, your skill, and your willingness to invade their privacy



Fostering media literacy

01

Engaging children
in discussions
about news

02

Co-creating
understanding
rather than being
prescriptive

03

Modelling good
critical habits –
especially about
our own sources
of information

04

Willingness to be
wrong (fallibility)

Curiosity as a value of inquirers

It moves us to question received opinion and information

To seek new knowledge

It is a truth-seeking value

It can also be seen as an emotion

Journalism and active production of media



THE BEST INOCULANT
IS TO MAKE IT



USING THE TOOLS



WRITING STORIES AND
PRODUCING MEDIA

A yellow magnifying glass is centered in the image, with the text 'Q&A' written in white inside its lens. The background is a solid blue color, and it is filled with numerous question marks of various sizes and opacities, some appearing as faint, light blue marks and others as more prominent, darker grey marks. A thin white horizontal line is positioned below the magnifying glass's handle.

Q&A