**The Oratory of Donald Trump**

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***Content Warning:*** *This chapter contains information about sexual assault and hate speech which maybe triggering to survivors.*

**Introduction**

Donald Trump is, as is well documented, a deeply controversial and divisive figure in American and global politics. Part of Trump’s current reputation is built on his confrontational business and television persona. Such was the strength of his image that his candidature for the presidency courted condemnation and criticism from across the political spectrum (Philip 2016). This is because Trump thrives on conflict as a measure of demonstrating ‘success’, particularly in that he should he be seen to have ‘defeated’ an opponent.

Throughout his campaign for the Republican nomination (and beyond) he offended, amongst others, Mexicans (Reilly 2016), the broader Latin American community living in the United States (Moreno 2016), African Americans (Fausset Blinder and Eligon 2016), those with disabilities (Carmon 2016), and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, queer (LGBTQ) community (Baume 2016). He has been accused of sexual assault (Revesz 2017), attempted rape (Hillin 2016), and being misogynistic towards women (Khomami 2016). In a conventional presidential campaign, any candidate surrounded by such a record would have been forced (most likely by the media and his own side) to drop out of the race to become President. Yet his determination to secure the presidency was such that he simply refused to abide by the standards expected of a presidential candidate.

The offensive style is fundamental to his rhetorical *ethos* because he is playing an offensive character that appeals to those of a certain socio-economic and educational background (Thompson 2016). He offends in a manner that appears designed to insult any politician or organisation that attempts to defend the interest of these groups. Those on the receiving end of Trump’s comments tend to be those associated with a so called ‘liberal establishment’ that his supporters believe is responsible for their social and economic position: partly as a result of immigration and the relaxation of traditional laws and values, and partially as a result of the effects of globalisation, as expressed though international trade agreements. (Mack 2017).

So, why did Donald Trump win the Republican primary and the general election? The answer, put simply, his attitude is one of indifference toward those he offends. He does not appear to care about how his rhetoric travels, nor does he appear to care about the divisions in American society, which he appears to be purposefully creating (Knott 2016). This rhetoric is designed to appeal to a ‘mass movement’ of supporters who see an authentic figure, willing to stand up for them and their interests (Thompson 2016). Despite his controversial rhetoric and policy proposals, for those in this movement, he is seen as a real person running against long-standing ‘corruption’ in Washington DC., that has ignored their economic and social plight since the start of the decline in the economic and social position of the working classes (particularly the white male working classes) since the 1980s.

In light of this we would like to advance a few reflections on Trump’s general rhetorical style and his use of the so called ‘dead-cat-strategy’ (Massie 2015). This theory suggests that a moment of controversy is an effective way of getting noticed by a target audience. Put simply, the speaker says something controversial in an otherwise normal argument and it is the controversial point that will be reported. However, for this strategy to be most effective, it is argued that it should only be used infrequently or moderately within a speech or interview. It is the shock factor that gets the attention – in effect, the punch line of an offensive joke. Trump and his supporters thrive on his being controversial. In his speeches, he tends to introduce a considerable number of rhetorical dead-cats. At times he introduces so many that it becomes difficult to see where the moderate argument is. As a result, the controversy of his comments escalates, thereby drowning out any apparent attempt at moderation. For example, in December 2015, Trump argued for ‘a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country's representatives can figure out what the hell is going on’ (Trump 2015a). This comment was delivered shortly after the Paris attack and was an attempt to put forward a ‘strong’ strategy for dealing with terrorism. He falsely conflated all Muslims with terrorism and terrorists, and appeared to be designed send out a message that the US was not welcome to any Arab or Muslim regardless of where they came from or what they believed (Davidson 2015). This was itself followed-up by an argument that Obama founded Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS): ‘in many respects, you know, they honor President Obama … He’s the founder of ISIS. He’s the founder of ISIS … He is the founder. He founded ISIS’ (Trump, 2016a). Trump did not end here; throughout the campaign he took every opportunity to remind his supporters that the President’s name was not Barack Obama but rather Barack Hussein Obama (Campbell 2015; Beschizza 2016; Siddiqui 2016). All of this gained considerable criticism from legal experts (Stone 2016) and his fellow Republicans (Sullivan and DeBonis 2016) but played well amongst the supporters within his movement and more generally amongst the far right (colloquially known as the Alt-Right) (Dearden 2016). As President, Trump’s controversial statements on banning Muslim entry into the United States was translated into his 27 January 2017 Executive Order ‘Protecting the Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States’ (White House 2017a). This prohibited individuals from seven predominantly Muslim Arab countries from travelling to the US and a complete ban on non-Christian Syrians from entering the US. This transfer of rhetoric into policy has been met with substantial legal difficulties (Lind 2017) (being put on hold by the US Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit) and criticism from across the political spectrum, particularly from John McCain and Lindsey Graham (Yuhas 2017). However, Trump’s *pathos-*driven rhetoric over Muslim immigration expanded the range of what was allowable in public discourse, thereby pushing the boundary beyond what would have been previously considered civil. Due to his rhetoric ‘people can get away with a lot more than what we thought possible’ (Quoted in Bush 2015).

Before proceeding to Trump’s rhetorical strategy, it is worth spending a moment looking at how he has used contentious, *pathos-*based arguments to energise supportive audiences in the past. It is important to note that Trump presents himself as a *character*. He is a *brand*. An *image*. The public persona of wealth, excess, and business ‘success’ has consumed the individual to such an extent that Trump is almost a caricature – to him, he is the self-made man who has gone from strength to strength, and one who is so famous and successful that he can get away with *anything* he desires (Sanchez 2016; Mondalek 2016). The normal boundaries of socially acceptable behaviour, conventions of speech, or intellectual discourse simply do not exist (Buonomo 2016). This image has been constructed over decades, as a business tycoon who could take out advertising space in four of the city’s newspapers, including the *New York Times*. Under the headline ‘Bring Back The Death Penalty. Bring Back Our Police!’, Trump wrote: ‘I want to hate these muggers and murderers. They should be forced to suffer and, when they kill, they should be executed for their crimes. They must serve as examples so that others will think long and hard before committing a crime or an act of violence’ (Quoted in Laughland 2016).

And, as a media personality appearing on programmes such as the reality television show *The Apprentice* where he has been accused of lured behaviour such as rating women on the size of their breasts (Osborne 2016) or likelihood of them being willing to sleep with him (Mehta and Branson-Potts 2016). Trump’s character is brash, in your face, and deeply individualistic (Irwin and Lamberton 2016). His individualistic character was effective as the presenter of *The Apprentice*. Indeed, here he was able to sell his character of a successful business tycoon by judging the efforts of others whilst being able to be excessively critical (Madison 2016). By doing so Trump was able to show off his business ‘brilliance’ and ability to ‘make great deals’, whilst undermining the attempts of others (Fisher and Kranish 2016). This persona has translated into his presidential style, where he places image, brashness, and confrontation at the head of his governing strategy (Zarroli 2016). For example, criticising Obama’s deal with Iran (Pengelly 2017); provoking Mexico over the building and funding of a wall between the two nations (which he has started to enact with Executive Order ‘Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements’ (Grillo 2017; White House 2017b); and attempting to withdraw from an obligation to accept refugees made with Australia (Murphy and Doherty 2017).

Understanding his persona and broader background is key if we are to understand Trump’s rhetorical style during the race to become both the Republican nominee and then President of the United States. For Trump, he is a successful businessman and TV personality that is a ‘threat’ to the so called liberal establishment (Glover and Reston 2016). Indeed, his allusions to business and not being a politician speaks to the sense of ‘difference’ he wants to create to define himself against his opponents. This is vital because he sought, as a nominee, and now as President to present himself as a successful business leader and not a politician. Indeed, he argues ‘I am not a politician, thank goodness’ (Trump 2016b). For Trump, he is the person who stands against a ‘rigged’ political system and the only one who can ‘drain the swamp’ (Widmer 2017). He wants to present himself as someone who ‘speaks the language’ of the average American who is not part of the Washington elite (Oprea 2016). Who has, he argues, been a victim of economic decline, radical social change and ignored by their leaders in Washington DC. (Berlatsky 2016). This is a point he made against Marco Rubio during the Primaries, arguing that he was simply too inexperienced to be a credible President (Peters 2016) and that he was a ‘lightweight’ (Trump 2015b; 2015c Swoyer 2016). But his character assassinations did not stop there. He argued that Jeb Bush was part of a dynasty of Republican leaders who are ‘terrible’ and ‘weak’, and that Bush was ‘a low-energy person’ (Trump 2015d). He also attacked Ben Carson (now Trump’s Secretary of State for Housing and Urban Development) for being a ‘very low-energy person’ (Rhodan 2016), whilst ‘Lyin’ Ted Cruz was part of the corrupt Washington bubble (Trump 2016c). These were focused *ethos-*based attacks, each designed to undermine the credibility of Trump’s opponents whilst seeking to ‘grow’ his own image. Indeed, he cast himself as having ‘a very good brain’ (Trump 2016d), which was important because America needed such a brain ‘to turn it around’ (Trump 2016e). He also said that he was a man who knows how to ‘get things done’ (Riddell 2017). Inversely, his opponents are ridiculed by Trump for artificially constructed inabilities to achieve, and therefore are rendered unfit to be President (DelReal 2016; Walker 2016; Fodor 2016). For Trump, ‘sealing the deal’ is all that matters and that even if the process is littered with controversy, succeeding is all that matters (Trump 2015e). Put simply, he wants to be the winner at allcosts. Indeed, ‘I am a winner. If I am elected I will make this country a total winner - *I* will Make America Great Again’ (Trump 2016f). The idea of Trump as a ‘winner’ is vital to his rhetorical strategy, even if his own performance then does not reflect the expectations of his earlier arguments or stated abilities.

**The Republican Primaries**

Through the Republican Primaries, Trump moved from an outsider, seen as having little chance of success, to the winner of the nomination (Stebenne 2016). Ultimately, Trump secured the Presidency on 45.9 per cent of the vote, whilst his main opponent, Hillary Clinton secured 48 per cent but over 2,800,000 more in the popular vote (*Politico* 2016). Trump won the Electoral College while losing the popular vote by attracting a movement of supporters who were enlivened by his oratorical style and rhetorical *ethos*. He did this not only through his ability to manipulate the media but also by actively engaging in the development of a provocative social media presence designed to confront his opponents (Khan 2016). He also presented himself still as an ‘outsider’, a ‘great businessman’ and one who would ‘tell it like it was’. As the *Guardian* reported ‘he says everything that’s in our hearts. No baloney … he’s got to keep it up. Keep it going … he’s not afraid to say what we feel … he’s telling like it is. He’s an American hero’ (Carroll 2015).

The core explanation for this success has been the use of *pathos-*based rhetoric that constructs a feeling of safety for his supporters and fear for his opponents. Through extensive othering of internal and external groups, his rhetoric places ‘us’ against ‘them’, based on subtle use of emotive language that taps into the growing fears of the white working classes and those associated with the so called Alt-Right. Thus ‘he appeals to something deeper, something baser: *Fear*. His campaign slogan, ‘Make America Great Again’, is an inverted admission of loss – ‘lost primacy, lost privilege, lost prestige. And who feels that they have lost the most? White men’ (Blow 2016). By the time of the Republican National Convention, polls showed ‘that more than seven in ten Republicans believe Trump “tells it like it is”’. (Shebaya 2016) As such, for those who believe in Trump ‘he is actually ‘‘telling it like it is’’ [unfortunately] those who disagree with his views, the ‘like it is’ is a racist, fascist, Islamophobic, narrow-minded, and essentially false perception of reality’ (*Ibid.,*). The reshaping of this perception of reality through Trump’s rhetoric has been driven through his character as defender of a very specific kind of American identity that is white, Christian, heterosexual, male, and successful within a free-market, de-regulated capitalist economy (Swarns 2016).

Tied to this specific conception of American identity is the familiar, recurring theme of illegal immigration (Semotiuk 2016). This is often used by Trump to maintain the fearful *pathos* of the artificially constructed ‘other’ that underscores his control of supportive audiences. For Trump, immigration represents a useful opponent around which to blame for the changes brought about by a more global interconnected economy which businesses like his own have benefitted from. To make his arguments appealing, he uses fear-based *pathos* to convince his audiences that immigrants (and refugees by implication) are a direct and personal threat to the lives of his supporters. He does this by linking immigration directly to apparent rises in the overall rate of crime. For example, during his campaign for the presidency, Trump argued that

the number of police officers killed in the line of duty has risen by almost 50 per cent compared to this point last year. Nearly 180,000 illegal immigrants with criminal records, ordered deported from our country, are tonight roaming free to threaten peaceful citizens’ (Trump 2016f).

By making such clear connections between illegal immigration and crime, Trump is artificially constructing and then confirming in his argument that a link between the two not only exists but that it is inevitable. In a similar way, he has argued that the lax immigration system ‘which does not permit us to know who we let into our country’ is allowing a ‘tremendous flow’ of jihadists into the United States which is going to be a ‘bigger, more horrible version than the legendary Trojan Horse ever was’ (Trump 2016g). Furthermore, at the same event Trump went on to argue that ‘they are trying to take over our children and convince them how wonderful ISIS is and who wonderful Islam is … We don’t know what is happening’ (Trump 2016g). These *pathos-*based arguments are designed to instil fear of immigration, Muslims, and refugees into his target audiences. They are *pathos-*driven arguments that result in his audiences spreading hatred for those that Trump has ‘othered’. Throughout the general election campaign, Trump returned to this theme because it had proven effective in creating growing swells of support amongst the disaffected white working class and the so called Alt-Right. Trump regularly argued that ‘we have a radical Islamic Terrorism problem … Every year we bring in more than 100,000 lifetime immigrants from the Middle East, and many more from Muslim countries outside of the Middle East … Hillary Clinton’s immigration plan would bring in millions of unvetted immigrants’ (Trump 2016h). Trump’s use of statistical evidence to support his argument (an allusion to *logos*) is an attempt to find an empirical foundation for his *pathos-*driven, fearful, and divisive arguments that appeal to those who believe in an exclusive conception of American identity (such as the so called ‘Alt-Right’) and who conflate Islamic terrorism with Muslims. It is also worth noting that the statistical foundation of this argument is open to dispute given the difference between refugees and economic migrants, which Trump has a tendency to rhetorically conflate.

By using *pathos-*based fear, Trump is able to construct a counter-argument for how the so called threat can be confronted. Put simply, immigration controls and putting ‘America First’ (White House 2017c). To advance these perspectives, however, he again develops fear through his speeches, by integrating stories and anecdotes from rhetorical witnesses. Such witnesses are then used to connect his fear-based arguments with the real-lives of all American citizens. Needless to say his stories revolve around the familiar theme of immigration and how he constructs a particular kind of American identity. To place such a story about immigration into context, he first sets the scene by saying illegal immigrants ‘are being released by the tens of thousands into our communities with no regard for the impact on public safety or resources’ (Trump 2016i). This immediately strives to demonstrate the real-world risk of immigration to communities and the prosperity of the United States. He then cites an example, such as saying that:

One such border-crosser was released and made his way to Nebraska. There, he ended the life of an innocent young girl named Sarah Root. She was 21 years-old, and was killed the day after graduating from college with a 4.0 Grade Point Average. Her killer was then released a second time, and he is now a fugitive from the law. I’ve met Sarah’s beautiful family. But to this Administration, their amazing daughter was just one more American life that wasn’t worth protecting (*Ibid.,*).

By using *pathos,* this story is intended to create a clear emotional response in his audience. *Anger* that the Obama administration ‘allowed’ it to happen, *fear* that it could happen to them or their families, and *hope* that he will be able to reverse the impact of immigration. Trump first angers his audience using fear, places the blame, then argues he has the solution. By doing so, he is striving to increase his *ethos* by casting himself as the figure with the strength and determination to curb illegal immigration, whilst attacking his opponents for apparently ‘allowing’ it to happen in the first place. Needless to say, it is an argument that resonates with those who feel as though the American political system has abandoned them whilst others prosper *vis-à-vis* the white working class and the so called ‘Alt-Right’. This is reinforced by economic arguments stressing the failures of the Obama Administration and that only he is willing to save American jobs. Thus, we (he) is going

To bring back our jobs, and we're going to save our jobs, and people are going to have great jobs again, and this country, which is very, very divided in so many different ways, is going to become one beautiful loving country, and we're going to love each other, we're going to cherish each other and take care of each other, and we're going to have great economic development and we're not going to let other countries take it away from us, because that's what's been happening for far too many years and we're not going to do it anymore (Trump 2016j).

Here, Trump’s use of ‘love’, ‘cherish’, and ‘take care’ are *pathos-*driven appeals to his audience that he will inspire a new era of genuine cooperation and understanding. They are intended for those who conform to his conception of Americanism and who oppose the ‘enemies’ that he has previously identified (immigrants and refugees). It is an exclusive form of prosperity that guarantees ‘success’ within an economically liberal state with a strong sense of social conservatism.

Alongside Trump’s criticisms of immigration and the economic management of the previous Obama Administration, he also presents an assessment of American foreign policy. Here, Trump argues that the US has ‘lived through one international humiliation after another’ (Trump 2016k). Trump’s *pathos-*driven allusions to ‘humiliation’ are designed to tap into a far right, media-created perception of the US as an ‘underdog’ in the world under Obama. Indeed, Trump has criticised Obama’s foreign policy for not ‘taking the oil’ from Iraq before leaving, for being weak in its approach to attacking ISIS, and for allowing a so called upsurge of ‘unreported’ terrorism across Europe (*Ibid.,*). Such attacks demonstrate a level of understanding of international relations that can best be described as ‘inadequate’, however he has revolved his own foreign policy around these media constructed preconceptions. To that end, he outlines his arguments on how the US can rebuild not only its international reputation but also its sense of self-respect by first attacking Obama’s record on Iran and Libya. To do so, he has argued that ‘the Iran deal, which gave back to Iran $150 billion and gave us absolutely nothing. It will go down in history as one of the worst deals ever negotiated’ (*Ibid.,*). This overly dramatic and exaggerated characterisation of the deal as the ‘worst deal ever made’ is designed to overstate its impact and the need to renegotiate a new deal with Iran. By doing so he is able to simultaneously and implicitly remind his audience that ‘he makes great deals’ as evidenced by his prior success in the different fields of business. However, the theme of ‘humiliation’ is key in Trump’s criticism of the Obama Administration. Indeed, he goes on to argue that ‘another humiliation came when president Obama drew a red line in Syria – and the whole world knew it meant nothing’ (*Ibid.,*). Here Trump is claiming that Obama’s credibility has been substantially undermined by the (non)actions taken in Syria because ‘the whole world’ can recognise it. Again, this exaggeration is a deliberate attempt to catastrophise the Obama Administration through *pathos-*driven allusions to self-evident mistakes. Indeed, Trump is attempting to demonstrate that he, along with the ‘whole world’, sees Obama’s foreign policy strategies as ineffective. The key point of this line is to undermine Obama’s credibilityby suggesting he is alone in not being able to recognise how and why the Iran deal was a ‘humiliation’.

Needless to say, this is an attempt by Trump to grow his own *ethos*. Furthermore, using fear-based *pathos*, Trump goes on to argue that ‘America is far less safe – and the world is far less stable – than when Obama made the decision to put Hillary Clinton in charge of America’s foreign policy’ (*Ibid.,*). Here, Trump is attempting to argue that global instabilities are a consequence of Obama’s decision to promote Clinton whilst he was fighting the election against her. By using fear, Trump is simultaneously attacking the incumbent whilst undermining the credibility of his electoral opponent.

Needless to say, Trump did not limit himself to attacks on her *ethos.* Rather, he went so far as to argue that not only was Clinton mentally ‘unbalanced’ but that if she won, ‘she will cause … the destruction of our country from within’ (Trump 2016l). This is a highly dramatic use of *pathos* that sought to present Clinton as a threat to the core American values that he implicitly suggested he would protect. Indeed, by arguing Clinton would cause the ‘destruction of our country from within’, Trump’s fearful, *pathos-*based argument is that civil unrest may be a consequence of her victory, and that it could undermine the cohesiveness of the US itself. Needless to say this is a highly exaggerated argument based upon the need to maintain the ‘risk’ narrative that Trump had used throughout the campaign, however with his target audiences this strategy instilled the fear necessary to undermine Clinton’s *ethos.* He continued these exaggerated, *pathos-*led demonstrations of rhetorical hyperbole by arguing ‘this is the legacy of Hillary Clinton: death, destruction and weakness’ (Trump 2016m). As a rhetorical strategy that is targeted at white working class Americans (and the so called ‘Alt-Right’), his was an effective approach because he is positioning himself as a knowing figure who can analyse and remedy the failures of the previous administration. He sought to confirm this message in a commercial in which stated that ‘Donald Trump will protect you. He is the only one who can’ (Trump 2016n). Needless to say, the message ignores a considerable number of the international dynamics at play in Iran, Syria, and Libya, but acknowledging this is not his strategy. His intention is to undermine the credibility of his opponents, building his own up to exaggerated heights whilst securing the electoral support of his target audiences.

Whilst it was successful in constructing a *pathos-*driven fearful narrative, it did expose the broader standard of American political discourse to fear and hate that often undermines the quality of political debate (Ball 2016). This exposure and the creation of a fearful narrative concerning immigration and global conflict carried with it the suggestion that an *imminent* challenge to the survival of the US was at stake. Because of the style of this argument, it was problematic for Clinton or others to counter it using reason or *logos-*based responses because they would be attacked as either; ‘fake’, ‘lies’, or the product of a liberal elitist ‘bubble’. Furthermore, because Trump blames ‘the politicians’ for the dramatic problems he has rhetorically constructed, it is equally problematic for them to construct a reasoned response that Trump’s audiences would countenance. Indeed, Trump’s *pathos-*based arguments were designed to inject such a high level of fear and blame that the possibility of reasoned debate was simply impossible. For example, Trump argued that ‘the problems we face now – poverty and violence at home, war and destruction abroad – will last only as long as we continue relying on the same politicians who created them’ (Trump 2016o). Here, he generalises the problems faced by American citizens before blaming the totality of the US political establishment. Continuing the theme of fear and blame, Trump also sought to argue that ISIS was hoping for a Clinton victory. Indeed, he compelled his audience to ‘remember, ISIS is looking, folks’ and that ‘they dream of Hillary Clinton’ (Trump 2016p). This *pathos-*driven attempt to connect Islamic State with Clinton sought to conflate her campaign with the objectives of the terrorist group. The unfounded attack on Clinton’s *ethos* was one of the arguments that led to her denouncing Trump and his supporters as ‘deplorable’, given the ‘low-level’ of the attacks by Trump (Clinton 2016a; Clinton 2016b). However, Trump’s argument was designed to present the ‘threats’ to his audience, position the blame on the so called liberal establishment, and present a solution *vis-à-vis* his election to the presidency. Indeed, he argued that ‘a change in leadership’ that ‘is required to change these outcomes’ and that he intends ‘share with you my plan of action for America’ (Trump 2016q). This is an attempt to promise a shift of direction from the rhetorically constructed failures of the Obama Administration and the so called ‘threat’ represented by Clinton to the US and the world, a person Trump claimed ‘doesn’t have the fortitude, strength or stamina to lead in our world’ (Trump 2016r).

**The Trump Plan**

Trump has always relied on emotive rhetorical devices to construct his narrative and attack his opponents. For instance, when announcing his candidacy, he used *pathos* (fear) to argue that ‘our enemies are getting stronger and stronger by the day, and we are getting weaker’ (Trump 2015f). The idea that the US was weakened by the growing strength of ‘our enemies’ was to suggest the Obama Administration had purposefully reneged on its responsibilities to protect the country. Later he developed this theme of weakness and strength by using social media. As a prolific user of *Twitter*, Trump’s positions are often outlined directly. By doing so, he comments on American domestic and foreign policy without the conventions usually associated with diplomacy (Worden and Williams 2017). For example, in terms of his theme of American weakness, he used *Twitter* to proclaim that: ‘Iran has done it again. Taken two of our people and asking for a fortune for their release. This doesn’t happen if I’m President!’ (Trump 2016s). By presenting his position in such a direct and confrontational manner, he believes he is projecting an image of personal ‘strength’ that will address those he views as enemies. Furthermore, he also uses *Twitter* to make declarations of intent. For example, he tweeted that ‘I will stop RADICAL ISLAMIC TERRORISM in this country!’ and that ‘In order to do this, we need to Drain The Swamp!’ (Trump 2016t). Furthermore, he tweeted ‘the dishonest media does not report that any money spent on building the Great Wall (for sake of speed), will be paid back by Mexico later!’ (Trump 2016u). These representative samples of Trump’s tweets lack detail and are often broad aspirational statements that lack nuance or explanation. Moreover, such tweets tend to be highly combative and *pathos-*driven (fear). The simplicity of the tweets is designed to convey direct messages to his support base, whilst ensuring he showcases his ongoing intentions as President to fulfil the agenda of his election campaign.

In terms of Trump’s broader governing strategies, his plans are also often simple and lack detail. Indeed, if the plan is too complicated then he risks alienating his intended audience by sounding like either an expert or politician, which he claims not to be. Indeed, part of his confrontational persona as President is often to reaffirm his lack of ‘expertise’ or ‘presidential style’. Indeed, he believes that he was the only one who could ‘solve the nation’s problems’ because he was a businessman and ‘not a politician’ (Trump 2015g). As such, his solutions to political, economic, and diplomatic issues are highly reductive and easy to conceptualise by those who have a staunch belief in the exceptional virtues of America. When Trump has explained his governing priorities, he outlines these using *pathos-*driven, aspirational terms that ‘will put America First. Americanism, not globalism, will be our credo’ (Trump 2016v). A sentiment regularly repeated up to the Inauguration where he stated that: ‘From this day forward it is going to be only America first, America first. Every decision … will be made to benefit American workers and American families’ (Trump 2017). As part of his America first rhetoric, he draws upon emotive themes such as freedom, democracy and historic moments. For example, in Florida, he repeatedly argued that ‘This election will determine whether we are a free nation, or whether we have only the illusion of Democracy’ (Trump 2016w). Whilst this appears to be confirming America’s position as a home for freedom and equality, Trump keeps to the theme of America at danger and that only he can save it. For example, he argued that ‘this is a crossroads in the history of our civilization’. In a similar way in a press release Trump argued that ‘we can’t solve [our problems] by relying on the politicians who created them’ and that ‘we will never be able to fix a rigged system by counting on the same people who rigged it in the first place. I know it’s all about you, I know it’s all about *making America great again*’ (Trump 2016x). As a rhetorical phrase, ‘America first’ is presented using simple *pathos*-led aspirations rather than clear economic or social strategies. For example, American first ‘will begin with safety at home – which means safe neighbourhoods, secure borders, and protection from terrorism. There can be no prosperity without law and order’ (Trump 2016q). Here Trump is reminding his audience of the criminal acts he argued are committed by immigrants, whilst promising safety. The safety he promises are more secure borders and illiberal action against suspected terrorists, which is very broadly defined. Indeed, his stated plan to ban Muslims from entering the US is an attempt to demonstrate the strength he believes is needed to achieve this objective. In terms of economic renewal, he argues that ‘I will outline reforms to add millions of new jobs and trillions in new wealth that can be used to rebuild America’ (*Ibid.,*). Here Trump fails to outline how he will do this by promising to outline his plans at a later point, however without greater explanation the ‘trillions in new wealth’ promise suggests another *pathos* driven claim rather than *logos-*inspired promise of quantifiable fiscal policy.

**Attack, Defend, Deals**

Trump often attacks those who opposed his candidature and subsequent presidency. Such attacks can be specific (as against Hillary Clinton) or it can be more all-encompassing. For example, during his campaign to be President, he argued that ‘big business, elite media and major donors are lining up behind the campaign of my opponent because they know she will keep our rigged system in place’ (Trump 2016v). Here Trump describes the pillars of society as his opponents, along with intellectuals and those who may challenge his artificially constructed narrative (Flaherty 2016). By suggesting the motivation for opposing him is to retain a corrupt system, Trump is implicitly connecting each of them with an *ethos*-destroying statement that attempts to undermine their credibility. He goes on to say ‘they are throwing money at her because … she is their puppet, and they pull the strings’ (Trump 2016i). Trump’s *pathos-*driven conspiratorial style of argument appears to explain how the system is ‘rigged’ against him, which became a familiar complaint he repeated during the presidential debates. Linking many of these themes together, and to his key theme of danger, Trump used an emotive, hyperbolic stream of exaggerated and apocalyptic claims to argue that there was a

Conspiracy against you, the American people … The establishment and their media neighbours wield control over this nation through means that are very well known – anyone who challenges their control is deemed a sexist, a racist, a xenophobe and morally deformed … They seek to destroy everything about you … They will lie, lie, lie, and then again, they will do worse than that. They will do whatever’s necessary (Trump 2016y).

A key strategy that Trump employs is to remind his audience that he is on their side. For him, he is their *defender* against this so called ‘corrupt elite’. He argues that ‘every day I wake up determined to deliver for the people I have met all across this nation that have been neglected, ignored, and abandoned’ (Trump 2016z). This is an emotive attempt to connect with those who he argues are being ignored by the elites. It is also an effort to cast himself as the strong solution to their problems. For example, after discussing a litany of wrongs, Trump went as far as saying that ‘I know these problems can all be fixed, but not by Hillary Clinton, only by me!’ (Trump 2016aa) Trump goes also presents himself as a victim and martyr for his movement, saying that ‘I take all of these slings and arrows, gladly, for you … I take them for our movement, so that we can have our back’ (Trump 2016bb). Trump went on to argue that

Some people warned me this campaign would be a journey to hell ... I will not lie to you. These false attacks hurt. To be lied about, to be slandered, to be smeared so publicly before your family, is egregious beyond words. It is reprehensible beyond description … People were not sure I was a nice person, I am. I am. I am. I am. I'm a giving person. *I believe in God, I believe in the Bible. I'm a Christian.* I love people. (Trump 2016x).

By making use of his own virtues as a Christian, Trump is striving to demonstrate that he is of good, moral character to religious Republicans. However, as is well documented, Trump has been accused of behaviour that runs contrary to this image. For example, he was attacked during the presidential campaign for describing Arianna Huffington as ‘a dog who wrongfully comments on me’ (Trump 2015h). He had also described Rosie O’Donnell as ‘disgusting – both inside and out.  If you take a look at her, she’s a slob. How does she even get on television?’ (Trump 2006a); saying that Megyn Kelly has ‘blood coming out of her eyes, blood coming out of her wherever’ (Trump 2015i); that ‘Heidi Klum. Sadly, she’s no longer a 10’ (Trump 2015j); saying ‘it must be a pretty picture, you dropping to your knees’ to Brande Roderick (Trump 2015k); that ‘all of the women on *The Apprentice* flirted with me - consciously or unconsciously. That's to be expected. A sexual dynamic is always present between people, unless you are asexual’ (Trump 2015l). He has also joked about incest saying ‘if Ivanka weren’t my daughter, perhaps I’d be dating her’ (Trump 2006b); and he attacked Cher saying ‘I promise not to talk about your massive plastic surgeries that didn’t work’ (Trump 2012). He also suggested cohabitation of men and women in the military was responsible for the number of sexual assaults: ‘26,000 unreported sexual assults (sic) in the military-only 238 convictions. What did these geniuses expect when they put men & women together?’ (Trump 2013).

These are representative samples of sexism that Trump has used against women. However, he gained most notoriety during the presidential campaign for a recording made by the ‘Access Hollywood’ show in 2005. He said that ‘Yeah, that’s her. With the gold. I better use some Tic Tacs just in case I start kissing her. You know, I’m automatically attracted to beautiful – I just start kissing them. It’s like a magnet. Just kiss. I don’t even wait. And when you’re a star, they let you do it. You can do anything … Grab ’em by the pussy. You can do anything’ (*New York Times* 2016). These extracts demonstrate a persona that is incompatible with the morals he claimed to hold at the Values Voter Summit.

He does, however make claims to a talent in developing business deals, which he uses to demonstrate his competence at economic management. He argues that ‘I have visited the laid-off factory workers, and the communities crushed by our horrible and unfair trade deals’ (Trump 2016f). By making this argument he is able to claim that his experience of ‘good deals’ will address and reverse the impact of the ‘horrible and unfair’ deals that he claims are creating economic woes in the US. In response, he claims that ‘I will be the greatest jobs President that God has ever created’ (Trump 2015m). Indeed, he goes on to say ‘I am your voice’, which is a clear and determined characterisation of himself as the solution to the problems he has rhetorically constructed (*ibid.,*). He carried this into the Inauguration where he argued that:

We must protect our borders from the ravages of other countries making our products, stealing our companies, and destroying our jobs … Protection will lead to great prosperity and strength. I will fight for you with every breath in my body and I will never ever let you down (Trump 2017).

He continues to confirm his *ethos* by arguing ‘when innocent people suffer, because our political system lacks the will, or the courage, or the basic decency to enforce our laws – or worse still, has sold out to some corporate lobbyist for cash – I am not able to look the other way’ (Trump 2016i). He is attempting to characterise himself as the defender of the weak, whilst suggesting that others are only interested in money. He simultaneously characterises ‘crooked’ Hillary as a bigot, by arguing that he rejects ‘the bigotry of Hillary Clinton’ who takes ‘advantage of the African-American’ and that ‘she doesn’t care at all about the hurting people of this country. For every forgotten stretch of our society, I’m running to offer you a much better future, a much better job and a much higher wage’ (Trump 2016cc). Trump’s *pathos-*driven rhetorical strategy strives to grow his *ethos* as a competent business leader, whilst conducting a highly emotive character assassination on his opponent, Clinton. In terms of the outcome, Trump is able to capitalise on the divisions he has created in order to use the anger felt towards the establishment for electoral gain.

Needless to say, Trump’s strategy in running for President raises a number of questions that need to be addressed. For example, if Washington were as corrupt as he suggests, then why would Trump want to become a part of it by participating in a presidential campaign? He responds to this question by arguing ‘I have joined the political arena so that the powerful can no longer beat up on people that cannot defend themselves. *Nobody knows the system better than me*, which is why I alone can fix it. I have seen first-hand how the system is rigged against our citizens, just like it was rigged against Bernie Sanders – he never had a chance’ (Trump 2016dd). By arguing he joined the race because he knows the system and wants to defend those affected by it, he is attempting to portray his *ethos* as a ‘selfless defender’. By saying ‘I alone can fix it’ he is attempting to claim a depth of analysis which others are incapable of seeing, whilst also suggesting the treatment of Bernie Sanders has provided evidence of a rigged system. Indeed, the connection between his own movement and Sanders is an attempt to claim the same kind of anti-establishment legitimacy that Sanders constructed during his campaign. Trump confirms this strategy by suggesting ‘his supporters will join our movement, because we will fix his biggest issue: trade’ (Trump 2016q). Trade, business, and opposition to a ‘rigged’ system represent Trump’s core rhetorical strategy.

As one of the main elements of the appeal and character he is constructing, it is unsurprising this would be the lasting message he wants his audiences to have. He makes this clear when he argues that ‘I want every American whose demands for immigration security have been denied – and every politician who has denied them – to listen very closely to the words I am about to say’ (Trump 2016i). This line is intended to capture their attention, which suggests that the next will contain a dramatic, *pathos*-driven promise. Indeed, he goes on by arguing ‘On January 21st of 2017, the day after I take the oath of office, Americans will finally wake up in a country where the laws of the United States are enforced. We are going to be considerate and compassionate to everyone. But my greatest compassion will be for our own struggling citizens’ (Trump 2016i). This return to strength, control, and compassion for his supporters strives to send out a reassuring message that Trump understands the fears and concerns facing ordinary American citizens. It is an attempt to demonstrate his *ethos* whilst providing a clearly defined *pathos*-driven political strategy. That same message and style were seen throughout the campaign. For example, when addressing an audience in Phoenix, he roused his supporters against a protester yelling ‘get them out of here, get them out of here!’ (Trump 2016ee). And, pumping up his audience by musing ‘I wonder if the Mexican government sent them over here? I think so … [but] don’t worry, we’ll take our country back’ (*Ibid.,*).

**Conclusion**

Trump wants to send out a clear message that ‘I am your voice’, ‘I’m with you’, and that ‘I will fight for you, and I will win for you’. This is a *pathos*-driven message of determination, based around ‘America First exceptionalism’, and a slogan to ‘make American great again’ through pride and safety. This message appeals to many in the US who feel disconnected from the political system, such as the white working class and the so called ‘Alt-Right’. It is, in effect, an attempt to convince the American voter that Trump and Trump alone possesses the passion, knowledge, and experience needed to be President. The consequence of this style led to supporters that argue ‘he’s telling like it is’ and that ‘he’s an American Hero’ (Carroll 2015).

It is also worth noting that the structure of many of Trump’s speeches has been exposed to criticism from experts for the lack of coherence or eloquence often expected of a presidential speech (Kingsbury 2017; Brownstein 2016; Ferreras 2017). For example, when accepting the candidacy to be the Republican nominee, he argued ‘I will present the facts plainly and honestly. We cannot afford to be so politically correct anymore.’ The use of ‘I’ then ‘we’ is designed to appeal to his supporters as an authentic character whilst highlighting the intended enemy of the speech – so called ‘political correctness’ (Trump 2016f). Furthermore, he continues by arguing ‘so if you want to hear the corporate spin, the carefully-crafted lies, and the media myths the Democrats are holding their convention next week’ (Trump 2016f). Again, the sentence structure appears to be badly constructed, but still carries an important implicit message of anti-establishmentarianism by crafting his opponents as liars and (strangely) corporate. This detachment of his opponents from the realities faced by Trump’s supporters both confirms his apparent understanding of their position whilst arguing the Democrats are indifferent to their plight.

Building on this, Trump’s uses the definitive article ‘the’ when he refers to minority groups and others he wants to separate out from his core group of white working class supporters. This rhetoric is best seen ‘when Trump speaks to his base … he dispenses with ‘the’ and talks in terms of ‘we.’ He tells crowds, ‘We’re going to make America great again’, it is only when he goes back to discussing the other that he uses his stock phrase of ‘the black community’ or ‘the Mexicans’. Trump uses ‘the’ as a dog-whistle to disaffected rural white voters in attempt to attract them to his message. At the very least, he is demonstrating to those voters that he is keeping other groups distanced - that, like them, he sees African-Americans and Latinos as something *over there*, in the inner cities (and the White House), rather than as millions of individual Americans with as much invested in the future (Murphy 2016).

In summation, ‘I know that fewer people are won over by the written word than by the spoken word and that every great movement on earth owes its growth to greater speakers and not to great writers’ (Hitler 1939: 7). This quote presents a useful summation of Trump’s oratorical style. In his case, he has been able to construct a political movement since December 2015 through his *pathos-*driven fearful and hateful rhetoric. He moves audiences, he encapsulates them, and he prompts them to action by making them feel as though he has the answers to their problems. Trump’s movement owes its growth to his style of speaking because it is grand, exaggerated, and promises great things, which any challenger who operates within the confines of a reasoned, deliberative political process has been unable to match or defeat.

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