

Sam Kearney

A Purple Picture

REFLECTION STATEMENT

In a world of growing hate and division, haunted by the looming spectre of autocracy, I have found it difficult to remain faithful to democracy's bedrock - political language. However, I remain cognisant of language's ability to unify and strengthen communities, from Julia Gillard's misogyny speech to Kevin Rudd's apology to the Stolen Generations. While my hybridised political satire 'A Purple Picture' was borne out of my faith in the power of language to unite, I came to understand the unique space in which effective political language operates. Ellison's notion of a "purple picture", which is the perfect blend of colours to generate extraordinary beauty, formed the foundation of my work; mixing red and blue creates ideal political discourse, and when these primary colours are combined, the world is transformed.

I do not dare to provide a definitive solution to the linguistic crisis plaguing modern Australia. Instead, this work is truly an embrace of language's flawed, beautiful complexity. It is an invitation to the audience to demand the best of their political leaders and fight for a language that reflects us as humans, imperfectly perfect but grounded in truth and mutual respect. Anthony Albanese's Garma Festival address is a glimpse of purple hope; I implore my audience to grab onto it with all their might and don't ever let go.

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FOREWORD

I do not wish to waste your time in a lengthy foreword; however, there is one point I must make clear. The original script was created for an Australian context in 2022 to critique the appalling state of political discourse, advocate for change to that system, and to bring together the disparate threads of language in modern Australia and blend them into a deep “*purple picture*”, the ideal form of democratic discourse. However, the composition and protection of the “*purple picture*” is an ongoing process that must continually be reignited to prevent the malicious misuse of language for personal or political gain.

The exploitation of language hinders democracy. Only ongoing critical evaluation by the public can resolve this crisis, which is why this play and others like it must remain discussed, performed, and consumed. In that spirit this script has been specifically written so that future playwrights can alter characters, settings, names, and parts of dialogue to make the key message of the play relevant to their contextual concerns. Sadly, this story is flexible and timeless and avoidable.

It is my desire that this script, and more broadly language both political and apolitical, be used nobly: to provide each of us with a voice; for communication, for advocacy and for identity, enabling us to contribute to the 65, 000-year-old community that is Australia.

Characters

Michel Foucault

A middle-aged man. Bald, clean-shaven and wears large square-style glasses. Grey tweed pants, a leather belt, and a white turtleneck. Speaks with a strong French accent. Dialogue is fast-paced, dismissive, and often sarcastic.

Perspective: Approaches political discourse by analysing its use in building, reinforcing, and maintaining power. Sees discourse as all-encompassing but subjective and fluid; its meaning changes with the social values and conventions of its context.

Marcus Tullius Cicero

A middle-aged to older man. Balding but still has hair and is clean-shaven. Wears a toga trabea and speaks with an Italian accent. Speaks with a very dramatic tone.

Perspective: Approaches political discourse as integral to the functioning of any government. Sees discourse as a performative, dramatic relationship between the orator and the receiver in which each party takes on roles that the other must seek to convince. Advocated for a return to more simplistic discourse and language in which the everyday citizen can make their voice heard. He described his oratory model as: “*Docere, Delectare, Movere*” – “*To Teach, To Delight, To Move*”

Eric Arthur Blair – George Orwell

Young to middle-aged man. Thick black hair and a moustache. Wears a tweed suit with a patchwork tie and speaks in upper received pronunciation.

Perspective: Orwell sees insincerity as the greatest challenge to discourse. That is, when an orator seeks to hide their true intentions, they inevitably move to long, meaningless, and complex language that corrupts thought and identity. He argues that users of language must actively choose to diverge from this to a more practical, clear, and true discourse.

Lucky

Lucky is a woman. She carries a heavy bag, a folding stool, a picnic basket, a greatcoat, and a rope passed around her neck.

Perspective: She laments the failure of theorists, philosophers, academics, and humanity in general to create a discourse that advances and improves the majority of people's quality of life. She calls for immediate change from the status quo to a simplistic language that serves both its users and receivers, is not overanalysed, and is not open to manipulation.

These characters are archetypes and can be played by a small ensemble of performers who play every character in each of these scenes, or they can be individual performers.

Politicians

Speaker
Prime Minister
Opposition Leader
Government Member
Opposition Member

Public Service

Secretary to the Department of Defence
Assistant Secretary to the Department of Defence
Journalist

Advocacy Group

O Member
W Member
Celebrity 1
Celebrity 2
Ensemble

Media

News Anchor 1
News Anchor 2
News Anchor 3

Note on Set:

The main stage (Stage 1) is bare, apart from set pieces brought on for each vignette. The entire upstage wall will be a screen. In front of and separated from the main stage will be an oval dais (Stage 2). The main stage will be 1.5m higher than the dais. This dais will have a circular table and six chairs: three for the theorists and three empty. A large, frosted glass sphere with a LED inside will be suspended above the centre of the table on the dais. There will be a small square platform suspended above and stage left of the main stage. LUCKY will remain on this platform for much of the play.

Scene One

There is a blue glow on LUCKY who is suspended above Stage 1 on a small square platform. A large bag, picnic basket, stool and greatcoat sit next to her and there is a rope around her neck. White LEDs light Stage 2, with a spotlight on the centre table. The sphere light is off. CICERO stands behind the desk which has three glasses and a jug of water on it, intensely studying an open scroll. ‘RECORD OF PAST LANGUAGE REVIEWS’ is written on the back of the scroll. After about ten seconds FOUCAULT and ORWELL enter from stage left.

CICERO: You sure took your time (*annoyed*).

FOUCAULT: It's not like we are running out of it anytime soon.

ORWELL: Besides, the latest influx of spiritual beings was rather excited to see us.

CICERO: Right. Well, we best get into it, don't want it to run into next year again...

FOUCAULT: Whose fault was that again?

CICERO: (*ignoring him, he stands*) I hereby...

ORWELL: Apologies. One question. The purpose of the empty chairs?

CICERO: Let's just say they weren't meant to be empty. (*Under his breath but audible to audience*) I made sure they were. (*Back to normal volume*) I hereby call the approximately 138, 608th Human Language Review open. I remind my colleagues that we would like to advance through this year's review with as little conflict as possible. For the minutes, I will ask the members of the panel to introduce themselves and note that our female and youth representatives, unfortunately, could not make it today, and neither could our representative from the Australian First Nations people. As the Chair I shall begin. (*CICERO walks around the dais using over-dramatic arm gestures throughout*) I am Marcus Tullius Cicero, the great Roman orator, fighting for a voice to the people, giving them a guide for expression. A guide for creating a discourse of advocacy, a mechanism for becoming the orator they desperately need to be because thoughts cannot be allowed to shine without the light of language. I rest.

CICERO sits down. ORWELL is rolling his eyes and sighs as FOUCAULT stands up.

FOUCAULT: I am Michel Foucault, it's my hypothesis that the individual is not a pre-given entity that is seized on by the exercise of power (*bangs the desk with his knuckles*). The individual, with his identity and characteristics, is the product of a relation of power exercised over bodies (*bang*), multiplicities (*bang*), movements (*bang*), desires (*bang*), and forces (*bang*), and it is language that binds and fuels those relations (*bang*).

FOUCAULT sits down and ORWELL stands up.

ORWELL: (*Spoken like a radio presenter*) I am Eric Arthur Blair. I believe prose consists less and less of words chosen for the sake of their meaning, and more and more of phrases tacked together like the sections of a prefabricated henhouse. What is needed, above all, is to let the meaning choose the word, and not the other way about.

ORWELL sits down, as FOUCAULT silently giggles disapprovingly. LUCKY groans and moves about as if about to speak then CICERO presses a button on his remote which makes the blue light on LUCKY flash once, silencing him.

CICERO: (*Ignoring what just happened*) Thank you noble gentlemen. Now, our review has been assigned to Australia.

ORWELL: How quaint!

FOUCAULT: I do not see the need. Considering there are football clubs in that nation using my work. Football clubs.

ORWELL: I would agree. I have a memory of a paper I read about the Japanese prisoner of war camps. I believe it said the Americans were the great individualists of the camps, the capitalists, the cowboys, the gangsters. The British hung on to their class structure like bulldogs, for grim death; how predictable. The Australians kept trying to construct little male-bonded welfare states...

CICERO: Despite their seemingly plebian-like demeanour their politics are as nasty as the Roman senate. We shall be assessing the state of political discourse within this nation, and I must warn you that they are exhibiting incredibly worrying signs of decay...

ORWELL: Not another America?

CICERO: Not yet, but I am afraid it bears the same markers of decline...

FOUCAULT: Considering Georgy's last failure, perhaps his presence is counter-productive?

ORWELL: I seem to remember a certain, very tanned man, failing to comprehend your tome of recommendations Michel.

FOUCAULT: If you think I was bad, wait until you encounter Derrida my friend. At least my most popular work is not a manual for totalitarianism everywhere. Can you say the same?

CICERO: Enough. We are not failing again. At the completion of our review, we must disseminate concrete solutions into the minds of capable Australians. Are we ready to begin?

ORWELL nods.

FOUCAULT: One moment, please.

FOUCAULT moves very slowly. He takes a glass, fills it with water, drinks the whole glass and then refills it with water. The other two men stare at him with rising anger.

CICERO: Ready?

FOUCAULT: What? We have plenty of time. The orb is still unlit.

CICERO glares at FOUCAULT

FOUCAULT: *(taking his time)* Ready.

CICERO: *(badly hiding anger)* Thank you.

CICERO pulls out his remote, holds it up to the audience, points it to Stage 1, presses a button and the lights go out on Stage 2 and up on Stage 1.

Scene Two

There is a blue glow on LUCKY who is suspended above Stage 1 on a small square platform. A warm Fresnel wash lights Stage 1. A table with two despatch boxes on the left and right sides sits in centre stage. There are two chairs facing each other on either side of the table and one facing the audience upstage of the table. An image of the Australian House of Representatives chamber is shown on the upstage screen. SPEAKER sits in the upstage chair, PRIME MINISTER stands at the stage right despatch box while GOVERNMENT MEMBER sits on the stage right chair. OPPOSITION LEADER sits on the stage left chair while OPPOSITION MEMBER stands at the stage left despatch box.

PRIME MINISTER: *(Throughout this the OPPOSITION LEADER and MEMBER are booing and shouting at the PRIME MINISTER, amplified by a soundtrack playing from the parliament of members interjecting)* Mr Speaker, those opposite are hopeless excuses for an opposition, pandering to Australia's biggest polluters. They want Australia to be like that movie – The Croods – never leaving the cave. Mr Speaker they are even led by a weak man beholden to the fossil fuel unions. He's like a lizard on a rock, alive but looking dead *(the shouting from the opposition erupts as the GOVERNMENT MEMBER shouts back)*.

SPEAKER: The Prime Minister will resume his seat. The Opposition Member has the call.

OPPOSITION MEMBER: Mr Speaker, I move that the Prime Minister must withdraw that unfounded and undignified slur *(cheers are heard)*.

SPEAKER: The Prime Minister will withdraw.

PRIME MINISTER: *(smirking)* Of course I withdraw Mr Speaker, but that does not detract from the incompetent rabble opposite who are all talk no action, no matter what the desiccated coconut who leads them might say *(shouting erupts)* ...

OPPOSITION MEMBER sits down as OPPOSITION LEADER stands up

SPEAKER: The Opposition Leader has the call. The Prime Minister will resume his seat.

OPPOSITION LEADER: Sit down boofhead!

Shouts erupt and the OPPOSITION MEMBER stands up and points at the PRIME MINISTER while banging his head with his fist. The PRIME MINISTER laughs as he pulls out his phone and turns his back to the OPPOSITION LEADER. SPEAKER: The Opposition Leader will withdraw.

OPPOSITION LEADER: Of course, I will happily withdraw and simply draw attention to the fact that those opposite have absolutely nothing to say but petty insults. Mr Speaker they are poor representatives of their community who have simply achieved nothing and continue to degrade public debate. Oh wait, I am wrong, it seems their one achievement is destroying Australia's international standing. You would think the foreign minister might actually think before she opens her big fat trap and says stupid things in this parliament *(hear-hear is heard)*.

GOVERNMENT MEMBER moves to the despatch box.

SPEAKER: Government Member has the call.

GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Mr Speaker, I suggest to the Opposition Leader that if he wants to continue ridiculing the Prime Minister, may he please do it without the insults he feigns to disdain. Perhaps the hypocrite is not capable of that. Although, in all honesty, debating with him is like being flogged by warm lettuce. *(Loud uproar from the opposition side)* He should also remember how privileged he is because even now, not far from here, such protest is being met with bullets, but not here, Mr Speaker, not to them in this country.

Noise erupts from both sides. The PRIME MINISTER stands up and shakes his hand, with fingers in a 'V' shape vigorously at the OPPOSITION LEADER while laughing. The OPPOSITION LEADER is still at the despatch box.

OPPOSITION MEMBER: Hang in your badge Adolf!

SPEAKER: The Government Member and Opposition Member will withdraw!

GOVERNMENT MEMBER: I withdraw (*he steps back*).

OPPOSITION MEMBER: Of course, the same.

SPEAKER: The Opposition Leader.

OPPOSITION LEADER: Thank you Mr Speaker. I suggest to my colleague opposite that his racist kind is unworthy of anything other than insult Mr Speaker. Indeed, they are the cockroaches of this place (*uproar from both sides*).

SPEAKER: The Opposition Leader will withdraw!

OPPOSITION LEADER: Apologies Mr Speaker. The prejudiced, hateful, and racist government who said, and I quote, 'January 26 wasn't a flash day for the people on those vessels either'. I do not mind when the election is Mr Speaker, because I am going to enjoy doing you slowly.

GOVERNMENT MEMBER: At least I keep my legs shut!

Shouts, boos, and cheers erupt from both sides as the four politicians on stage shout and ridicule each other in chaos. They stand up and yell over the table. Pointing at each other and making obscene, farcical, and exaggerated physical insults with their bodies.

SPEAKER: Order! Order! I will have order! (*He is ignored*)

The four men get on the table and start wrestling with each other until they are lying on the table while the SPEAKER continues to shout. The chaos continues until with a snap it ends as the lights on Stage 1 blackout and come up on Stage 2.

Scene Three

There is a blue glow on LUCKY who is suspended above Stage 1 on a small square platform. A large bag, picnic basket and stool sit next to her, there is a rope around her neck, and she has picked up the greatcoat. White LEDS light Stage 2, with a spotlight on the centre table. CICERO is holding the remote up and presses the button just as the lights change. The sphere is flashing red very slowly.

CICERO: Fascinating.

FOUCAULT: Isn't it.

ORWELL: Almost primitive.

CICERO: Animalistic. Reminds me of the republic. Ahh, the good days ...

ORWELL: It was horrific. Not a single word had any beneficial meaning. Simply a string of insults with no grand strategy... and look at the orb.

CICERO: (*Worried*) It is fine, just a slow pulse, still plenty of time before the nation collapses.

FOUCAULT: (*Condescendingly*) Now, now George. We must remember that those words are a mechanism for their maintenance of power. Perhaps it is just in their nonsensical nature that lies the genius. Too hard for the common voter to follow.

ORWELL: It is language designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind. This is far worse than we thought.

FOUCAULT: Ambitious of you to be so sure, isn't it Georgy?

ORWELL: George, sir, it is George. It is not. Consider where they started: with climate change, with one leader calling out the other for inaction. When, in reality, both are united in their inaction and severely beholden to the groups they condemn. What were the numbers again Cicero?

CICERO flicks through several pages.

CICERO: Ahh, here we are. Nearly \$500,000 to the red party and over \$1,000,000 to the blue party.

ORWELL: Precisely. Simply giving solidity to absolute wind. It is quite disgraceful if I do say so myself. This is a disaster; they are nearly too far gone.

FOUCAULT: Give it a rest Georgy. Your conclusions are quite juvenile. Consider the fact that their context shapes the meaning of the words. All this extraneous information is irrelevant, the insults help them maintain power within the specific context of parliament. Think a little bit more.

ORWELL is growing visibly angry.

CICERO: Michel our job is not to praise them it is to prevent...you know what.

ORWELL: To prevent this. (*To CICERO*) May I?

CICERO nods. ORWELL takes the remote off CICERO and presses a button. An excerpt from a debate between Donald Trump and Joseph Biden plays on the back screen from 1:40 to 2:05. Transcript:

BIDEN: A lot of people died, and a lot more are gonna die unless he gets a lot smarter a lot quicker

MODERATOR: Mr. President

TRUMP: Did you use the word smart? Ahh... So you said you went to Delaware State, but you forgot the name of your college. (BIDEN laughs) You didn't go to Delaware State. You graduated either the lowest or almost the lowest in your class. Don't ever use the word smart with me, don't ever use that word.

BIDEN: Oh, give me a break.

TRUMP: Because you know what, there's nothing smart about you Joe.

The screen turns off

CICERO: Thank Jupiter they are not that far gone.

FOUCAULT: He is a master isn't he. It's funny. All you must do is say something nobody understands, and they'll do practically anything you want them to.

ORWELL: Michel, snap out of it. Don't you see how Australia is sitting on a knife edge? Look at the orb!

FOUCAULT ignores him.

CICERO: Orwell is right. We must move quickly before Machiavelli's legacy becomes any more destructive.

CICERO raises the remote and presses the button. BLACKOUT on Stage 2 and lights up on Stage 1.

Scene Four

There is a blue glow on LUCKY who is suspended above Stage 1 on a small square platform. There is a sharp, white spotlight on the SECRETARY and ASSISTANT SECRETARY and a sharp, white spotlight on the journalist. There are two lecterns in centre stage next to each other. The screen displays the Defence Department logo. There is a desk extreme downstage where the JOURNALIST sits facing the lecterns, with back to the audience, the entire scene. The two departmental officials speak almost robotically and, at times, painfully slowly. After the lights come up, the SECRETARY enters from stage left, and the ASSISTANT SECRETARY enters from stage right. They move symmetrically and march very robotically, pausing after every step. They walk until they reach the lectern on their side and stand tall, with arms completely straight

by their sides, facing the audience. 'Vader's Redemption' (A reworked version of The Imperial March by John Williams in a Major Key by Ian Gordon) plays throughout their entrance until they are stood still at the lecterns.

JOURNALIST: Thank you to both of you for agreeing to this interview.

SECRETARY: Our pleasure, it is vital that we communicate the strategic realities to the Australian populace writ large.

ASST. SECRETARY: Seconded.

JOURNALIST: What do you think is the greatest defence challenge facing Australia?

SECRETARY: *(Takes a long sip of water)* We live in a challenging world and as such there are a variety of multi-faceted, highly specific, and unique strategic blockades facing us as a nation and a member of a region...

ASST. SECRETARY: Precisely. It is in fact that challenge that is the greatest challenge.

JOURNALIST: The challenge being?

SECRETARY: As I said: the unique strategic blockades.

JOURNALIST: Which are?

ASST. SECRETARY: Highly dangerous, volatile, and diverse trials...

JOURNALIST: I think we'll move on. Was the Solomon Islands' recent deal with China your fault?

SECRETARY: That is a complex question.

ASST. SECRETARY: Indeed, a compound one.

SECRETARY: It was induced by a succession of global, domestic, foreign, regional, international, and malicious factors that are unpredictable and require newfound efforts to combat.

ASST. SECRETARY: Indeed, we have never lived in a more hazardous world. Our region is sitting on the precipice of possible, however avoidable, although conceivable, perhaps large, or then again localised, but altogether destructive skirmishes, potential conflict, that could, in the foreseeable future be considered war, but then again may never develop to that benchmark.

SECRETARY: Commendably seconded.

JOURNALIST: Final question for the two of you then. Should Australia send troops to Ukraine?

ASST. SECRETARY: The situation is, has, was and will for the foreseeable future be highly volatile.

SECRETARY: It is indeed a hot issue, which may make it inappropriate to comment on.

ASST. SECRETARY: Except to say that, which has already been said, this is a complex issue and as always, the Department, its subsidiaries, arms, and offices are navigating the obstructions and contemplating the multi-faceted and various ways in which we as a united organisation can safely, and in our national interest, attempt to aid the people, state or grouping that is Ukraine or identifies as Ukrainian.

SECRETARY: Of course, that is, that has been said, what is appropriate to say.

JOURNALIST: Secretary and Assistant Secretary for Defence, thank you for your time tonight.

SECRETARY AND ASST. SECRETARY: Our gracious and unreserved gratitude for your mighty invitation.

'Vader's Redemption' plays again as they robotically exit on the sides closest to their lectern. After they have exited the music stops and BLACKOUT on Stage 1 and lights up Stage 2.

Scene Five

There is a blue glow on LUCKY who is suspended above Stage 1 on a small square platform. A large bag and picnic basket sit next to her, there is a rope around her neck, and she has picked up the greatcoat and stool. White LEDS light Stage 2, with a spotlight on the centre table. The sphere is flashing red, now faster than before but still slow. CICERO is holding the remote and presses the button as the lights change. FOUCAULT is sipping on a cup of coffee while ORWELL continues to look annoyed.

CICERO: That was perhaps the least engaging, most preposterous rhetoric I have ever consumed. I mean, it was boring ... it was a failure.

ORWELL: They didn't answer a single question. Nearly every word they said was unnecessary. They are tied down to a language that makes up in obscurity what it lacks in style.

FOUCAULT: I may just agree with you two on this one. The overload of needless words eliminated any chance of gaining enough contextual understanding to ascertain meaning. The only purpose possible would be that they set out to confuse their audience.

ORWELL: Highly likely.

CICERO: I am not so sure. I have watched these kinds of people quite intently. They seem to revel in boring language, in combing dictionaries for the most complex word to express otherwise simple concepts. It's common amongst economists but especially these men, public servants. They are possibly some of the most boring speakers to have ever donned the title of orator.

ORWELL: Are you suggesting they are well-meaning?

CICERO: I believe so. Yes. They just need more rhetorical power!

LUCKY groans and moves about as if about to speak.

ORWELL: What was that?

CICERO presses a button which makes the blue light on LUCKY flash once, silencing him.

CICERO: *(suspiciously)* Creaking planks I am sure...

FOUCAULT: *(chuckles)* Rhetorical power? What a ridiculous phrase. It is all about maintaining power, my friends. These men are not immune to the follies of their elected counterparts. They just want national power, not political power. They desire agility and freedom from the conventions established by strong rhetoric. It is their confusing language that maintains and builds their power to act.

ORWELL: That shouldn't be the way it is.

FOUCAULT: Alas, my friend. It is the way it is.

ORWELL: Cut that tone out.

FOUCAULT: *(Sensing an ability to start conflict)* I am simply building a window where once there were walls, please don't come after the glazier.

ORWELL: It is not about your message it is about your delivery method, and you fully understand that, sir. Their insincerity undermines those they are meant to serve. Their language corrupts real thought...

FOUCAULT: My language seems to be corrupting your real thoughts.

ORWELL: I suggest you refrain good sir and make your meaning clear. Stop hiding behind vague retorts.

CICERO: Cease at once. You both know how serious the situation is. This is not a platform for grandstanding. We must move on; they are drifting further down the path of no return as we speak. The orb has sped up! (*FOUCAULT giggles as ORWELL continues to look disparaged.*)

CICERO raises the remote and presses the button. BLACKOUT on Stage 2 and lights up on Stage 1.

Scene Six

There is a blue glow on LUCKY who is suspended above Stage 1 on a small square platform. A warm Fresnel wash lights Stage 1. The stage is bare. On the screen there is an image of Parliament House. On stage is a lead protester (O MEMBER) dressed in an orange shirt and an opposing lead protester (W MEMBER) in a white shirt. The two advocates are handing out flyers to the ensemble. The ensemble (varying in size depending on performer numbers but at least 4) is walking around the stage accepting flyers, reading them, and reacting to the two advocates.

O MEMBER: (*On a megaphone*) It's time to fight for change! Come get a shirt! Use your vote to change the government! Join the cause!

W MEMBER: (*Also on a megaphone*) Don't surrender to the radicals! If you want freedom! If you want to be able to say and do what you want, it's time to fight back! Are you sick of lockdowns? Do you want to stop the loss of jobs due to climate action extremists? Join Us!

Slowly members of the ensemble begin falling behind each of the advocates until there is about an even number behind each. Once they have fallen behind one, they start cheering on their advocate and booing the other.

O MEMBER: Thank you all for turning out today. How great is the turnout? It's time to make sure it doesn't go to waste.

W MEMBER: You lot should feel lucky you can protest, not want more. You know in other places in the world, your kind of marches are being met with bullets!

O MEMBER: This is why we need change. People like you are so tone deaf you don't understand the idiocy of what you just said. Come on guys, 'Out with the old, In with the new'

The O group starts chanting.

W MEMBER: That's it! Out with the old, in with the new!

O MEMBER: They aren't gonna get us that easy are they guys. Come on! 'We Want Freedom'

The W group starts chanting. Both groups are now competing with chants.

W MEMBER: We Want Freedom!

The chanting continues.

O MEMBER: It's time to bring out the big guns! Are you ready?

The O group shouts 'Yes' then goes back to chanting. CELEBRITY 1 runs out. As they run past the O MEMBER they hand the celebrity a densely filled envelope with '\$10,000' written on the outside. The celebrity takes it and moves to centre stage with cheers welcoming them from both sides.

CELEBRITY 1: Hey everyone. It's great to be here supporting the orange team! (Boos erupt from the W side as the O side continues to cheer and the celebrity pulls out her phone and starts filming herself) Hi TikTok, all five million of you, who have been gracious enough to follow me. Let's get down here today and support the great work they are doing. They need our help to succeed! Let's do this.

CELEBRITY 1 is in centre stage. The TikTok remix of 'Blinding Lights' by The Weekend plays as CELEBRITY 1 and two members of the O group do the TikTok dance to this song. LEDs of different colours strobe across the stage during the dance.

W MEMBER: (*On megaphone*) Just remember you started this. Here we go.

CELEBRITY 2 runs out.

CELEBRITY 2: (*Puts down her phone to film*) Get down here and help the white team protect you and your family's freedoms! Let's fight for it!

The TikTok remix of 'Say it Right' by Nelly Furtado plays as CELEBRITY 2 and two members of the W group do the dance. The O side boos as the W side cheers. LEDs of different colours strobe across the stage during the dance.

O MEMBER: *(On a megaphone)* Let's take it back to them guys!

CELEBRITY 1: Here goes it!

The TikTok remix of 'Coincidance' by Handsome Dancer plays. CELEBRITY 1 and O MEMBER perform the dance to this song. LEDs of different colours strobe across the stage during the dance.

W MEMBER: *(On a megaphone)* We've got one more thing in our case to make freedom win! Everyone together!

The TikTok remix of 'Swing' by Joel Fletcher and Savage plays. The entire W group does the 'Trump Dance Challenge'. The TikTok of Trump dancing plays on the screen during the dance. LEDs of different colours strobe across the stage during the dance. They repeat the dance over and over as the entire O group does the same dance. The two groups dance towards each other and just before they meet the lights blackout on Stage 1 and come up on Stage 2.

Scene Seven

There is a blue glow on LUCKY who is suspended above the main stage on a small square platform. A large bag sits next to her, there is a rope around her neck, and she has picked up the greatcoat, stool, and picnic basket. White LEDS light Stage 2, with a spotlight on the centre table. The sphere is flashing red, again faster than before. CICERO is holding the remote up and presses the button just as the lights change. ORWELL looks angry at what he has just seen, FOUCAULT is chuckling, and CICERO is standing up applauding.

CICERO: Now that was some powerful stuff. That is how you work a crowd. Find what they care about and perform to them.

FOUCAULT: They were indeed successful in gaining that group's support but as for the dancing...I am not too sure.

CICERO: It was a testament to beautiful language and the language of dance! What did Camus say "man cannot do without beauty, and this is what our era pretends to want to disregard"

ORWELL: That was horrendous. Nothing meant anything. We are back to the start again. I will concede that these people have embraced simple vocabulary and symbolism, but it is almost too simple.

FOUCAULT: *(Laughs)* Too simple now, huh?

ORWELL: It is so simple it is in fact now having the same effect the over-complex language had. It has no meaning. It is simply phrases chosen to incite anger and passion rather than to convey a pre-determined meaning. Political language is broken.

CICERO: That is far from fair Mr Orwell. Those protestors gave impassioned speeches, they knew their audience and they brought out their most innate wants and needs. To be heard on the issues that matter to them. Isn't that powerful speech? Isn't that language providing a voice to those who have so far not been heard?

FOUCAULT: Both of you are being absurd. Orwell, language is most definitely not broken and Cicero you believe in people far too much. They chose their words for their own gain not to provide a voice. Come down from the clouds. Georgy, isn't this just the purpose of political language, to gain power, and hence it is not 'broken' but rather functioning exceptionally well?

ORWELL: That is an incredibly sad way of looking at the world. These proles are indeed the path to change but they cannot achieve that if the extent of their rebellion is pre-made three-word slogans and dances. The orb agrees with me. Please look at it!

FOUCAULT: I put it you that in effect your method of critique is the ineffectual and 'sad' method. A critique does not consist in saying that things aren't good the way they are. It consists in seeing on just what type of assumptions, of familiar notions, of established and unexamined ways of thinking the accepted practices are based.

ORWELL: Very well, however you stop before the final step, before condemning those accepted practises and building a new convention of language, rather you just point out the self-evident: that language is being used as a power sustaining tool. As K said stop just interpreting everything!

FOUCAULT: *(Dismissive)* I am no prophet; it is not my job to provide the solution.

ORWELL: Then what is the point?

Both men are angry with each other now and stare silently for a moment. LUCKY groans and moves about as if about to speak.

FOUCAULT: Can someone shut that noise up...

CICERO presses a button which makes the blue light on LUCKY flash once, silencing him.

FOUCAULT: What is the point of your work? Underground man. You ask for simplistic language yet now you critique it. Is nothing good enough for your delicate sensibilities?

CICERO: Friends, Orwell is right. We are desperately running out of time. Let us not descend into combat now, we will succeed in saving Australia. We are moving on to the media review.

CICERO raises the remote and presses the button. Lights remain up on Stage 2.

Scene Eight

There is a blue glow on LUCKY who is suspended above Stage 1 on a small square platform. There is a rope around her neck, and she has picked up the greatcoat, stool, picnic basket, and large bag. Stage 1 remains unlit. A news intro visual with music plays on the screen. This pre-recorded segment of NEWS ANCHOR 1 plays when CICERO presses the button.

NEWS ANCHOR 1: Welcome to 8:30, I'm Samantha Band. Tonight, we cover the day that was in politics. A controversial vote in the Senate, a new opposition leader, and we'll be interviewing the new Treasurer. Later we'll bring you coverage from the mid-term elections in the United States and our special report tonight will cover the effects of the rising cost of living on Australia's most vulnerable communities, but first to...

CICERO: *(Snores loudly)* This is impeccably boring.

FOUCAULT: Agreed. Everything is too neutral.

ORWELL: Hmmmm, that must be terrible mustn't it Michel?

CICERO: *(Looks disapprovingly at ORWELL)* To the next one.

CICERO raises the remote and presses the button. A different news intro visual with music plays on the screen. This pre-recorded segment of NEWS ANCHOR 2 plays.

NEWS ANCHOR 2: *(Spoken in a highly dramatic tone)* Tonight. Does Prime Minister Ardern have to bite her tongue when nearly upsetting the regime in Beijing? We take you inside the most important story we have ever run. We thought they were our best friends, but it seems as if they have ditched us to make a quick Chinese buck! It is a

deal with the devil. Could it be that New Zealand is becoming New Xi-land? Tune in at 8pm tonight to find out.

CICERO: That is more like it! Reeling the audience in, I am sure.

ORWELL: It could be very misleading with the lack of evidence in that snippet.

FOUCAULT: Again George. It is not about that it is about the audience, the money. Context my friend, context. Language is being used incredibly well again there to achieve the watch time they want to gain.

CICERO: *(Holding a hand up to ORWELL)* We are not going back there. Here is the last one.

CICERO raises the remote and presses the button. A different news intro visual with music plays on the screen. This pre-recorded segment of NEWS ANCHOR 3 plays.

NEWS ANCHOR 3: *(Spoken in an angry and desperate tone)* I've argued for some time about the crisis in western political leadership. Why have leaders in the western world given international exposure to the uninformed and disinformed utterances of Greta Thunberg. She's now 18. She calls herself an environmental activist. She started raving at 15, and that's the appropriate word, about climate change mitigation. She's never been challenged on the rubbish she utters but the publicity she gets leads young people to believe her. Now paroxysms of fear and hopelessness overwhelm these young people because no political leader stands their ground to dismantle this emotional, disinformed rubbish.

CICERO raises the remote and presses the button. The screen turns off and only Stage 2 is lit.

CICERO: Another great example of performative rhetoric. If you want to get something, you've got to know your responder, and you've got to appeal to them. That's what he's doing right there.

FOUCAULT: Very similar to the previous one in understanding that, before you speak Orwell, this is not targeting you and it works for those it is targeting.

ORWELL: I must say, on the record, that I detest this ambivalent attitude to damaging rhetoric. It is unproductive and fails to portray what the orator thinks rather its just to propel what they believe will earn the most money. He is literally abusing a child. A child!

FOUCAULT: Yes. We've all got that by now.

As ORWELL and FOUCAULT fight, the orb begins flashing faster and faster.

ORWELL: Why are you here?

FOUCAULT: Excuse me?

ORWELL: You seem to have no regard for our purpose here. In fact, you actively support the misuse of language we are attempting to prevent.

FOUCAULT: You pompous, elitist snob.

ORWELL and FOUCAULT stand up.

ORWELL: How dare you!

They walk stage right of the table and step closer and closer to each other. They stare into each other's eyes for an awkwardly long period of time and begin poking each other repetitively. CICERO notices the orb's flashing.

CICERO: Gentlemen! The Orb!

FOUCAULT and ORWELL flick their heads towards the orb simultaneously and panic ensues. All three men pace frantically around the small stage as they speak.

ORWELL: Not again. Not again. Not again.

FOUCAULT: This will look devastating on my record.

CICERO: Oh Minerva. It is my consulship all over again.

FOUCAULT: All right. What do we do?

ORWELL: The recommendations!

CICERO: They are Australia's last hope.

All three men sprint to the desk. They are talking aloud while frantically writing. Chaos ensues while they write, paper flying everywhere, constant movement and desperate body language.

ORWELL: Simplicity.

FOUCAULT: Power.

CICERO: Performance.

ORWELL: Clarity of meaning.

FOUCAULT: Clarity of purpose.

CICERO: Inspire them.

ORWELL: Eliminate prepositional podge.

CICERO: Are we ready to propagate?

ORWELL and FOUCAULT: Yes.

CICERO: Let's go then!

The men run around the table attempting to gather up the papers. They fail dismally as they get in each other's way, slip over papers on the floor, break pens, throw glasses, spill water, and create more mess. As the men attempt to gather their writings, the lights slowly fade down on Stage 2, leaving only the red glow of the sphere to illuminate the continuing chaos. A purple LED wash comes up slowly on Stage 1. At the same time, 'Starman (CODA version)' fades up. An image of Marrickville station at night appears on the screen. A South Sydney Rabbitohs scarf is hanging off a coat stand. A man sleeps in a bed centre stage. A Labor Party campaign 'Better Future' placard leans on the bed. A dog bowl with the name Toto painted on it lies in front of the bed. LUCKY's platform lowers onto the stage. While descending, she puts down the greatcoat, stool, picnic basket and large bag and then takes off the rope around her neck. She walks onto the main stage, in front of the bed and pulls out a piece of paper and a pen and writes. As LUCKY writes, the sphere's red flashing slows and then stops. LUCKY finishes writing after thirty seconds. She folds the paper and places it on the end of the bed. The music fades up as LUCKY walks back onto the platform, and it rises until it is not visible to the audience as the purple wash fades out. As she rises, the music reaches a crescendo and fades out after LUCKY is no longer visible.

BLACKOUT