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# I'm Not Racist, I Love Those People: How Trump's Language Reveals His Bigotry

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## I'm Not Racist, I Love Those People: *How Trump's Language Reveals His Bigotry*

Everyone knows that one person who tends to loudly proclaim something along the lines of “*I'm not racist! I think the Mexicans are great. They make amazing food.*”, or “*The Asians are all so smart*” This is the person that makes you cringe a little when they talk because the statements they're making are themselves inherently racist, but they truly don't realize it. Donald Trump is this person to the entire country. Among the other numerous reasons pretty much everything Trump says is problematic, even when he's trying to prove he's not racist, *he's still being racist*. His ‘othering’ of pretty much any minority group, but especially Muslims, only increases fear or mistrust of these individuals and dehumanizes them. By using “the” when referring to Muslims or African Americans or Hispanics, Trump is furthering the idea that these individuals are not as unique or different as his fellow White, Christian peers (O'Connor).

This subtle form of islamophobia is one of the more troubling aspects of Donald Trump's campaign thus far. For the most part, he is very open and vocal about his feelings on anyone or anything. As Rohit Chopra writes, “For Trump, the Muslim or Latino citizen or immigrant is a suspect; he gestures towards the underlying anxieties about Muslim terrorism or waves of illegal immigrants swamping America” (24). Whether the topic be Megyn Kelly, building a wall between the US and Mexico, or John McCain's military service, you can be sure Trump will put his personal opinion out there. Voters hear these statements loud and clear, and they use them when trying to decipher what Trump's values and beliefs are. However, Trump is sending mixed messages when he makes a statement like “I love the Muslims. I think they're great people” (Reilly). On the one hand, he is claiming something positive, and trying to gain favor with constituents who are Muslim or religiously tolerant. But at the same time, his statement is incredibly insensitive. He generalizes and reduces the entire faith of people down to a single trait, not allowing them any type of individuality. This makes it seem as if these individuals are one-dimensional, and fundamentally different than other Americans. This type of islamophobic speech furthers the orientalist view that many people in this country have of the Middle East and Muslims in general. Orientalist sentiment permeates both our media and this current election cycle, only further ingraining this ideal into American culture. Not realizing all Muslims and Middle Easterners are unique individuals with different opinions and beliefs makes it easy to lump them all together, and fear them. That fear prevents people from ever getting to know these people who have a different background than themselves, meaning their opinion of this group will never be changed. Having a prominent public figure spout these kinds of misconceptions spreads them more and gives them more legitimacy. As Donald Trump continues to gain strength and popularity, his islamophobic and bigoted ideas only become more and more popular. As long as he continues to lump any group together, whether his comment about them is supposed to be positive or not, he will be continuing to divide

our society. When he uses this subtly orientalist language, he's dividing people without them even realizing it.

So, what can be done to combat this negativity and bigotry that is endlessly leaving the Trump campaign? Well, first of all, we need to not put him in the White House, plain and simple as that. Giving Trump the power to enact any kind of real policy based in these islamophobic beliefs is not the way to "Make America Great Again". The way to *continue* to improve our country is to connect us to one another, and grow understanding between citizens. This is something that can begin at the personal level. Become active in your community. Befriend people who come from a background different than your own. Visit different places of worship and learn about other religions. Don't be afraid to ask people those deep questions about who they are, what they believe, and how they got there. Become politically engaged at the local and national level. And don't refer to any group as "The Muslims, Mexicans, Asians, ect, ect". You might be mistaken for Donald Trump.

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