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| ***Text: Black Like Me***    ***Produced by/when: Reporter: Stan Grant; Produced by Sharon O’Neill; multimodal text, July 2020. Adapted from the Four Corners program; published online at*** <https://mobile.abc.net.au/news/2020-07-13/stan-grant-black-lives-matter-four-corners/12429206?nw=0&pfmredir=sm> | ***Precise one-two sentence summary of this text:* Stan Grant relates his personal experience of racism as an Aboriginal man in Australia to show that racism remains entrenched in our society but that there is hope for moving forwards if we walk together in unity.**    ***Key people in this text:* Stan Grant and members of his family, key people in the Aboriginal community** |
| ***Syllabus skill*** | ***Notes on studied text*** |
| *Use of generic conventions to achieve purpose*   * + *Identify one or more specific purpose(s)*   + *Make notes on how this purpose is achieved through specific language (identify) and/or textual features?*       Purpose: to interpret the Black Lives Matter protests in Australian context, to respond to questions often heard in Australian national conversation, to persuade us that racism is entrenched in our history and that our history has an ongoing trauma, to give hope that our society is moving forward and can continue to break free if we are unified against racism.      Reading of the text:  The Australian history of dispossession, disempowerment and dehumanization of Aboriginal people has created an ongoing legacy of damage that creates feelings of anger and a need for justice. The everyday racism that continues in Australian society contributes to these feelings for Aboriginal people. Stan Grant interprets the BLM protests of 2020 in light of Australian history and casual racism of some Australian people toward Aboriginal people. | * + Still image in the opening of this text   Red colour predominates with connotation of danger, death, anger  Stan Grant stands still, centred, wearing all black, he has a direct eye gaze, serious facial expression. He is a well-known figure in Australian media, often discussing issues facing Aboriginal people and advocating for elimination of racism. In this image, he is standing as an advocate for Aboriginal people and he is a voice for the experience of racism and he is a bridge between the anger in the Black Lives Matter protests and the non-Aboriginal people in Australia who may not understand this rage. He is serious yet calm – appears trustworthy.  Movement is implied, even though it is a still image. Gesture hands raised, fists closed, holding posters up high, mouths open as if shouting – all this creates a sense of pushing forward, of angry protest. This is linked to the issues being explored – Aboriginal deaths in custody through the words on the signs ‘Stop killing us’ ‘Most incarcerated people on earth’. Along with the red/orange smoky lighting behind the protesters, it creates a feeling of anger, rage.  The American and Aboriginal flags are both present, inking the American and Australian Black Lives Matter movements: both are essential, both countries have racism entrenched. It is not just an American issue.    Written/spoken language   * + Repetition ‘I, me, my, my life’: this is a personal experience of racism, repetition of ‘not’ refuses to reduce racism to statistics or numbers, instead Grant relates stories to illustrate effects of racism in Australia on him, on his family.   + Structure: begins with the current context, using the murder of George Floyd in America to remind Australians of the global history of oppression faced by people of colour. Grant says that George Floyd died ‘under the knee’ and that this is the history of Aboriginal people in Australia also ‘chains, whipped, lynched’. Grant then links this traumatic global and Australian treatment of people of colour to outbursts of rage seen in Black Lives Matter protests globally and nationally, as well as in other examples. He uses the metaphor of a volcano ‘erupts’ and that rage ‘never really leaves us’.      * + Video   Stan Grant speaks directly to camera. There is a plain dark background, he is wearing a dark suit and the camera is mainly close-up focusing us on his face, his eyes, his voice. This creates an intimate feeling, like he is calmly explaining directly to the viewer.  His purpose is to help people understand how the feelings of anger and rage for people of colour are the result of ‘the weight of history’. This metaphor creates the idea that the history of oppression presses down on people of colour and that they are desperate to break free from feeling less than human. Grant says that rage and anger are shouts of people asserting ‘I am human!’.  Grant creates similarity between Black Lives Matter protests in America and those in Australia, ‘we are joining our voices’. This refuses what has been said in Australian media that Aboriginal people are ‘importing’ issues from America.       * + Still image of protest in Sydney   Much like the opening still image, this image though static captures a sense of movement through gestures and posture. The central figure raises a loudspeaker, his mouth is open as if shouting and he stands tall and confident; the figure to the left is leaning forward, others in the background holds signs up high. Many people wear printed t-shirts with ‘Black Lives Matter’ or ‘I can’t breathe’. This links the murder of George Floyd with the deaths of Aboriginal people in custody in Australia. Facial expressions, particularly of the central figure, express anger. Some in the background comes from a figure wearing traditional Aboriginal corroboree body paint and he holds smoking leaves, like a smoking ceremony. This often has connotations of cleansing so in this context, it is like the city streets of Sydney need cleansing from the abuse against Aboriginal people.     * + Grant begins to retell his own experiences with racism, relating personal anecdotes from his childhood where ‘white was normal and I wasn’t normal’. He was taunted and mocked for being Aboriginal. Grant repeats the idea that such a personal history creates an unbearable weight and he ‘can’t shrug it off’. He includes really significant issues facing Aboriginal people such as suicide rates and chronic health problems adding them up to repeat the metaphor ‘the weight of our history’ – all these issues are pressing down on Aboriginal people.     Structure  While Grant includes many serious issues, he quickly refocuses on positives with the repetition of ‘believe’ – ‘believe in our future, believe in ourselves, our own strength, our resilience, our determination’. Creates a sense of hope that, despite the trauma, there can be unity and a future.    Grant goes further back in Australian history to his grandparents and parents’ experiences. He shows examples of the Stolen Generation ‘think white, act white, be white’ and young girls dehumanized with numbers like 658 instead of names.    He draws the text to a close with the repetition of ‘survival’ to show how Aboriginal people overcome tragedy. Finishes with an appeal to viewer’s sense of justice and need for hope with another direct to camera video: Grant reiterates that Aboriginal people should be ‘free from the chains of history’, another similar metaphor that creates the idea that oppression over time binds people; and asks the viewer to ‘walk the last part of the journey with us’, calling for unity.    Aboriginal language is used ‘Yindyamarra Winanghanha’ – to live with respect in a world worth living in.  This strong conclusion ends appealing to the viewers values for community and peace and that we can be part of creating such a world. |

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| *Make notes on how voice reveals values, attitudes reinforced or challenged through the text.* | Whenever Grant speaks to camera, his tone is always calm, serious and intimate. His pace is slow, his voice well-modulated and clear. It seems like he is asking us to be respectful of the issue through his calm and serious tone. His voice is consistently personal, creating a sense of close understanding between the audience and himself. This personal voice is constructed through the use of his own anecdotal experience and that of his family. The repetition of personal pronouns such as ‘I’, ‘my’ create the same kind of personal voice. At times, Grant uses metaphors that have an emotive effect for example he uses the metaphor of a volcano that ‘erupts’ to explain a rage that ‘never really leaves us’. While Grant himself doesn’t exhibit such volcanic rage, the metaphor effectively conveys the feeling that some Aboriginal people have due to the history of racism. Another metaphor repeated is that Aboriginal people face ‘a weight of history’ conveying the intergenerational trauma of racism. The literary style of language is formal without being overly complex and works to create an educated, serious voice. The structure of the text shows Grant links BLM protests in America and those in Australia to prove Aboriginal people face similar issues of injustice in Australia. His voice shows he seeks to educate Australian people, almost teaching us in his serious, calm tone.    Through Grant’s serious, concerned, personal and calm voice in this text, we see he places high value on educating Australian people about the experience of being Aboriginal. He clearly believes that Australian people can work together to bring about justice for Aboriginal people and to eliminate racism. His focus on explaining and interpreting current global events and his educated voice may challenge some opinions about the BLM protests, particularly where we saw anger and rage in action during some protests. His calm manner of speaking takes the rage and makes it intellectual, something we can reason and understand. This creates a more supportive attitude towards BLM protests where we may have been inclined to feel shocked. |

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| *Identify the perspectives offered in the text – particularly paying attention to more than one perspective within a text.*  *Remember that perspective is both viewpoint and context together.*  *Are any perspective in conflict within a text?* | This text offers Stan Grant’s perspective as one of the experiences of Aboriginal people. His opinion is that   * + The Australian history of dispossession, disempowerment and dehumanization of Aboriginal people has created an ongoing legacy of damage that creates feelings of anger and a need for justice. This opinion is shapes by his own context as an Aboriginal man from Wiradjuri, Kamilaroi and Dharawal country. His family were part of Stolen Generations.   + The everyday racism that continues in Australian society contributes to these feelings for Aboriginal people. Stan Grant himself has experienced taunts, mocking and name calling due to his Aboriginality.   + The rage seen in BLM protests stems from a traumatic history for Aboriginal people in Australia.   + Justice is needed for Aboriginal people and Australian people can walk together with Aboriginal people to achieve this. Grant references the context of Aboriginal deaths in custody in Australia as evidence for his opinion for systemic racism in Australia.   + Aboriginal people are resilient, strong and determined and have overcome many obstacles. Again, his personal family context informs this opinion.       Stan Grant is also a journalist, which clearly shapes his educated, serious voice and use of literary language. He values language and stories as being important to educate people about Aboriginal experiences. |

* + Aboriginal people lived and thrived in Australia for thousands of years prior to colonization. Colonisation is also known as invasion where land was forcibly taken from Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people often say that Australian land ‘always was, always will be’ Aboriginal land. Aboriginal people were dispossessed of their homes, separated from their families, killed in frontier wars, disempowered by the law. There is an ongoing legacy of damage that comes from this traumatic history. Further to these examples of national racism, Aboriginal people face individual racism in their daily lives.

* + The Black Lives Matter protests reignited in May 2020 after the murder of George Floyd by police in USA. These protests were against judicial racism by American police. Similar protests happened in Australia for similar reasons – protesting against Aboriginal deaths in custody which many people say go unpunished in Australia. These global protests were often peaceful, sometimes destructive. Statues were pulled down, some property was vandalized and many people seemed surprised by the anger and rage evident at times.

* + These protests generated a lot of heated public debate with very different opinions being expressed, both agreeing with reasons to protest against racism in Australia and disagreeing with the protests.

* + These protests were complicated by the global pandemic, where public gatherings were discouraged and sometimes banned. At times the protests were seen as dangerous to the health of society and so this added to the controversy.

*Link the important aspects of context to how this shapes your understanding of the ideas in the text.*

You need specific reference to both context and features of construction.

* + I’m a privileged white educated woman with a stable job and family. I’ve never faced racism. I admit I was surprised and shocked by some of the rage shown in the BLM protests. Such anger is outside my realm of experience. Therefore, I found the ‘Black Like Me’ text was helpful in interpreting this global event for me from a perspective different from my own. I cannot empathise or walk in the shoes of Aboriginal people. But this text gave me insight into how Aboriginal people might be impacted by the history of Australia and the racism in our society.

* + Visual – still images and videos worked to relate the global issue to an individual person as we see Stan Grant and we also see images of the protests. Stan Grant personalized the BLM protests and therefore I could understand his own story. Understanding one person’s story is a step forward. I believe that’s all we can do – seek to understand each person’s story. His calm, serious demeanor took some of the rage from the issue so that I was not so much shocked and confronted. This way I was more able to listen without being offended.

* + The repetition of personal pronouns reinforced this idea that his personal experience is an example of both the history of being Aboriginal in Australia and the ongoing racism. His anecdotes of personal experiences had a similar effect

* + The overall text appealed to my emotions of sadness and my sense of justice rather than confronting with rage and I think this enabled me to align with his points and gain an understanding of why some protests showed so much rage.

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Through Black Like Me we are positioned to be empathetic towards Aboriginal people and to understand some of the experiences through Stan Grant's anecdotes. While he remains calm and serious, he discusses very emotive events, appealing to our value for freedom, our sense of humanity and our value for justice. George Floyd is someone whose story evokes a lot of emotional impact as the video went viral and many people saw footage of him 'under the knee' of the police officer who murdered him. Stan Grant draws on the emotions of shock and horror that his audience already hold regarding this event. He redirects those emotions towards the treatment of Aboriginal people in Australia. Because Grant comes across as trustworthy with his concerned, educated voice, we respond to his sincerity with sensitivity and shared concern. The photo of his great-aunt as a young girl given a number rather than a name and taken from her family was particularly emotive as we got the sense of a young girl's powerlessness and vulnerability, only because of being Aboriginal.

The repetition of personal pronouns reinforced this idea that his personal experience is an example of both the history of being Aboriginal in Australia and the ongoing racism. His anecdotes of personal experiences had a similar effect. Often we are more likely to care about individual people, rather than large groups as a whole. Stan Grant draws on this by personalizing Aboriginal experience in Australia through his eyes and those of his family.