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Honors Thesis

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Department: English

Advisor: Patrick Thomas, Ph.D.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The selection, nomination, and swearing in of Justice Amy Coney Barrett took place amid an already tension-ridden political and cultural landscape. As a figurehead of women’s rights and equality, Ruth Bader Ginsburg did not want President Trump to choose her successor. Her dying wish was for her seat to be replaced after the 2020 presidential election. Nevertheless, Trump moved his Supreme Court nominee through the process at an unprecedented rate, and within six weeks of Ginsburg’s passing, a conservative constitutional originalist named Amy Coney Barrett took her place.

The nature of the Supreme Court position, the contrasts between the two women, and the way in which the events unfolded wield an opportunity to compare the ways in which Ginsburg and Barrett were discussed on Twitter during the six-week transition period. This project utilizes feminist critical discourse theory and the study of intertextuality to uncover trends and patterns that may speak to larger observations about how women of power are discussed on social media platforms. The ways in which Ginsburg and Barrett are connected, through position and title, allow for careful comparison and analysis of Twitter discourse that will ultimately reveal the ways in which the women are linked rhetorically. Twitter users, whether aware or not, created a database of firsthand accounts, reactions, and personal retellings of a historical moment.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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I also want to thank those who have lent their thoughts, support, and even voices during the initial and final drafting and recording stages of this project. This includes my parents, boyfriend and sister, Maddie, who helped me test out my podcast equipment over the holidays. This also includes my roommates and peers who brought the tweets to life by reading them aloud for the podcast. For a project that relied so much on the power multimedia and intertextuality, everyone’s contribution were greatly appreciated.



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## Guide to Listening

This research is presented in the form of a five-episode podcast. To access and listen to the podcast, use the following eCommons link:

[https://ecommons.udayton.edu/podcast\\_durham](https://ecommons.udayton.edu/podcast_durham)

Each podcast episode has a transcription. To follow along, download the transcripts directly from eCommons.

The following will be discussed in each episode:

	Episode 1	Episode 2	Episode 3	Episode 4	Episode 5
<b>Topics of Discussion</b>	Significance of the topic  Academic theories used in the project  Research Question  Methodology and Methods	Discussion of the first answer to the research question: discourse focused on the presence and absence of the “iconic” status of the pop culture figure of RBG	Discussion of the second answer to the research question: discourse portrayed Ginsburg and Barrett as opposites with Barrett following in the footsteps of Ginsburg	Discussion of the third answer to the research question: discourse portrayed Barrett as a “figure-in-process”	Summary of the findings  A look at what has happened since the six-week period of analysis  Suggestions for continuing the study

The podcast cover art was created by UD student Skylar Barlow.

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