"Make America Great Again": Political Rhetoric of the American Alt-Right Movement

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Introduction

On November 8th, 2016, Republican nominee Donald Trump was elected President of the United States of America. On November 9th, 2016, Twitter was flooded with messages hashtagged #TrumpsAmerica which narrated various ways that marginalized groups were being attacked, verbally or physically, by self-proclaimed Trump supporters whose inappropriate actions had been legitimized by Trump's election into office. Many Americans were in shock upon receiving the news of the new President Elect. Jon Ronson, journalist and author of *The Elephant in the Room: A Journey into the Trump Campaign and the Alt-Right,* stated in the closing remarks of his book that "the alt-right's small gains in popularity will not be enough to win Trump the election […] but if some disaster unfolds […] and Trump gets elected […] that is terrifying" (2016: 793). Ronson's book was published before the election had concluded, and his closing remarks haunt many Americans who are now just that—terrified.

Still others ponder at how the country transitioned from the progressive era of the Obama administration to the election of a man who helped inspire the 2016 word of the year, "post-truth". What many believed was a joke in the Republican primaries has suddenly evolved into a Presidency that is all too real. Many Americans believed Trump appeared out of nowhere, ran his mouth carelessly during his campaign, and was elected by the racist, xenophobic, anti-Semitic, and homophobic population of America, more specifically known as the Alternative Right Movement. Matthew Lyons, author of "Ctrl, Alt, Delete: The Origins and Ideology of the Alternative Right", defines the Alt-Right movement as "a loosely organized far-right movement that shares a contempt for both liberal multiculturalism and mainstream conservatism [which] combines White nationalism, misogyny, anti-Semitism, and authoritarianism in various forms and in political styles ranging from intellectual argument to violent invective" (2017: 2). He continues to note the Alt-Right maintains, "a belief that some people are inherently superior to others; a strong internet presence and embrace of specific elements of online culture; and a self-presentation as being new, hip, and irreverent" (Lyons 2017: 2). However, this alt-right rhetoric which Trump stands for has always been a counter-narrative throughout

American political history, quietly lingering in the shadows until the moment it could finally reveal itself.

My paper will be focusing specifically on this counter-narrative that has pervaded throughout American political history and how the alt-right has evolved and harnessed this rhetorical narrative to create an environment that has lent itself to the election of a man such as Donald Trump. By first establishing the necessity of using a rhetorical lens with which to evaluate the 2016 American Presidential election, I will then trace the rhetorical genealogy in order to show the gradual ascension of alt-right rhetoric through American political history, concluding with the election of Trump.

To fully understand how Trump used rhetoric as a campaign strategy, his campaign must be contextualized in order to focus on the specific way he uses language to communicate with his audience. Due to this emphasis on the language of his campaign, a thorough rhetorical analysis is essential. While political rhetoric is a popular area of study, it tends to focus on the broader notions of rhetoric and avoids an in-depth analysis of certain areas of rhetoric. Furthermore, the study of political rhetoric is often conducted in an interdisciplinary manner; meaning that it is evaluated from a political or sociological standpoint rather than a rhetorical one. As a result, the data is usually reported in statistical form, which, while helpful, functions to show broader trends rather than specifics. In utilizing rhetorical theory as a framework on which to base my research, I intend to show the specificity of how rhetoric functions within the current political climate of the alt-right. Using Lloyd Bitzer's notion of the rhetorical situation, I will begin by showing that rhetoric, political or otherwise, is dependent upon a situation and that the rhetoric of the alt-right movement stems from a rhetorical situation which originated in America's political past, and has been further developed in modern times. I will then show how Trump situates his campaign within this rhetorical situation and how his rhetoric becomes appropriated by this situation.

The Rhetorical Situation

Understanding Lloyd Bitzer's notion of the rhetorical situation is imperative to understanding the success of Trump's campaign. Not only does this rhetorical theory clearly define the various components of Trumpian rhetoric, but it explains how these components operate together to provoke an action from his rhetoric. In Lloyd Bitzer's "The Rhetorical Situation," he argues that, "rhetorical discourse […] obtain[s] its character-as rhetorical from the situation which generates it. Rhetorical works belong to the class of things which obtain their character from the circumstances of the historic context in which they occur […] a work is rhetorical because it is a response to a situation of a certain kind" (1992: 3). Simply stated, Bitzer believes that rhetorical discourse evolves

from a specific situation. Thus, language becomes a product of one's environment, instead of one's environment being constructed by the language. He continues by discussing how the exigence functions as the determining factor to the rhetorical situation. The exigence, or a situation requiring action, influences the environment and invites a particular kind of rhetoric. Essentially, the exigence represents the foundation upon which the language is built and it effectively shapes the construction of the language it invites. Bitzer defines the exigence as that "which functions as the organizing principle: it specifies the audience to be addressed and the change to be effected" (1999: 8). He continues to note that, "rhetorical discourse is called into existence by [...] the situation which the rhetor perceives amounts to an invitation to create and present discourse" (1992: 8f). In this, the situation not only determines the specificity of the rhetoric, but the audience and its potential reception as well.

This relationship between the exigency and the audience is further exemplified through the work of Mary Garret and Xiaosui Xiao. Garret and Xiao built upon the foundation of Bitzer's argument in their article "The Rhetorical Situation Revisited", noting that while Bitzer's argument regarding the rhetorical situation is overall useful, certain areas could be refined. By applying Bitzer's theory to a concentrated subject, specifically political texts from the 19th-century Chinese Opium Wars, they were able to make conclusions that helped to refine the broadness of Bitzer's claim. Among these conclusions was the notion that the rhetor and the audience are closely related, and that this relationship aids in the way rhetoric is delivered and perceived. Essentially, the relationship between rhetor and audience appropriates the language according to the exigencies of the audience. This repeated appropriation of the language creates a discourse tradition that determines how rhetoric is used and received within a particular situation. This discourse tradition:

> directly or indirectly participates in a rhetorical situation in at least three ways: [1] it generates needs and promotes interests in an audience that must be met by new discourse; [2] it cultivates an audience's expectations about the appropriate forms of discourses, the proper subject matter, the right modes of argumentation, and so forth in relation to a given circumstance; and [3] it also affects an audience's recognition and interpretation of a rhetorical exigency (Garret/Xiao 1993: 38f)

Accordingly, an audience with a similar discourse tradition to the rhetor will be more likely to accept and understand the rhetoric since the discourse tradition innately affects how they perceive language. Furthermore, because of the essential way in which discourse tradition plays a role in the rhetorical situation, Garret and Xiao argue that the audience should represent the center of the rhetorical situation. In this way, the audience becomes "the pivotal element which connects the rhetorical exigency (the audience's unsolved questions), the constraints (the audience's expectations), and the rhetor (as a member of the audience)" (Garret/Xiao 1993: 39). By situating the audience in the center of the

rhetorical situation, it becomes evident that it is the exigency, or needs of the audience, that shapes the discourse of the rhetor. Going back to Bitzer's argument, Garret and Xiao show how the rhetorical discourse is a result of a rhetorical situation centered around an audience-based exigency. This exigency can arise suddenly or it can develop slowly over time. While most of the exigencies that fueled the Trump campaign were sudden backlashes of modern social and governmental policies, there were a few core exigencies that had already been developing over time through American political history.

A Rhetorical Genealogy of the Alt-Right

In order to understand the current language of the alt-right, we must first look at the genealogy of this language to see how the exigencies evolved through history. These slowly-developing historical exigencies were the byproducts of the failed campaigns of politicians with rhetoric similar to Trump, specifically Barry Goldwater and George Wallace. In America, the roots of the alt-right movement can be traced all the way back to the 1930s. Although the term "alt-right" wasn't coined until recently by Richard Spencer, this movement has slowly been developing through American history. The development of the alt-right movement can be broken into three main parts: the Old Right movement from 1933-1955, the 1st New Right movement from 1955-1964, and the 2nd New Right movement from 1964-present. In the 1930s, the Old Right movement was fueled by the opposition of the GOP and some democrats to Roosevelt's New Deal. During the Old Right era, the movement was marked by anti-interventionist policies in WWII, and a general opposition to Truman's foreign and domestic policies. However, with this opposition came the next evolution of the movement. The opposition to Truman's policies was rooted in a strong desire to prevent foreign communism from invading the United States, and it was this intervention in foreign policy which distinguished the 1st New Right movement from the Old Right movement. Along with the 1st New Right movement came the notion of fusionism—which promoted classical liberal economics, traditional social values, and anti-communism. The 1st New Right movement was comprised mostly of libertarians, traditionalists, and anti-communists and set the stage for the 1964 election by creating a receptive audience. Around the time of the 1964 election is when the 2nd New Right movement emerged. The transition between the 1st and 2nd New Right movements, as well as the 2nd New Right movement in general, are the most important eras in terms of their effect on the modern alt-right movement.

The transition from the 1st to the 2nd New Right movement occurred during the 1964 Presidential election between incumbent democratic President Lydon B. Johnson, who took office after Kennedy's assassination, and Conservative Republican Barry Goldwater. Goldwater's campaign promoted the idea of states' rights, labor union reforms, and anti-communism. He also opposed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, arguing that this act would

allow federal government to impede upon an individual's right to conduct business. Because of his opposition towards the federal government having jurisdiction over individual states, Goldwater received a high level of following from conservatives. His campaign also familiarized the public with conservative ideals and provided a platform for discussion with the 1960 publishing of his book *The Conscience of a Conservative.* This book functioned as a way of bringing conservatism into the public sphere while also associating Goldwater with the conservative movement. Although the use of the media helped to introduce conservatism to the American voter, it ultimately did not get Goldwater elected in 1964. Rather, it highlighted a shortcoming in the conservative's campaign approach. First, it showed that while they had a following, this following was not large enough to win a national election. Secondly, in doing a poll, they found that many voters had supported Goldwater's ideas without knowing that Goldwater was associated with these ideas. Thus, Nicole Hemmer argued that the Goldwater election "pointed to an underlying problem: a failure to communicate and control the image of the movement and the spokespeople [...] To win over people not committed to the cause, conservatives would first have to find a way to define themselves to the American people" (2013: 128). Although Goldwater's campaign had successfully introduced conservatism to the American people, it was still lacking the necessary momentum needed to get him elected.

After Goldwater's campaign, conservatives continued to define themselves to the American people with candidate George Wallace. Wallace was a known segregationist who campaigned as an independent in the 1968 election. Despite running as an independent against two major party candidates, Wallace was able to secure five of the Southern states, implying that there was an audience for his segregationist, conservative rhetoric. While Goldwater utilized conservative media as a key strategy in his campaign, Wallace utilized populist rhetoric to gain support. The majority of Wallace's campaign was centered around the notion that the federal government had too much power and that the citizens themselves were lacking in power. Wallace's primary goal was to cast the federal government as the enemy to the American people. What emerged from this primary motive was a rhetorical strategy based on emotional appeals, predominately fear. By directly juxtaposing the federal government to the American people, Wallace played on their feelings of powerlessness in government to gain support for his campaign. However, like Goldwater, Wallace was ultimately not successful in obtaining the Presidency.

Goldwater and Wallace's campaigns exemplified situations similar to those which led to the Trump campaign. The social turmoil of the sixties which invited the drastic rhetoric of Goldwater and Wallace is a direct parallel to the social turmoil of modern times that invited the rhetoric of Donald Trump. The rapid social changes that were happening in the sixties, as well as in modern times, left certain populations of American voters dissatisfied with their government. Consequently, the populist rhetoric that Goldwater and Wallace stood for emerged as a response to an exigency rooted in lowering government control.

This same phenomenon has been seen with Trump's campaign through his use of populist rhetoric. Furthermore, the lack of success associated with Goldwater and Wallace's campaigns functioned in two ways. First, it proved that there was an audience for their specific rhetoric, even if this audience was not large enough to cause political action at the national level. And secondly, it implied that the exigencies set forth by their audiences were never resolved as a result of the failed campaigns and therefore they continued to invite and appropriate discourse.

Although these exigencies were not met by the failed campaigns of Goldwater and Wallace, they helped to pave the way for Reagan's successful Presidential campaign. Using the lessons learned by Goldwater and Wallace's campaigns, Reagan was able to harness their rhetoric in a way that was well received by the American public. While still preaching conservative values, Reagan avoided the mistakes that the other two candidates had made. As a local viewer of Reagan's 1967 Republican fund-raising speech put it, "Reagan is the real Goldwater. He's the man we were looking for in 1964" (NBC 1967 as cited in Ritter 1999: 343). This view is supported by Kurt Ritter in his article, "Ronald Reagan's 1960s Southern Rhetoric: Courting Conservatives for the GOP" in which Ritter attributes Reagan's success to three factors. First, that "Reagan projected a less harsh persona than did Goldwater, [next] that Reagan's populist appeal proved to be both broader and more ideologically consistent than Wallace's appeal, and that [finally] the 1964 presidential campaign caused Reagan to moderate his apocalyptic rhetoric and instead to stress a conservative jeremiad" (Ritter 1999: 333). While many people supported Goldwater's ideas, it was his persona that often became a matter of concern. Although Reagan and Goldwater had similar ideas, Reagan ultimately had a celebrity persona that was in sharp contrast with Goldwater's "rugged individualist" persona. This celebrity persona also established him as a notable figure in the public sphere that was more trustworthy than the average politician. As Ross puts it, "Audiences connect with movie stars at an emotional level and with a sense of intimacy they rarely feel about politicians" (2011: 5). Furthermore, while Wallace and Reagan also shared an ability to connect to the "common man" through their similar populist rhetoric, Reagan was able to use this rhetoric as a uniting, rather than dividing, force. Finally, it was his ability to build upon the rhetoric of Goldwater and Wallace that helped in his success. The campaigns of Goldwater and Wallace had paved the road for Reagan's Presidency; all he had to do was navigate the road.

One important rhetorical difference between Goldwater, Wallace, and Reagan was that Reagan constructed an image of himself as a conservative jeremiah. In this way, his rhetoric functioned to inform the American people of the nation's shortcomings while then promoting the idea that these shortcomings can be changed. This is seen in his campaign slogan of "Let's Make America Great Again" and was reinforced in several of his speeches. While Goldwater and Wallace similarly stressed the shortcomings of the nation,

their speeches utilized an apocalyptic rhetoric which made progress seem hopeless or impossible. Reagan, on the other hand, replaced, "dire warnings of an impending doom [...] with calls for restoring old values in government" (Ritter 1999: 340). Reagan evoked a political nostalgia while promoting a return to the golden age of government.

Once elected, the Reagan administration had a large impact on the American people. In his book *The Reagan Era: A History of the 1980s,* Doug Rossinow pronounces, "Reagan is now widely considered one of America's great presidents" (2015: 9). Even after his time in office, many American people still maintain a level of appreciation and respect for the Reagan administration. Based on conservative ideals, "Reaganism consisted of a few core components: an insistence that unfettered capitalism is both socially beneficial and morally good; a fierce patriotism that waves the flag, demands global military supremacy, and brooks no criticism of the United States; and a vision of society as an arena where individuals win or lose because of their own talents and efforts" (Rossinow 2015: 1f). These ideas were stressed during his time in office and led to what many politicians have called the "Reagan Revolution". This political revolution boosted both the economy and the morale of the American people, securing the Reagan era into a history of romanticized nostalgia. Furthermore, as Rossinow mentions, "Reagan's true triumph was that in his wake—at least to some—conservatism became equated with love of country" (2015: 10). It was this love of country, along with the nostalgia associated with the Reagan administration that led to the next development of the New-Right movement.

It has been this evolution of the right movement in American history that has contributed to the current political rise of the alt-right movement. Starting most prominently with Barry Goldwater, continuing with George Wallace, and finally being solidified through the Reagan era, the political right has been slowly developing over time. Alongside this development of the political right was the gradual construction of a rhetorical situation that centered itself around an ever-increasing audience. Rhetors such as Goldwater and Wallace were able to recognize this rhetorical situation; however, it was Reagan, and now Trump, who have become successful by centering their rhetoric around the audience within the situation.

The Current Rhetorical Situation and Audience

Although the eras of Goldwater, Wallace, and Reagan are well in the past, the current rhetorical situation is derivative of the narratives they constructed. Furthermore, these narratives act as the foundation on which the current rhetorical situation is built. As I have shown through the rhetorical genealogy of Goldwater, Wallace, and Reagan, rhetoric is directly based on the situation which calls it into existence. Accordingly, in politics it is the exigencies of our time which dictate the way political rhetoric is both received and acted upon by the audience. In the case of Donald Trump, this rhetorical situation has been

developing both slowly over America's historical past through candidates like Goldwater, Wallace, and Reagan, and more rapidly in recent times through socioeconomic factors.

To fully understand the implications of Trumpian rhetoric and its application in his campaign speeches, we must first recognize that rhetoric can function beyond the sphere of language to permeate and alter our socioeconomic perceptions. As Bitzer argues:

> we should acknowledge a viewpoint that is commonplace but fundamental: a work of rhetoric is pragmatic; it comes into existence for the sake of something beyond itself; it functions ultimately to produce action or change in the world; it performs some task. In short, rhetoric is a mode of altering reality, not by the direct application of energy to objects, but the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action. The rhetor alters reality by bringing into existence a discourse of such a character that the audience, in thought and action, is so engaged that it becomes the mediator of change (1999: 3f).

Bitzer's argument implies two things. First, that Trump's rhetoric was spawned from a rhetorical situation that necessitated this rhetoric, and second that this rhetoric functions as a way of altering reality through changing societal perceptions of actions. Both implications are essential in understanding the effectiveness of Trumpian rhetoric on the American voter. However, these elements are essentially powerless without the appropriate situation. In order for rhetoric to produce a change, it must be situated in coordination with an exigency calling for a change. With this, rhetoric becomes situational, meaning that it comes into existence as a response to a situation, much like an answer exists as a response to a question. It also implies that the situation gives the rhetoric significance and, as a result, the discourse that is invited by the situation must be capable of interacting with the situation in a way that alters its reality. Finally, the response to this discourse is ultimately determined by the situation that called the rhetoric into existence, just as the question would determine an appropriate answer (Bitzer 1999: 5f). It is important to note that Trumpian rhetoric would not have been successful without the current rhetorical situation. Moving forward, I will show how the current rhetorical situation essentially invited Trumpian rhetoric as the appropriate discourse to alter reality and resolve modern exigencies. Before beginning my analysis, I would like to reiterate that the exigence requires a fitting response, otherwise the rhetoric cannot be successful. This was the case in Goldwater and Wallace's campaigns; their rhetoric was lacking an appropriate response to the rhetorical situation of those eras. Finally, we must note that the ability of rhetoric to alter the perceptions of reality is an important political tool used to gain voter support. If the exigence is calling for an action to be taken, and the rhetor creates an alternate discourse that responds to the exigence, they can essentially manipulate the perceptions of their audiences to accept this alternate discourse as reality. In what follows, I will be defining the current exigencies that developed from the rhetorical situation of our time and evaluating how these exigencies invited Trumpian rhetoric into the main political sphere via audience support.

In 1988 Roger Stone, an American political consultant, lobbyist, and strategist, first suggested Donald Trump run for President. He remarked later at the Citizens for Trump rally that 1988 "wasn't the right time. In 2000 I urged him again, and I was privileged to be the chairman of his Presidential Exploratory Committee. But it was still not the right time. [...] But now was the right time [...] because working people were at last rising up against the elites, thanks to the death of the dinosaur media and the upsurge of the internet, and also because [of Hillary Clinton]" (qtd. in Ronson 2016: 239). Although Stone did not continue with the duration of the Trump campaign (some sources said he was fired, others that he resigned), with this statement he highlighted something that the Trump campaign did well. That is, the Trump campaign recognized the importance of waiting until the rhetorical situation had developed to such an extent that there would be an exigence for their specific rhetoric. While no one can say with exact certainty whether or not Trump would have been successful had he campaigned in the late 80s or early 2000s, the current research suggests that his success would have been highly unlikely. This is something that Stone apparently realized and thus the campaign decided to wait until the situation would call them into action.

Fast forward to the present era marked by an immigration crisis, economic depression, terrorist threats, transitioning social structures, and a general feeling of civil unrest among many Americans; suddenly the situation was inviting the rhetoric of the Trump campaign. While there are various factors that have accounted for the current situation, there are a few main factors that have played an active role in shaping our current political climate. Among these are economic depression and a rising sense of economic misery; cultural stress derived from growing rates of illegal immigration, perceived resistance to assimilation, and strained race relations; fears of the population resulting from the rising terror attacks in association with Islamic extremism; and an ever-increasing mistrust in American government (Korostelina 2017: 3f). These main factors are all interrelated and have contributed to the current feeling of civil unrest that has defined the current political climate.

These various factors set up a rhetorical situation that was defined by very specific exigencies including: a need for economic recovery, a need to implement nativist policies that end immigration and promote homeland security, and a need for a leader who is not a "traditional, corrupt politician". Simply stated, these became the factors that the American voter, as the audience, determined were the essential issues that candidates needed to rectify. In his campaign, Trump both recognized and responded to these exigencies in a way that his opponent, Hillary Clinton, did not. However, it is important to note that the current rhetorical situation did not invite the rhetoric of Hillary Clinton. Thus, it does not matter how powerful her rhetoric was, since ultimately it was not appropriate to the current rhetorical situation. Instead Trump was able to persevere by adequately responding to the exigencies set forth by his audience.

While the claims of Trumpian rhetoric may seem a bit extreme, it is the audience's response to this rhetoric that allows it to be so. When evaluating an audience that supports Trump, there are often varying levels of support. Although he has a large audience, it is important to note that not every member of this audience supports his discourse in its entirety. However, it is also important to note that some of his other supporters not only support his entire discourse, but they believe in taking it another step further. Despite this variation in the level of support for Trump, there are general trends about his audience that have been noted. Generally speaking, the modern media has found that the majority of Trump supporters tend to be older white males with little to no formal college education (Tyson/Maniam 2016; Rothewell/Diego-Rosell 2016; Kurtzleben 2017; Ehrenfreund/Guo 2016). Specifically speaking, 58 percent of White non-Hispanic voters, 53 percent of men, and 52 percent of those without a college degree were in support of Trump's campaign (Tyson/Maniam 2016). Both gaps in gender and education were at their largest since 1972 in the case of gender and since 1980 in education (Tyson/Maniam 2016). Furthermore, it has also been suggested that support for Trump coincided with voters residing in rural America. A Gallup poll conducted after the election found that most of Trump's supporters were from rural America and had little to no college education. These groups also reported feeling marginalized by the current political atmosphere. As Katherine Cramer, a Political Science Professor at the University of Wisconsin notes, "There's this sense that people in [rural] communities are not getting their fair share compared to people in the cities [...] They feel like their communities are dying, and they perceive that all that stuff—the young people, the money, the livelihood—is going somewhere, and it's going to the cities" (qtd. in Kurtzleben 2017: n.pag.). This relationship between economic stress and rural communities is often considered a theory in explaining voter support for Donald Trump.

Furthermore, there is another significant audience that has begun to shape Trump's discourse. Although not every Trump supporter represents the ideology of the Alternative Right movement, it is still important to note the relationship between this movement and Donald Trump. The relationship between Trump and the Alt-Right is a rather intriguing one since Trump himself claims no connection with the movement. However, Lyons believes otherwise stating, "The Alt Right helped Donald Trump get elected president, and Trump's campaign put the Alt-Right in the news" (2017: 2). Even though there is not an explicit connection between the two, the rhetoric of the Alt-Right has influenced Trump's rhetoric by acting as an additional constraint on his audience. Just as the traditionalist viewpoints of the above audience constrained Trump's rhetoric in a certain way, the belief system of the Alt-Right also plays a role in both the rhetoric that is being used by Trump, and how this rhetoric is received by the audience. It has already been established that Trump's audience views the continuing of globalization and immigration as being detrimental towards the country, yet people who ascribe to the ideology of the Alt-Right maintain an even stronger, and less flexible, view of white nationalism.

The involvement of the Alt-Right in Trump's campaign is most prevalently seen through observing his audiences. Days after Trump's immigration speech in Youngstown, Jon Ronson, a Welsh Journalist, attended a rally in Cleveland at Settlers Landing. At the rally, Ronson interviewed a man in the audience who was ecstatic about Trump's success. The man, referred to as Steve from Tampa, told Ronson "I am proud of him [Trump] […] It's a little selfish, but I used to share a lot of his information and I was literally ridiculed […] [by] people on Facebook […] I've been called mentally ill and paranoid and 'tin foil hat' […] But who's laughing now?" (qtd. in Ronson 2016: 109). Steve from Tampa represents the alt-right audience that Trump responds to with his rhetoric. Usually marginalized within politics, they felt empowered and justified by Trump and began to emerge from various locations in America. Nevertheless, it was Trump's audience that helped to shape his rhetoric.

Modern Trumpian Rhetoric

Perhaps one of the greatest examples of Trumpian rhetoric was his Immigration speech in Youngstown, Ohio that the Breitbart Group described as one of the great speeches of his campaign. Throughout the speech, Trump discusses the problems with terror attacks associated with Radical Islam and associates these problems with immigration and the Obama administration. He also aligns his opponent, Hillary Clinton, with the Obama administration as he aligns their actions with perpetuating terrorism. He then touches upon the Reagan era to create a parallel between the past triumph over communism and the present struggle with terrorism. Trump remarks, "In winning the Cold War, President Ronald Reagan repeatedly touted the superiority of freedom over communism, and called the USSR the Evil Empire" (2016: n.pag.). By creating this subconscious analogy between communism and terrorism, Trump is responding to an audience who remembers the legacy of Reagan and is then employing a similar discourse tradition rooted in America's ability to overcome negative foreign influences. With this, he is also positioning himself as the prominent figure needed to lead the country away from terrorism. He reaffirms this later in the speech with the lines, "It is time for a new approach. Our current strategy of nation-building and regime change is proven failure. We have created vacuums that allow terrorists to grow and thrive […] But it is time to put the mistakes of the past behind us, and chart a new course" (2016: n.pag.). These lines reflect a similar tone to Reagan's notion of the "conservative jeremiad" and reaffirms to the audience that Trump is the patriotic choice. Anything else would not only be unpatriotic; it would be in alignment with the terrorists themselves.

In addition to campaign speeches, Trump continues to make his audience feel heard through embedding themes of his campaign speeches into his Twitter feed. One of the most unique aspects of Trumpian rhetoric is the way he uses social media as a campaign

platform to reach his audience. With 9.3 million Twitter followers as of October 2016, Trump's "[social media] strategy has contributed to the popularity of his image among supporters" (Korostelina 2017: 22). Furthermore, it is important to note that since 2012, the focus on images and videos has grown (Enli 2016: 52). Therefore, Trump's extensive use of social media is simply a response to the rhetorical situation. Not only do the exigencies function to determine the subject matter of the discourse, but they also yield the manner of delivering the message. Trump's use of social media reflected the needs of his audience and proved to be a successful marketing strategy. Through using social media in a specific way, Trump was able to connect with his audience better than his opponent.

Just as Trump mirrored himself to Reagan in his Youngstown Immigration speech, he used Twitter in a similar way. Despite responding to the same exigencies as he did within his Immigration speech, Trump's rhetorical approach shifted slightly to accommodate the rhetorical constraints of social media. For starters, anything posted on social media had to be both concise and engaging, and, in the case of Twitter, able to be said in a maximum of 140 characters. As a result, Trump had to condense his rhetoric, while still meeting the exigencies of his audience. He accomplished this through posting Tweets that addressed specific issues he had discussed in his various campaign speeches. In this way, he could allow for the brevity of Twitter while implying a message larger than 140 characters. He was then able to use Twitter to successfully communicate his campaign to the American voter.

One of the exigencies Trump addresses through his use of Twitter is that of populist rhetoric. This type of rhetoric is especially appealing to his particular audience since they feel marginalized by the current political situation. Trump's use of populist rhetoric implies taking back power from the federal government and giving it back to the people. For his audience, who feels disempowered and voiceless, this type of rhetoric gives them a sense of power. Populism is a major theme in Trump's campaign speeches and, as a result, is seen in several of his Tweets as well. The way Trump frames populism in his Tweets once again reflects his understanding and appeals to his audience.

As mentioned before, rapid rates of social change result in civil dissatisfaction which causes a strained relationship between the government and its people. The turmoil of modern times has left many citizens feeling irked with the Obama administration. Trump recognizes this strain and uses it as a divisive wedge between the people and the government. Much like he does with immigration, Trump refers to the government as "they" or "them" which stresses the division between the "them" (government) and the "us" (citizens). Of course, Trump strategically places himself with the "us" as a concerned citizen and continues to stress the divide between the government and the citizens. He Tweets, "It is time to create jobs for Americans, not D.C. We need a bold new direction. Let's Make America Great Again!" (@DonaldTrump), which directly juxtaposes

government officials working in D.C with Americans. Then, by adding his campaign slogan at the end of the Tweet, Trump is reaffirming that the way to achieve this is by creating jobs for Americans by getting rid of the jobs in D.C. He continues by then separating himself from traditional politicians and aligning himself with the American people. Trump Tweets, "Politicians are trying to chip away at the 2nd Amendment. I won't let them take away our guns!" (@DonaldTrump). Despite the fact that Trump himself is running for a political office, the way he names politicians as being responsible for the undesirable action of gun control suggests a divide between himself and politicians. Since he has already established a binary that opposes politicians to the American people, he is indirectly associating himself with the average American voter. This is reaffirmed later in the Tweet when he states, "I won't let them take away our guns!" This final line further solidifies the opposition between the two groups in a way that places blame on politicians for an abuse of power, and reasserts that Trump will return power to the people.

Conclusion

During his 2016 Presidential campaign, Donald Trump has thoroughly exemplified Bitzer's notion of the rhetorical situation and, subsequently, was successful in obtaining the presidency. By understanding that the nature of rhetoric is to provoke a response and that this response is appropriated by the relationship between the rhetor, audience, and situation, it is apparent that Trumpian rhetoric is substantiated by the current political climate and audience. Appropriately, it was the situation and audience which shaped the exigencies that Trump responded to in his campaign rhetoric. Through analyzing the relationship between these various factors, the success of Trump's Presidential campaign is not as surprising as many initially thought.

Furthermore, the success of Trump's campaign confirmed that an individual's rhetoric can influence change if the rhetoric directly applies to an audience's needs. Perhaps one of the greatest lessons from Trump's campaign is that the audience can impact rhetoric through expressing their needs. While Trump's rhetoric tended to be extreme at times, it was merely a reflection of the audience's emotional state. Had the audience demanded another type of rhetorical response, Trump's rhetoric would have not appealed to them. A perfect example of this occurs in the various opposition groups that have sprouted into existence since the election.

As Trump's time in office continues, his rhetoric will inevitably also continue to evoke support in some and opposition in others. Since his rhetoric functions at such an extreme nature, the discourses invited by this rhetoric will often fit appropriately, and thus they will be on the extreme side as well. However, as these discourses evolve, the audience's response will continue to slowly shape the rhetorical situation for the next Presidential election. By the end of his term as president, Trump will have unknowingly created a

whole new set of exigencies for the next politician to address. These exigencies will be based upon the decisions he continues to make and his audience's reaction to them. With Trump's election into office, Trumpian rhetoric has officially entered the sphere of American political history and will continue to affect events that have not even happened yet. Just as the politicians that came before him, Trump has effectively used his rhetoric to steer the country in a certain direction. However, with this direction comes strong opposition and with strong opposition comes change. In the end, maybe it's not Trump who will make America great again, but the citizens who stand up against him for the change they want in their country.

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