

YOUNG WRITERS GROUP DIVES INTO THE ARCHIVES

September 24, 2021 Shipwrecks and the Sea and Writing with Sensitivity



When something bad happens in the past it's often called a tragedy? What is a tragedy?

When we hear about something bad happening to someone we know we feel badly why?

Understanding and sharing feeling is sometimes called empathy. Being able to understand what another person is feeling- to put ourselves in another's position.

Is it easier or harder to empathize, to put ourselves in the place, of people who experience tragedy if we don't know them?

What about if they lived in the past?

Often when it comes to history you will hear the word objectivity? What is objectivity?

Being balanced, showing no favoritism or bias towards one side or the other.

What do you think about that?

Unconscious bias. Means humans often have beliefs and biases that we don't know about, especially around race, gender and class.

Bias is prejudice, and it interferes with impartial judgement and objectivity. Because of how human brains are wired, especially when making quick decisions, we all have unconscious bias.

Objectivity and bias are talked about a lot by people who study history. People write history and people come with their own points of view and perspectives, biases and prejudices.

Why is it important to understand bias?

So it's important and useful to try as much as possible to uncover and understand what our perspectives and points of view are – our biases, when writing history. So you know where you are coming from and others do to.

What can historians do, can people do to disrupt their unconscious bias, or understand it?

1. Education – learn and read books from a diversity of perspectives. Join in activities with a diversity of people.
2. Ask others – to critique your work. Critique others' work
3. Talk about bias
 - a. Historians can explain who they are in relation to their work. For example, why they are writing on this topic, and what their motivations and questions are.
 - b. You can frame this for yourself even when you are writing fiction: Who are you in relation to this story. Why are you writing your chosen point of view etcetera.

How do you think bias might be an issue in historical fiction?

1. Stereotypes – oversimplified image

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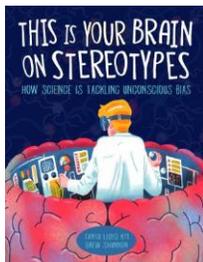
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2. Tropes – repetitive literary devices
 3. Cultural Appropriation- writing from the point of view of a culture or gender that is not your own. Power relationships.
- So being aware of bias, being critical of our perspective and avoiding stereotypes and tropes – this all sounds like it makes us better at writing.

Our mission today if we choose to accept it is to write sensitively about the shipwreck at dinner rock. Considering what we know about unconscious bias- how might we do this?

Booklist



Title: This is your brain on stereotypes: how science is tackling unconscious bias

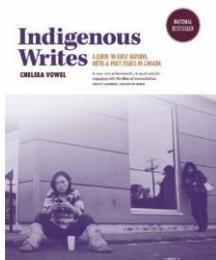
Author: Kyi, Tanya Lloyd, 1973-

Shelf Number: J 303.385 KYI



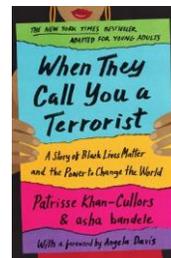
Title: Intersection allies : we make room for all

Author: Johnson, Chelsea.
Shelf Number: J 305 JOH



Title: Indigenous writes: a guide to First Nations, Métis & Inuit issues in Canada

Author: Vowel, Chelsea.
Preferred Shelf Number: 971.004 VOW



Title: When they call you a terrorist : a story of Black Lives Matter and the power to change the world

Author: Khan-Cullors, Patrisse, 1984-

Shelf Number: TEEN 921 KHA



Title: On the news: our first talk about tragedy

Author: Roberts, Jillian, 1971-

Shelf Number: J 303.485 ROB



Title: Channel kindness : stories of kindness and community

Author: Lady Gaga.

Shelf Number: TEEN 177.7 CHA