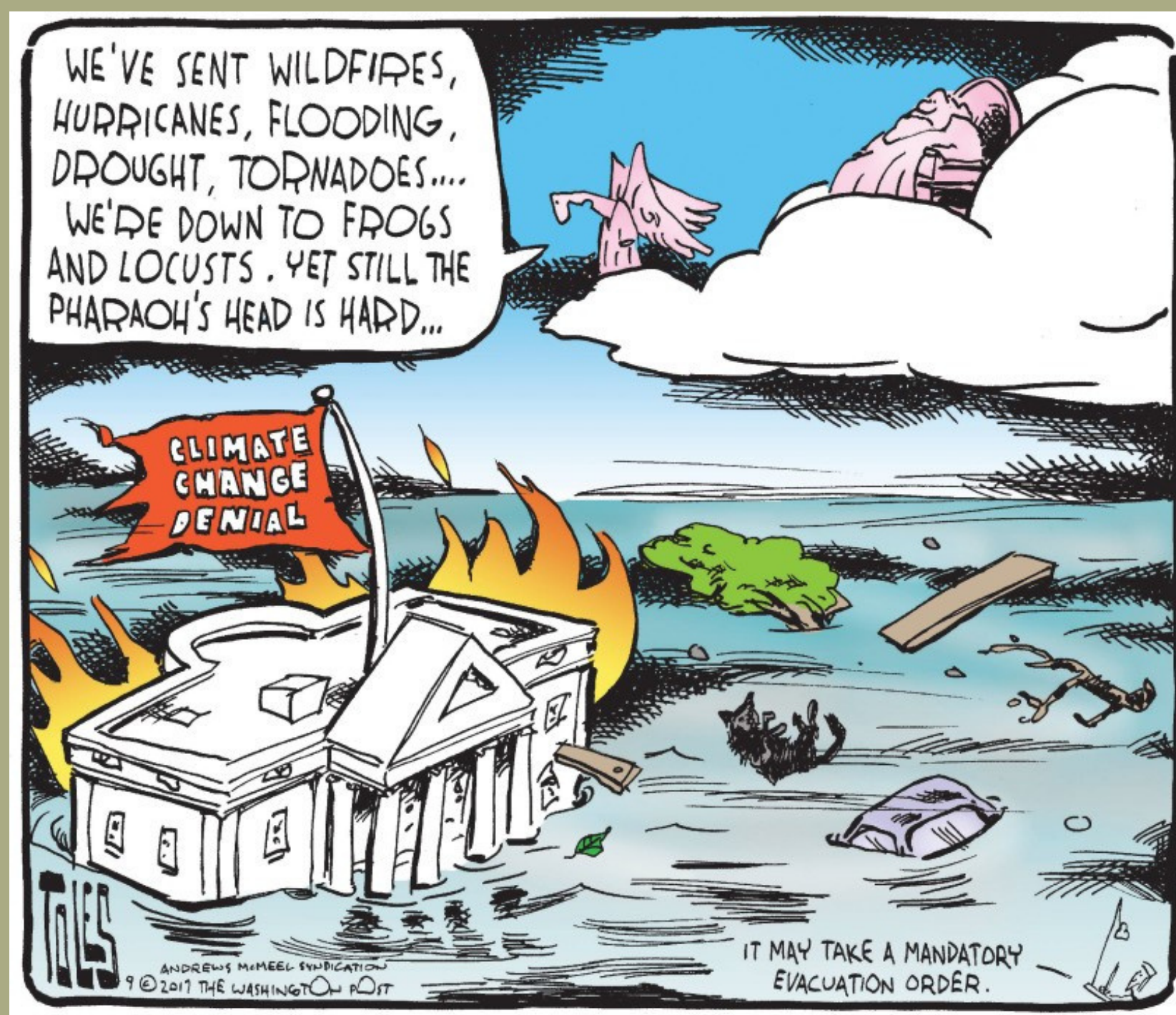# DEBUNKING TRUMP'S RHETORIC OF CLIMATE CHANGE DENIAL

Une expo des terminales LLCE Anglais

2022-2023 Lycée Clément Marot

Si la rhétorique ô combien peu orthodoxe de Donald TRUMP est un intéressant anti-modèle pour le Grand Oral, elle a trouvé à l'échelle mondiale un écho et une plateforme inégalée auprès de la plupart des médias et réseaux sociaux. Ses tweets et ses discours ont fait le tour du monde en quelques secondes et à l'heure où en dépit des aléas climatiques de plus en plus marqués, le climato-scepticisme s'accroît , il nous a paru nécessaire de nous pencher sur la rhétorique du plus médiatisé des climato-sceptiques pour mieux la déconstruire.

Les " cartoonists" du monde entier l'ont fait avant nous, en quelques traits, quelques mots, leur message humoristique, drôle ou grinçant, mais toujours succinct révélant pourtant l'étendue et la complexité des stratégies et des enjeux à l'oeuvre.

Nous avons donc aussi décidé de saluer ces artistes engagés de notre quotidien, en illustrant chacune de nos analyses d'un dessin de presse.

De façon inattendue, le climato-scepticisme progresse de manière continue depuis 3 ans (37%, +6 points en 3 ans), et de façon particulièrement marquée en France cette année (37%, +8 points en un an) alors que la préoccupation environnementale y est particulièrement forte. Plus précisément, l'idée qui progresse le plus n'est pas la négation du changement, mais le fait qu'il est « principalement dû à un phénomène naturel comme la Terre en a toujours connu dans son histoire ». On trouve donc moins de personnes qu'avant estimant qu'il est dû à l'activité humaine : 63% en 2022 contre 69% en 2019. La France reste toutefois moins concernée par le climato-scepticisme que les pays producteurs d'énergie fossile (Arabie Saoudite : 60%, Norvège : 48%, Russie : 48%, Emirats Arabes Unis : 46%, Etats Unis 48%).

Trump et le changement climatique
Trump and climate change

ADENE

Archenemies -" vilifying".

This is one of the fundamentals in Trump's rhetoric repertoire . They come back as leitmotivs.
The Hero v. The Villain and never-ending battles and everlasting feuds. A staple of many genres but certainly not of speech rhetoric and political discourse until ... Trump took to twitter.
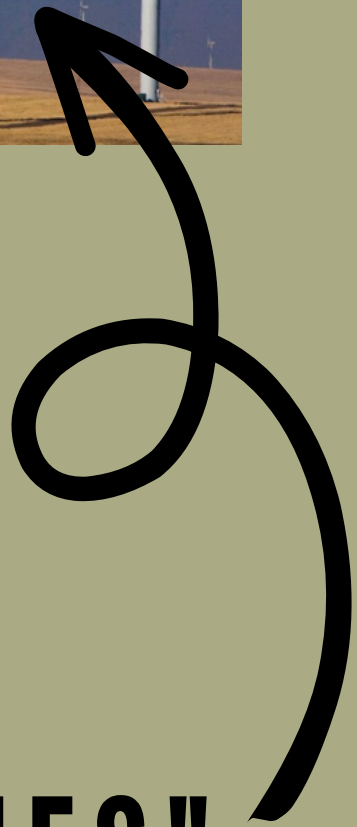
1 archenemy CHINA

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump — Follow

The concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive.

RETWEETS 55,604   LIKES 30,835

12:15 PM - 6 Nov 2012

56K   31K

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · Follow

China loved Obama's climate change speech yesterday. They laughed! It hastens their takeover of us as the leading world economy.

9:34 PM · Jun 26, 2013

116   Reply   Share

Read 133 replies

This is blaming and systemic bashing and it amplified already existing <u>negative perceptions.</u>
<u>Misrepresentation</u> also pairs up with <u>conspiracy theories</u>.

Typical of deniers

SEVERE WEATHER

YOU GOTTA HAND IT TO THE CHINESE. THEY STAGE A CONVINCING GLOBAL WARMING HOAX.

Archenemies - " vilifying".

2 archenemy "WINDMILLS"

BY THE WAY IT'S

"WINDTURBINES"

"They're made in China and Germany mostly [...]You talk about the carbon footprint, fumes are spewing into the air, right? Spewing. Whether it's in China, Germany, it's going into the air. It's our air, their air, everything, right? [...] Some of this monsters [...] They're noisy, they kill the birdsYou want to see a bird graveyard? Go under a windmill someday. You'll see more birds than you've ever seen in your life."

Florida 2019,
Speech to the Young Conservatives.

His regular tirades against "windmills" may seem nonsensical yet they provided opportunity to lash out against the American New Green Deal, against a few companies he had feuds with, or he knew the public opinion resented (General Motors or Siemens) and of course contributed to discrediting green energies.

Typical of deniers

DONALD J. QUIXOTE

WE MUST SLAY THOSE HIDEOUS DRAGONS BEFORE INNOCENT OIL COMPANIES GET HURT!

BRAVEST KNIGHT EVER!

GREEN NEW DEAL

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ANDREWS McMEEL SYNDICATION (APOLOGIES TO PICASSO)

Discrediting.

SCIENCE DISTRUST.

"I don't think science knows actually."
Florida 2019,
To California Governor Gavin Newsom and other state officials to get an update on the ongoing efforts to combat the wildfires gripping the region.
September 2020

Destroying trust in Science is also a common feature used by all climate skeptics. This approach has animated the conservative movement in the USA for more than half a century.

Whether it is skepticism of climate change,

support for cuts in funding basic research,

or hostility to universities in general,

they have trained their rhetorical weapons on the scientific community with devastating effect.
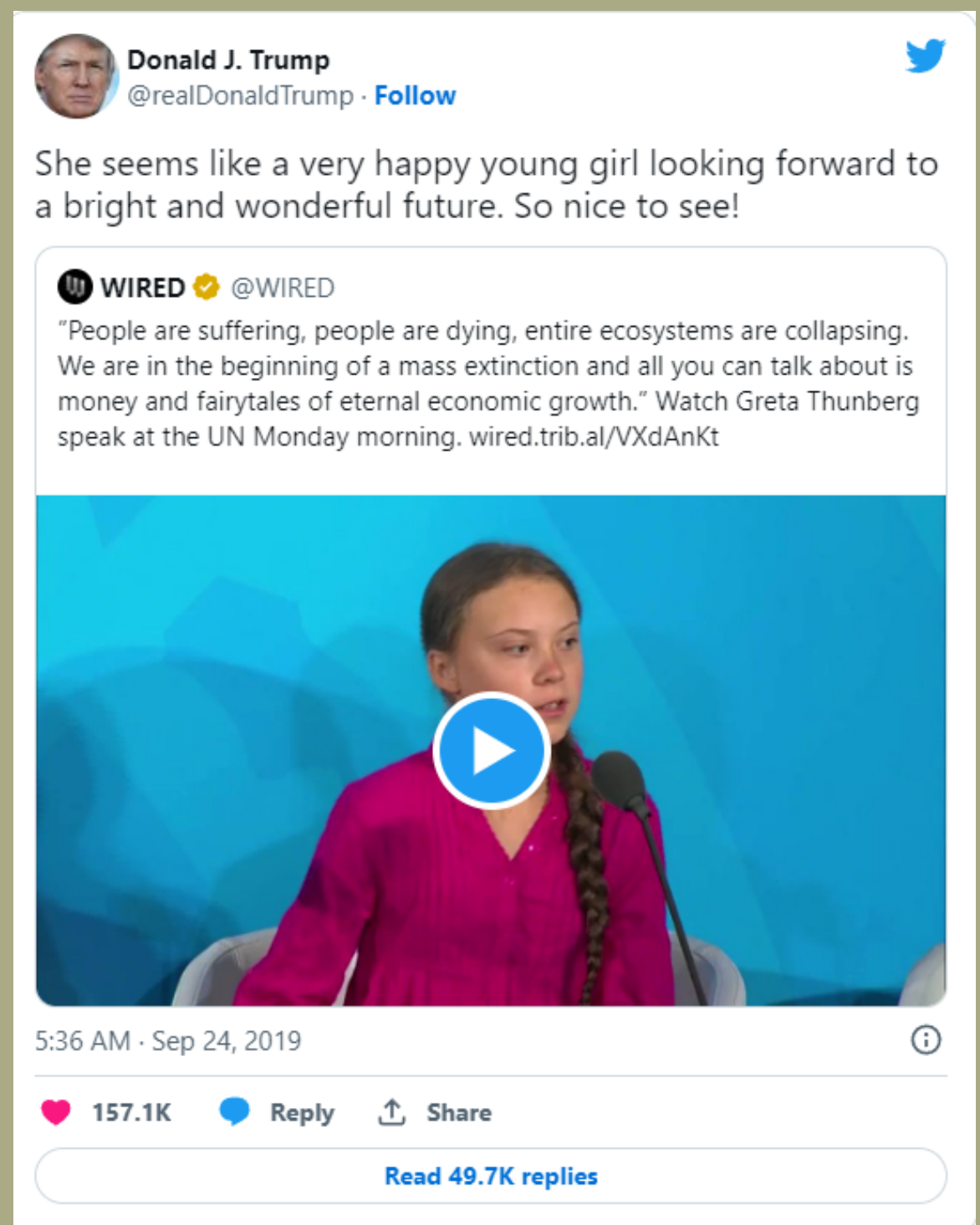
In the 1991 GSS, 47% of Republicans and only 32% of Democrats expressed "a great deal of confidence" in the "scientific community."

Yet by 2018, the parties had flipped: 50% of Democrats expressed a great deal of confidence, compared with only 39% of Republicans.*
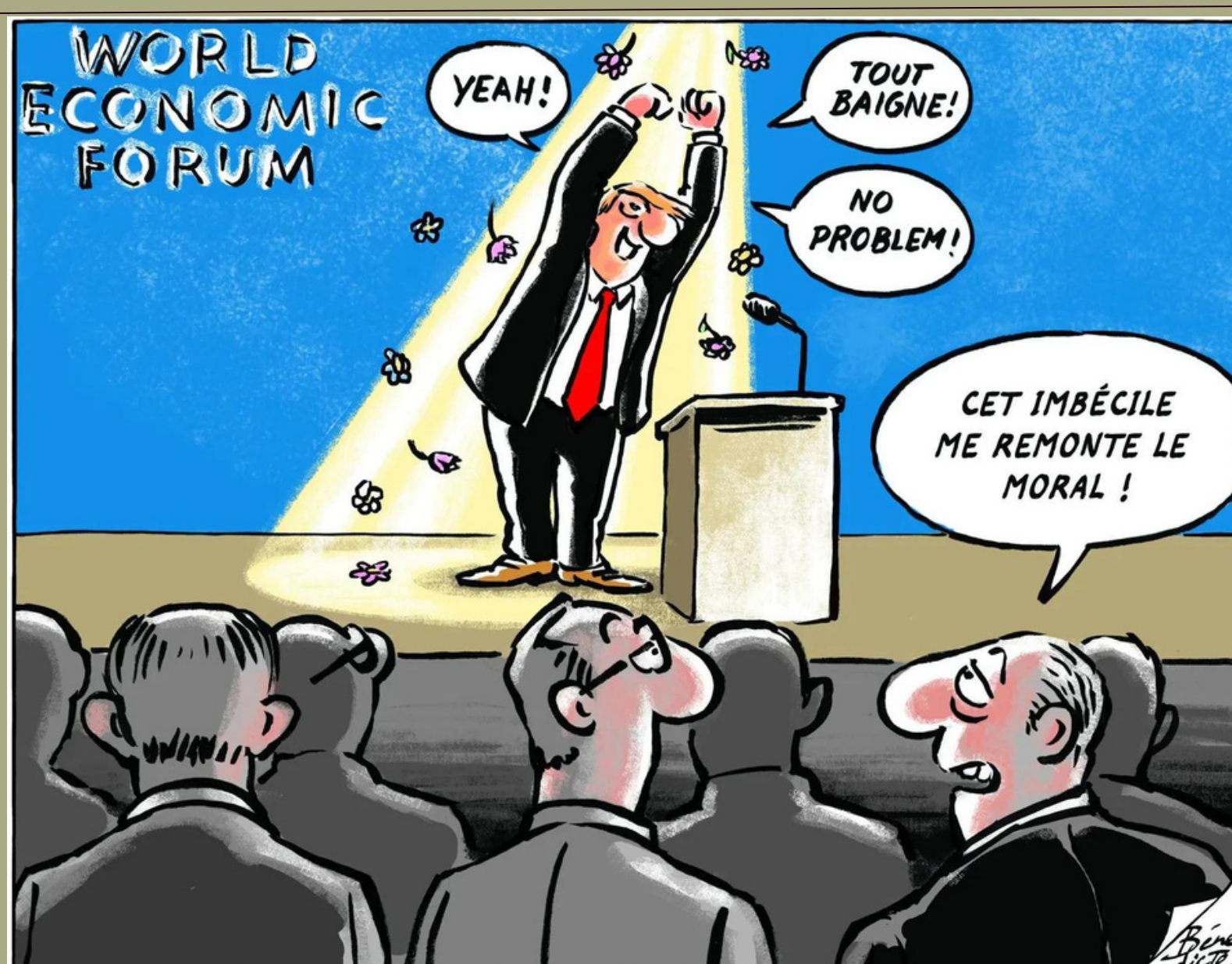
Extreme positivity aka " Prozac leadership"

" It'll start getting cooler,you just watch "
"our Numbers are very good, our environmental Number, our water numbers or our numbers on air are tremendous "
« we have the cleanest water, it's crystal clean »

Trump's comment is meant to undermine the very thing that makes Thunberg an effective activist: the impassioned moral clarity with which she speaks about climate change.

"The wishful thinking of Prozac leaders can quickly cascade down managerial hierarchies, contaminating organisational structures, cultures and practices. It does this by discouraging followers from raising problems or admitting mistakes. Important issues get ignored, leaving organisations – and sometimes even whole societies – unprepared to deal with unexpected events and threats."

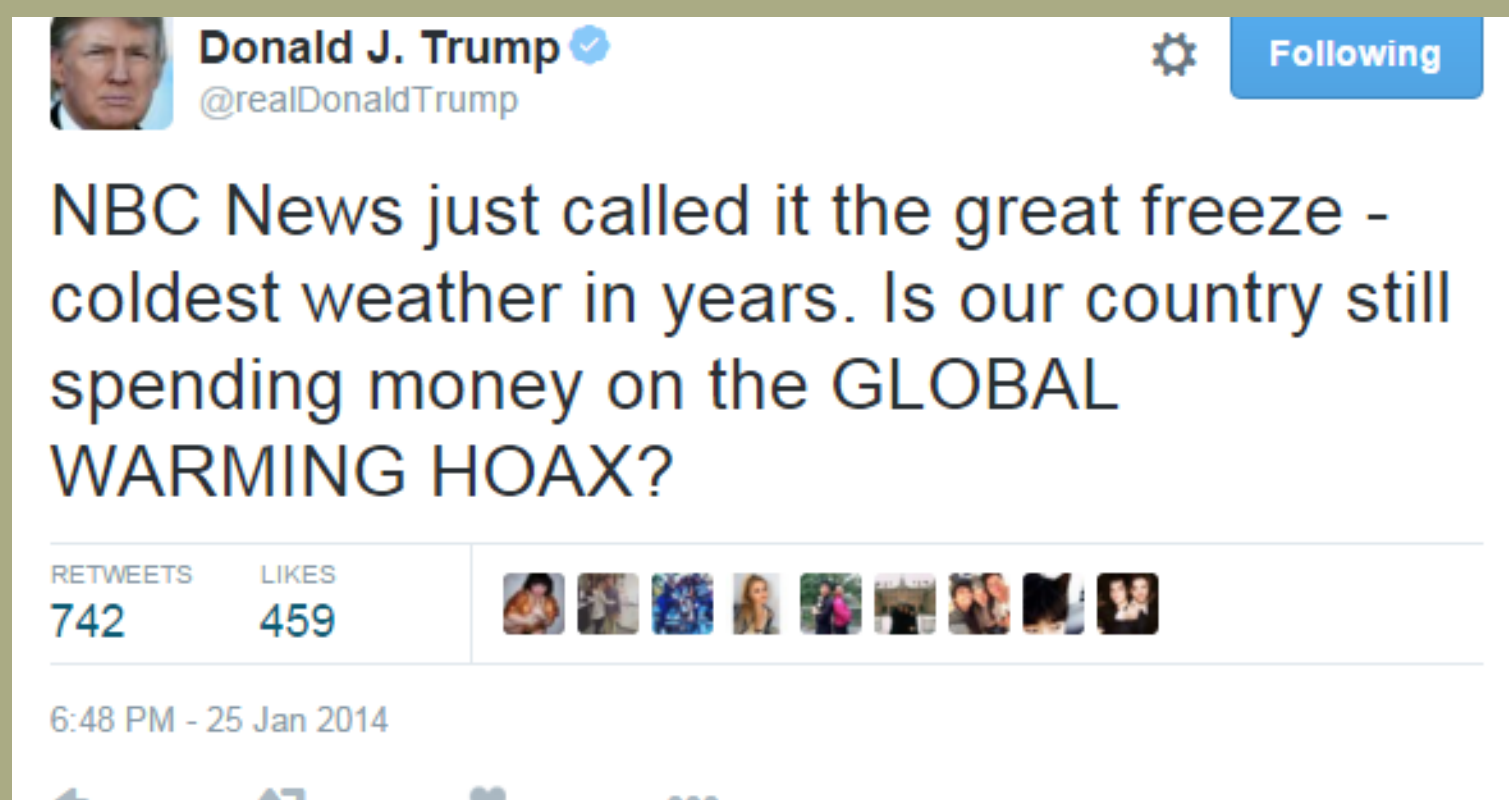David Collinson October 2020 The Conversation

Logical fallacies, cherry picking and jumping to conclusions

- A logical fallacy is the use of <u>invalid</u> or otherwise <u>faulty reasoning</u> in the construction of an argument which may appear to be a well-reasoned argument if unnoticed.
  Donald Trump's tweets and speeches are often rife with logical fallacies

- Cherry picking : Trump is cherry picking cold weather to ignore the larger picture of a warming planet. As if he was trying to prove that because of night-time, the sun does not exist.

By assuming a causal connection simply because they are regularly associated , Trump establishes a cause-and-effect relationship which seems fair when underlooked. Basically, logical fallacies used by Trump help him to draw false conclusions. For example, winter in the USA are cold, therefore, he totally denies the existence of global warming.

Building Ethos

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"I will fight for you with every breath in my body" - Inauguration speech

- *"I've studied them very much more than anybody else." - speech delivered*

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · Dec 11, 2020
I just want to stop the world from killing itself!

💬 82.2K   🔁 96.4K   ♡ 439K

- By using a less wide range of vocabulary than his predecessors, just so he can be understood by anyone easily and project himself to his audience, acting more "non-official" like a sort of friend talking openly and honestly to you just as when he tells stories or adds little comments through declarative sentences.
- Staging himself as the hero America requires, through superlatives and delusional reasoning so that everyone should have faith and trust in him. Even if he appears sometimes a bit too.. confident and that makes so even if he's mistaking, he doesn't care.

Building Pathos

Pathos deals with appealing to the audience's emotions fear, anger, sadness, joy, disgust, surprise, trust, and anticipation and suspense but that is really Trump-like

1 confidence BALLSY

"Personally, I've never had a problem with self-esteem. I always say that you have to believe in yourself or no one else will."
Posted by Donald J. Trump on 5/19/2008 at 10:46 AM

"AMERICA NEEDS A SUPERHERO! I will be making a MAJOR ANNOUNCEMENT tomorrow." - Twitter

2 language HYPERBOLIC

"To embrace the possibilities of tomorrow, we must reject the perennial prophets of doom and their predictions of apocalypse. They are the heirs of yesterday's foolish fortune tellers."
Speech given at the World Economic Forum, Davos, January 2020.

"Before we discuss the Paris Accord, I'd like to begin with an update on our tremendous — absolutely tremendous — economic progress since Election Day on November 8th. The economy is starting to come back, and very, very rapidly. We've added $3.3 trillion in stock market value to our economy, and more than a million private sector jobs[...]Big, big contributions are being made by countries that weren't doing so much in the form of contribution. [...]As President, I can put no other consideration before the wellbeing of American citizens. The Paris Climate Accord is simply the latest example of Washington entering into an agreement that disadvantages the United States to the exclusive benefit of other countries, leaving American workers — who I love — and taxpayers to absorb the cost in terms of lost jobs, lower wages, shuttered factories, and vastly diminished economic production."

Rose Garden, June 2017

As usual he uses mostly declarative and imperative mood, involving his audience : making an commitment, asserting a expectation, predicting an outcome, with a set of powerful words, a wild range of superlatives, repetitions , adverbs, and his three favorite adjectives : "big", "huge", and " tremendous" .
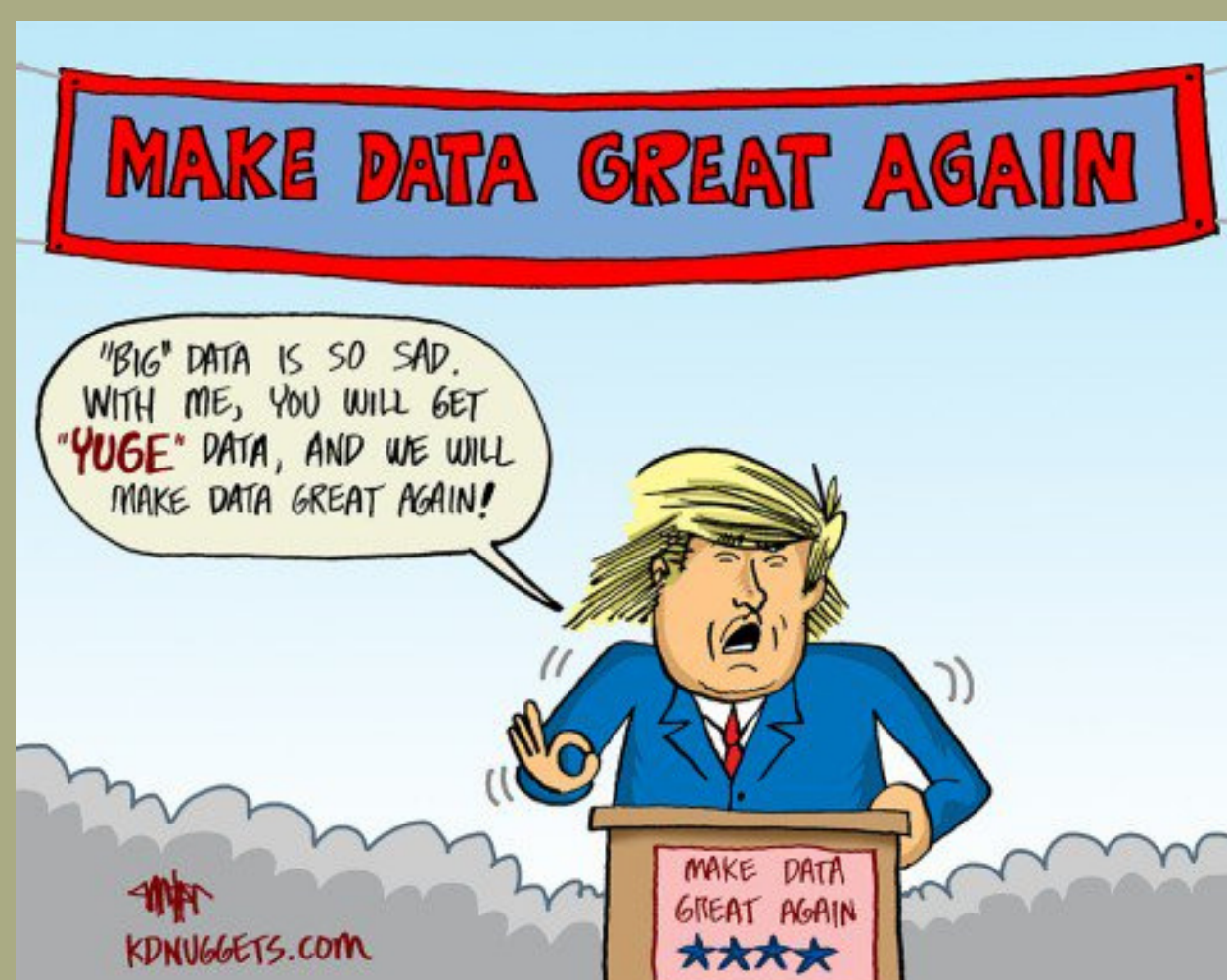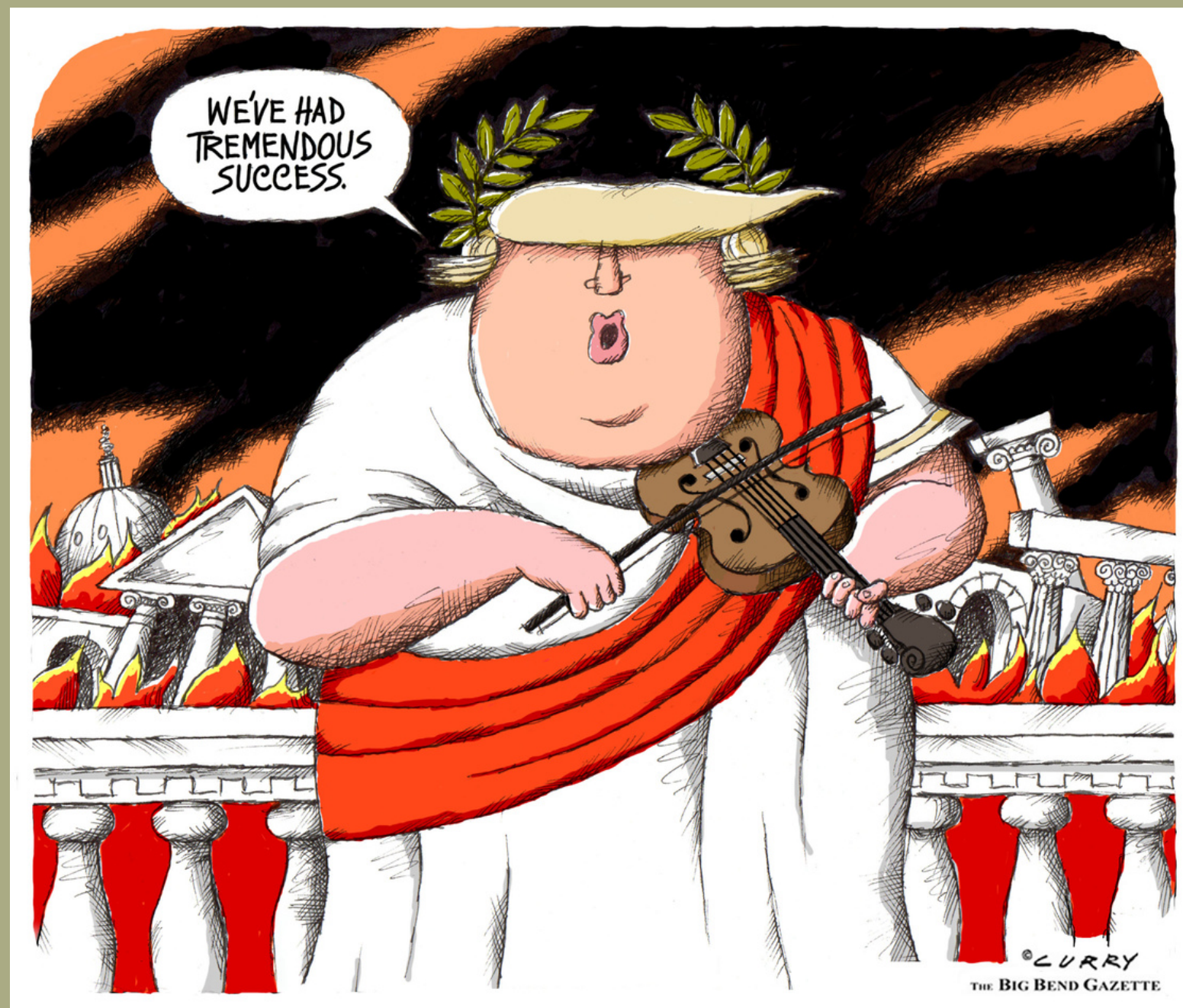
Building Pathos

"
I'm an environmentalist. I am. I want the cleanest water on the planet. I want the cleanest air anywhere."

Donald Trump
December 2019

WE'VE HAD TREMENDOUS SUCCESS.

©CURRY
THE BIG BEND GAZETTE

MAKE DATA GREAT AGAIN

"BIG" DATA IS SO SAD. WITH ME, YOU WILL GET "YUGE" DATA, AND WE WILL MAKE DATA GREAT AGAIN!

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MAKE DATA GREAT AGAIN
★★★★

The Red Herring strategy

The red herring technique involves introducing an irrelevant topic to divert opponents from the original or real issue
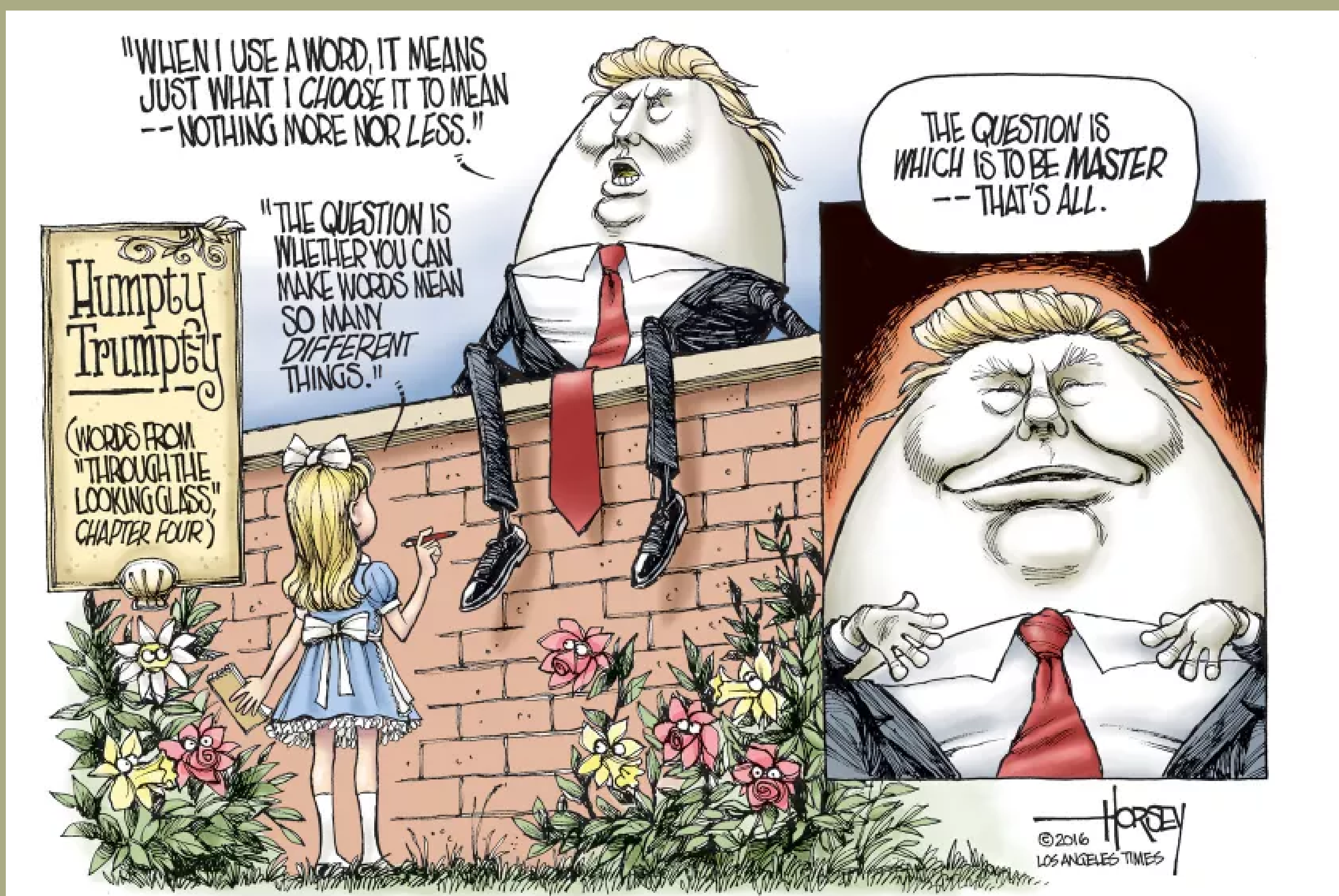

"I'm here to ask you what your plan is to reduce pollution that is driving climate change and endangering public health ?"

"That's an interesting ques/ let me ask you a question ? Ok. So Let me ask you this... So we have global, ok take it easy folks. How many, How many people here believe in global warming? Do you believe in global warming? Who believes in global warming ? Ok we're gonna do two more questions. Two more questions. Let's go. Do you ..."

Rochester6 New Hampshire. 2018

A Red Herring is a distraction, anything that sends a conversation off on a tangent and away from the original point. When someone completely avoids a question by bringing up another issue entirely, they are committing a Red Herring fallacy. here Trump starts asking questions instead of answering.

The Red Herring strategy

The red herring technique involves introducing an irrelevant topic to divert opponents from the original or real issue

Trump's comments are a distraction from what's really happening here – an assault both on climate action broadly and on international cooperation to tackle this global challenge.
August 3, 2017 By David Waskow

"On these issues and so many more, we're following through on our commitments. And I don't want anything to get in our way. I am fighting every day for the great people of this country. Therefore, in order to fulfill my solemn duty to protect America and its citizens, the United States will withdraw from the Paris Climate Accord — (applause) — thank you, thank you — but begin negotiations to reenter either the Paris Accord or a really entirely new transaction on terms that are fair to the United States, its businesses, its workers, its people, its taxpayers. So we're getting out. But we will start to negotiate, and we will see if we can make a deal that's fair. And if we can, that's great. And if we can't, that's fine. (Applause.)."

2017-06-01 Rose Garden.

I could be argued that Trump is a red herring all by himself every time he opens his mouth. Trying to distract.

The lack of LOGOS

"..."Well - since there is none, no quote .
Ok, ok, he does use economic figures, but these are hard to verify. He uses analogies too, easy to grasp and understand as for example when in Davos, in 2020, speaking in the heart of Europe, he cited the example of Florence cathedral, whose magnificent dome was built in the 15th century despite naysayers who doubted it could be done."The technology did not yet exist, to complete their design, city fathers forged ahead anyway, certain they would figure it out someday."

He uses arguments whose conclusion does not follow logically from the premise - logical fallacies and cherry-picking).
He asserts facts and numbers (which usually are just a word, no figure is actually given) without giving any real proof, any statitstics, any sources .
His top advisor Kellyanne Conway even took to the the phrase "alternative facts" as a way to judge the attendance at the inauguration which was presented as the greatest ever when photos showed much less larger crowds than at Obama's inauguration. Reality denial- false dichotomy.

Conclusion

Vous devriez maitnenant pouvoir repérer facilement les jeteurs de discrédit, douteurs systémiques, pseudo-experts

adeptes de la rhétorique autoritaire qui à l'aide de raisonnements fallacieux, - sophismes, paralogimes, picorage- arrivent à des conclusions précipitées qu'ils assènent péremptoirement à grand renfort d'épithètes hyperboliques en mode déclaratif/injonctif.

Evidemment, on vous déconseille cette stratégie pour votre grand oral.

Et comme il est toujours bon de pousser toujours plus loin la réflexion,   nous vous laissons méditer pour finir sur le message d'un ultime dessin de presse ☺

Ceci n'est pas une vignette sur Donald Trump