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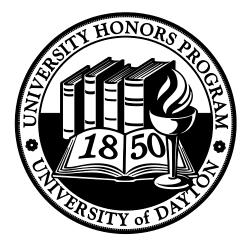
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"You Can Disagree Without Being Disagreeable": A Rhetorical Study of Twitter Discourse about Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Amy Coney Barrett



Honors Thesis Lauren Durham Department: English Advisor: Patrick Thomas, Ph.D. April 2022

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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.

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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

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

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

The following will be discussed in each episode:

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

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