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**The Trump Metaphors:
Comedy News Portrayal of Donald Trump
During the 2016 US Presidential Election**

Master's Thesis

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Abstract

This master's thesis deals with the implications of metaphorical language, which comedy news programs used to portray Donald Trump as a candidate during the 2016 US presidential election. First, the author outlines the most important moments of Donald Trump's presidential campaign, then introduces the comedy news genre as well as three comedy news programs – *The Daily Show*, *Last Week Tonight* and *Real Time* – which are included in the analytical part of the thesis. The thesis continues with the theoretical and methodological chapters, in which conceptual metaphor analysis based on the works of Lakoff, Johnson and Yanow is presented. The metaphor analysis itself, performed on 73 comedy news episodes, reveals that mostly the same metaphors were used across all three programs and they overwhelmingly portray Donald Trump as non-human. As the election kept approaching, Donald Trump was increasingly portrayed as “a natural disaster,” “the apocalypse” or “the Devil.” The author suggests that the overall tacit objective of the metaphors used in the three comedy news programs was to dehumanize Donald Trump. Finally, the limitations of the analysis are discussed and suggestions for further research on the implications of metaphorical language are made.

Keywords

US presidential election, Donald Trump, comedy news programs, John Oliver, Bill Maher, Trevor Noah, metaphors, sociolinguistics

Extent of the Thesis

The thesis as submitted is 114 206 characters including spaces, i.e. 60 standard pages long.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work, based solely on the sources and literature listed in the appended bibliography. I also declare this thesis was not used to obtain any other academic degree. I give my permission to make this thesis accessible for further study and research purposes.

Prague, 31. 7. 2018

Bc. Petra Králová

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Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the US political debate has witnessed an emergence of powerful new voices – the hosts of comedy news programs, such as Jon Stewart and Trevor Noah of *The Daily Show*, Stephen Colbert of *The Colbert Report* or John Oliver of *Last Week Tonight*. Although they claim that the sole focus of their programs is comedy, a number of scholars and political commentators have argued that comedy news programs have the potential to influence their viewers' political attitudes, redefine journalism as well as bring about real-life change through their calls to action. Given the rising influence of comedy news programs, the main objective of this thesis will be to analyze how these programs covered the 2016 US presidential election and more specifically, what language they used to portray the Republican candidate and the ultimate election winner, Donald Trump.

The theoretical and methodological basis of this thesis will consist of the conceptual metaphor analysis anchored in the works of linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson and communication scholar Dvora Yanow. They argue that metaphors can serve as valuable analytical tools because they are not just superficial figures of speech; in fact, they have the ability to shape the way we think and act. Therefore, the theoretical chapter will focus on the definition of metaphors according to these scholars and it will illustrate the importance of analyzing metaphorical language in the effort to understand how language impacts our thinking and actions. In the methodological chapter, I will introduce the data corpus consisting of selected comedy news programs episodes and I will outline how I proceeded in the choice of relevant metaphors for the analysis.

My hope is that the analysis will not only describe which metaphors prevailed in the comedy news programs' portrayal of Donald Trump and how the metaphors changed as the election kept approaching, but it will also reveal which aspects of Trump's

statements and actions were highlighted and which aspects were obscured through the use of metaphorical language. The results of the analysis will hopefully uncover the tacit image of Donald Trump that comedy news programs created through their use of metaphors. Finally, I will discuss the implications of the created image as well as the significance of conceptual metaphor analysis for our understanding of how comedy news programs use metaphorical language to share unspoken meaning with their viewers.

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Introduction

“The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.”

Ludwig Wittgenstein¹

In the past few years, the American political discourse has significantly changed. The changes have been, to a great extent, triggered by Donald Trump’s candidacy, his victory in the unprecedented 2016 presidential election and the subsequent reaction to it. Some of Donald Trump’s loudest critics come from an particular source – liberal comedy. The hosts of comedy news programs, a relatively new television genre, have become unintended, yet prominent voices in the American political discourse. As I will illustrate in this thesis, comedy news programs have a material impact on viewers’ political attitudes, they are effectively redefining journalism, and their call-to-action has the potential to trigger real-life change.

Due to the amount of influence these programs appear to have, my interest was piqued in the way in which they portrayed Donald Trump, the candidate, and what language they used in framing his campaign, his statements and the actions he took during the election. The link between language and thought has been a widely discussed topic in social sciences for decades and it is perhaps best exemplified by the so-called Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Kay, Kempton, 1984). After being introduced to the works of linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson and their theory on conceptual metaphors, I chose to focus on one linguistic aspect in particular – the use of metaphorical language. I decided to analyze selected comedy news episodes and examine which metaphors they used in relation to Donald Trump and what sort of image of Trump the use of these metaphors conjured up.

This thesis explores the topic over the course of five chapters. The purpose of the first two chapters of this thesis is to “set the scene” for the readers. The first chapter offers a brief overview of Donald Trump’s campaign in the 2016 presidential election, including

¹ Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1922.

several controversial events which were specifically discussed in comedy news programs. The following chapter then introduces the genre of comedy news, its effects on the viewers, as well as three comedy news programs (*The Daily Show with Trevor Noah*, *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* and *Real Time with Bill Maher*) which are selected for the analysis. In chapter three, I outline the foundations of conceptual metaphor theory, as introduced by linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, and further developed by communication scholar Dvora Yanow. This chapter also defines (conceptual) metaphors and describes some of the ways in which metaphors shape our thoughts and actions. The theoretical chapter is followed by a chapter dedicated to the methodological approach used in the analysis, which presents the research questions, the data corpus, the method used to identify metaphors in the data as well as the process of selecting relevant metaphors. In the final chapter, I produce a descriptive analysis of the metaphorical language used in relation to Donald Trump and the findings based on the analysis. This thesis concludes with both a discussion of the implications of the findings as well as the limitations of the presented analysis, along with suggestions for future research on metaphorical language.

1. Donald Trump's Campaign in the 2016 Presidential Election

Before I move on to the focal point of the thesis, comedy news programs and their portrayal of Donald Trump as a candidate in the 2016 US presidential election, I intend to outline the development of his campaign in the presidential race. Although this chapter focuses on the key moments and elements of Donald Trump's campaign, I want to emphasize that this is not the place to provide any more than a brief account of the key presidential campaign moments which took place in the pre-election period. The objective of this short chapter is to simply provide some context to the references made in comedy news programs regarding Donald Trump's presidential campaign.

1.1 Candidacy Announcement

On June 16, 2015, Donald Trump officially announced his candidacy in the upcoming presidential election. He gave a speech at Trump Tower in Manhattan, which outlined some of the main topics of his upcoming campaign and introduced his campaign slogan "Make America Great Again". Trump's speech was based on the idea that the US had been losing their economic and political upper hand on the world stage and his presidency would reverse that process.

The speech was mainly focused on Trump's key campaign goals, including:

- Bringing jobs, which were outsourced abroad by American companies, back to the country
- Renegotiating foreign trade deals
- Reducing national debt
- Putting a stop to the influx of immigrants from Mexico, Latin America and the Middle East
- Increasing military spending and providing for war veterans
- Repealing The Affordable Care Act (aka Obamacare)
- Eradicating ISIS and preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons
- Supporting the Second Amendment of the US Constitution

In addition, the speech was laced with mentions of Donald Trump's personal business achievements, his wealth and financial independence from campaign donors. He also criticized president Obama, the administration at the time and politicians as a whole for their incompetence (Time, 2015).

1.2 GOP Debates and Nomination

In the beginning of the race for the Republican presidential nomination, Donald Trump was not considered a particularly viable candidate. A number of experts and political commentators from both camps claimed that his eccentric, populist and inflammatory rhetoric could never secure him a win in the Republican primaries (Spatola, 2015). However, once the Republican televised debates began in August 2015, the former reality TV star and well-known public figure started drawing considerably more attention than his rivals. A total of 12 Republican debates took place and the viewership rate averaged about 16.2 million viewers. Such numbers were unprecedented and it was soon clear that Trump's presence in the debates was the key factor behind these record-breaking numbers (Howell, 2016).

Despite the constant stream of criticism for his outlandish and offensive claims and fumbles, Donald Trump's poll numbers continued to rise. In the beginning of 2016, many political commentators still predicted Trump would eventually lose the nomination (Klein, 2016). There were powerful voices from within the Republican Party denouncing Trump, including the 2012 Republican nominee Mitt Romney (Jackson, 2016). The last remaining Republican candidate besides Trump, Senator Ted Cruz, dropped out of the race on May 3, 2016 (Sullivan, Zezima, 2016). Subsequently, Donald Trump was announced as the presumptive Republican nominee on the same day (Nussbaum, 2016). After surpassing the 1237 delegate votes needed to secure the nomination, Trump became the official GOP presidential nominee on July 19, 2016 (Collinson, Kopan, 2016).

1.3 General Election

For the general election, Donald Trump chose Indiana Governor Mike Pence as his running mate. Pence originally voiced his support for Ted Cruz, but some time before

the nomination he started campaigning alongside Trump (Levingston, 2016). On July 27, 2016, the Democratic Convention elected former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to run against Donald Trump in the general election (CBS News, 2016). Throughout the four months leading to the general election, Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton consistently led the polls (RealClearPolitics.com, 2016).

The two candidates faced off in a total of three televised debates. The first debate between Clinton and Trump on September 26, 2016 was the most-watched debate in American history, with 84 million viewers tuning in via traditional TV channels and many millions more via web streaming and other channels (Stelter, 2016a). The other two debates, which took place on October 10 and October 20, 2016, also attracted a vast number of viewers (Katz, 2016). Many commentators claimed that the ongoing theme in all three debates was personal attacks and unprecedented hostility between the two candidates (Caldwell, 2016). Additionally, a number of controversial information about both candidates appeared in the media during this time period. Just 11 days before the election, the FBI reopened an investigation regarding Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server during her time as Secretary of State in 2009. FBI director James Comey announced that no criminal charges would be made against Clinton two days before the election (Zurcher, 2016).

A large portion of these controversial revelations concerned Donald Trump. Perhaps the most-discussed Trump controversy surfaced on October 7, 2016, when The Washington Post published a 2005 recording of Trump having a conversation with Access Hollywood host Billy Bush in which he bragged about his unsolicited sexual advances on women (Blake, 2016). In the following weeks, a number of women came forward with allegations of Trump's past sexually inappropriate behavior towards them. Although Donald Trump released a video apology for his words from the Access Hollywood tape, he denied all of the subsequent accusations and claimed that they were purposefully fabricated to hurt his campaign (DelReal, Sullivan, 2016). The other widely discussed Trump controversy, which took place within the last month of the pre-election period, involved Donald Trump suggesting that he would not necessarily accept the election results. He received criticism from liberal commentators, Democrats as well as some prominent members of the Republican party (Chuck, 2016).

2. Comedy News

Now that I offered a brief overview of Donald Trump's presidential campaign and some of the events which took place in the election year, I would like to shift the focus to the main actors of my analysis – the hosts of comedy news programs. I suspect that comedy news is not necessarily a well-known genre to readers outside the US and that is why I will begin this chapter by explaining its roots in late night talk shows as well how researching these programs potentially offers a better understanding of certain changes that social scientists have been observing over the past few decades. Then I will follow with introducing the three comedy news programs I chose for my analysis – *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah*, *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* and *Real Time with Bill Maher* – and I will bring forward their significance within the comedy news world.

2.1 Late Night Talk Shows

In the early 1960s, a new genre of television programs emerged – late night talk shows. They were 30 to 60-minute-long programs with live audience, always presented by the same host who would start off the show with a 15-minute monologue about current (political) events. The rest of the program usually featured interviews with guests from the show business, comedy sketches or musical numbers. This format was first established by Johnny Carson who became the host of *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson* on NBC in 1962 and it has not changed much since then. Even though Carson's monologues in the beginning of each episode contained political jokes, they usually echoed the public opinion on political issues and they were never edgy or controversial. In the late 1960s, other networks started airing their own late night talk shows. In an effort to become more distinguishable, some hosts would engage in more controversial political topics, for example Merv Griffin interviewed an anti-Vietnam war activist on his show on CBS in 1970. However, it was Johnny Carson who effectively monopolized late night talk all the way to the late 1980s (Lichter, Baumgartner and Morris, 2015, p. 20-21).

In the 1990s, late night shows featured a growing number of political topics and guests from the world of politics. In 1992, a presidential candidate made an appearance on a late night show for the first time – Bill Clinton played the saxophone and gave an

interview on *Arsenio Hall Show*. By then, late night TV was ruled by Jay Leno, who became the host of *The Tonight Show* after Johnny Carson retired, and David Letterman who hosted *The Late Show* on CBS. Both shows partially relied on political satire – Leno and Letterman regularly joked about politicians, policy issues, political institutions and parties (Ibid, p. 22-23).

The world of late night talk has seen the emergence of a large number of shows since the 1990s. Some of the most popular ones are *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* on ABC, *Conan* on TBS, *The Tonight Show* with Jimmy Fallon, who replaced retired Jay Leno as host, and *Late Night with Seth Meyers* on NBC (Ibid, p. 25). But apart from the number of late night shows growing, another subgenre emerged in 1999 when Jon Stewart became the host of *The Daily Show* on Comedy Central. When the show first aired in 1996, it was hosted by Craig Kilborn and it focused on “creating funny spoof headlines” (Smith, 2016). With Stewart replacing Kilborn in the host chair, the show’s focus shifted to politics and mainstream media (Lichter, Baumgartner and Morris, 2015, p. 26). *The Daily Show* became the first late night program dedicated almost exclusively to political/news satire and started off the genre of comedy news.

2.2 Comedy News Format

Even though the format of comedy news programs is heavily inspired by late night talk shows and especially the late night hosts’ opening monologues, there are some significant differences because the comedy news format also uses the setup, structure and editing typically seen in traditional cable news. This means that the hosts of comedy news programs usually sit behind an anchor desk and present individual stories about current events with accompanying images and clips in the top left corner of the screen. The “newscast” may be accompanied by live or pre-taped contributions from “correspondents”, who are comedians posing as journalists, news reporters or experts, and interviews with guests from the entertainment world, real politicians, journalists, authors, scientists or other publicly known persons. The topics covered in comedy news programs are also typically not so different from what viewers see in traditional cable news – it is mostly the latest development of political, economic and social issues in the US or abroad. Comedy news programs feature clips from cable news, Senate or Congressional hearings, press conferences and briefings. Some information also comes

from public documents and major print media. Unlike cable news, however, comedy news programs often dedicate more time to the coverage of presented topics as well as placing the issues in context and presenting them from a wider perspective (Baym, 2005, p. 256-269).

Still, comedy news programs along with daytime and late night talk shows, newsmagazine shows and tabloid programs, fall into the category of “soft news” (sometimes referred to as “infotainment”). Soft news merges entertainment and news together, but mostly accentuates the entertainment value of the program. While traditional news sources like print, radio and cable news have been witnessing a steady decline in subscription rates and viewership, people increasingly come to soft news programs for their updates about current events (Lichter, Baumgartner and Morris, 2015, p. 32). This trend is possibly even stronger in the case of comedy news programs since they specifically cover political issues. Therefore, some scholars such as Geoffrey Baym suggest that although comedy news does blur the line between news and entertainment and therefore has the attributes of soft news, “[...] it is a more profound phenomenon of discursive integration, a way of speaking about, understanding, and acting within the world defined by the permeability of form and the fluidity of content. Discourses of news, politics, entertainment, and marketing have grown deeply inseparable; the languages and practices of each have lost their distinctiveness and are being melded into previously unimagined combinations” (Baym, 2005, p. 262). This points us to the question of what effect comedy news programs possibly have on the viewers as well as institutions and society as a whole.

2.3 Comedy News Effects

2.3.1 Enhancement of Viewers’ Political Awareness

In their analysis from 2008, communication scholars Lauren Feldman and Dannagal Goldthwaite Young suggested that those who were exposed to late night shows also showed increased level of attention to cable news’ coverage of the 2004 presidential election. However, unlike late night talk show viewers, those who watched *The Daily Show* were more consistently attentive to current events and their attention did not wane with the end of the election (Feldman, Young, 2008, p. 416). Additionally, a

considerable portion of *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* viewers report that the programs provide them with “truthful, accurate and unbiased” information, “context, background or perspective” to the information obtained from traditional news as well as they “make news fun”, which suggests the viewers already had some knowledge of current events. It may indicate that watching comedy news programs offers a deeper understanding of political issues and boosts the viewer’s ability to put the news in broader context (Young, 2013, p. 165). Moreover, even if it was not their intention to educate themselves on current political issues, some viewers end up more politically informed after watching comedy news programs. This process is known as the “incidental by-product model of learning” (Lichter, Baumgartner and Morris, 2015, p. 35).

2.3.2 Speaking to the Younger Generations

It has been true for quite some time that American young adults do not follow the news as frequently and are less interested in current public affairs when compared to older generations. Additionally, they are the least trustful of the national media out of all generations (Pew Research Center, 2016). Young adults increasingly turn to “soft news” for information about current events (Lichter, Baumgartner and Morris, 2015, p. 32). That is why it is remarkable that comedy news programs have been able to attract young viewers and draw their attention to political issues. In 2012, 43% of *The Colbert Report* and 39% of *The Daily Show*’s regular viewers were less than 30 years old (Pew Research Center, 2012). Additionally, in 2015 approximately one fourth of American millennials considered *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* trustworthy news sources (Pew Research Center, 2015).

2.3.3 Contribution to a Deliberative Democracy

Scholars like Geoffrey Baym argue that comedy news programs offer new forms of political and democratic communication. They offer “practices [...] that simultaneously inform and educate, entertain and motivate” (Baym, 2007, p. 113). According to Baym, their strength is in their ability to utilize satire in the attack of conventional and self-important practices of traditional cable news. Making reference to Habermas and other proponents of a deliberative democracy who highlight the importance of rational

communication to the workings of democracy, Baym claims that the regressive, frantic and sometimes incomprehensible news reporting appearing on traditional cable news is in direct conflict with the effort to create a meaningful democracy-supporting debate. And this is where comedy news programs fill in the gaps – they are able to point out these tendencies as well as offer an alternative (Baym, 2005, p. 269-273).

2.3.4 Reinvention of Journalism

Comedy news hosts as well as their networks regularly deny that the programs have anything to do with real journalism. However, the programs do not simply present current events using news footage – they in fact add their own opinions to the issues they discuss and they use investigative research to back up these opinions (Brewer, Marquardt, 2007, p. 261). So even though it is not the showrunners' intention, some scholars argue that there are elements of journalism present in these programs. It seems that this view is shared by the public and the media. *The Daily Show*, *The Colbert Report* and *Last Week Tonight* all have won Peabody Awards for their contributions in the field of news and entertainment (PeabodyAwards.com). The former host of *The Daily Show*, Jon Stewart, was named the most important newscaster in the US by *Newsday* in 2004 (Baym, 2005, p. 260).

Nevertheless, some suggest that conflating comedy news programs with journalism has its limitations. It has been pointed out that the hosts of comedy news programs are not held to the same standards as journalists who are under an obligation of following a specific code of ethics (Borden, Tew, 2007, p. 301). Other scholars view this discrepancy as a valuable tool, which potentially helps comedy news programs critically examine the information given by politicians. This is something that the media often fail to do since they tend to simply parrot the soundbites fed to them by politicians and focus on “[...] the trivial at the expense of the consequential.” Additionally, the media are not free to critically examine current events because unlike the comedy news programs, they often have to sacrifice critical inquiry in the name of “objectivity” (Baym, 2005, p. 265-268).

Now that I have outlined the core characteristics of the genre and suggested its relevance to social sciences, I will continue with introducing the three comedy news programs I selected for the analysis portion of my thesis.

2.4 The Daily Show

The Daily Show is a comedy news programs which runs four nights a week on Comedy Central, a cable network (Brewer, Marquardt, 2007, p. 249). It premiered in 1996 and it is currently running its twenty third season (The Daily Show, IMDb.com). Last year Comedy Central announced that the current host Trevor Noah signed a contract extension until 2022 (Itzkoff, 2017). As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, *The Daily Show* was the pioneer of the comedy news genre. The program has won 24 Primetime Emmys and more than 40 other awards (The Daily Show, IMDb.com).

2.4.1 Hosts

The program has been hosted by the total of three hosts. Comedian and former sports news anchor Craig Kilborn hosted *The Daily Show* for the first two seasons. Under his tenure the program focused mainly on humorous made up stories presented in all seriousness. After Kilborn's conflict with one of the show co-creators, he resigned in 1998 (Holman, 2016). The following year Kilborn was replaced by stand-up comic Jon Stewart who had previously hosted his own talk show on MTV and had appeared in several minor film roles (Smith, 2016). As I suggested earlier, it was Stewart who changed the direction of the program almost entirely towards political and news satire and made *The Daily Show* "a hybrid blend of comedy, news, and political conversation" (Baym, 2005, p. 259). Jon Stewart hosted and co-produced the program from 1999 until 2015 and during that time *The Daily Show* became a well-known and highly regarded addition to the national political debate. Despite his consistent objections to the show being perceived as anything but pure comedy, Stewart himself became "a public intellectual" (Gillick, Gorilovskaya, 2008) and in 2009 he was voted "America's Most Trusted Newscaster" in a *TIME* online poll (Poniewozik, 2015).

In 2015, Jon Stewart announced his retirement after 16 years of hosting the program and South African stand-up comedian Trevor Noah took his place upon Stewart's personal

recommendation. It became Noah's first major work on American television and the network expected him to bring a more youthful and international influence on the program (Itzkoff, 2015). While the format of the show remains almost completely the same under Noah's tenure, some commentators observe that the content has partially shifted from the media coverage of domestic news to more international affairs. In addition, Noah claims to put his own perspective on the covered issues (Hibberd, 2015), which seems to manifest as highlighting the plight of immigrants and people of color in the US (Holman, 2016).

2.4.2 Format and Content

The Daily Show's episodes run for 22 minutes (The Daily Show, IMDb.com). Each episode starts with the opening credits of the program, which strongly resemble those of typical newscasts – they feature graphics of the globe, the US flag and dramatic music. However, once the opening credits finish, the camera switches to a wide shot of the studio with cheering live audience (Baym, 2005, p. 262). The host guides the viewers through the program from behind a newscaster-like desk. Although each episode slightly differs, they mostly follow an established structure – they start with the host discussing the latest news headlines, then there are correspondent segments and the program closes with a guest interview (Brewer, Marquardt, 2007, p. 256). As I already indicated, the content of the program has changed with each host. Trevor Noah currently follows Jon Stewart's footsteps to a large extent and in his first news headline segment he mostly focuses on news stories regarding domestic or international political, social and economic issues being discussed in the mainstream media.

A large portion of the program also consists of live or pre-taped segments from the show's "correspondents" who parody the newscasters and reporters of traditional cable news. They often assume pompous titles like "senior Baghdad bureau chief" or "senior election/terrorism correspondent" (Baym, 2005, p. 269). The correspondents often cover current affairs in the field and they interview unassuming individuals. Especially in the beginning of the program they let the people whom they interviewed believe they were real news reporters to elicit a certain type of response:

There was a very specific way we were supposed to present ourselves when we set up field pieces: “I’m from *The Daily Show*.” “What’s *The Daily Show*?” “Well, it’s an alternative news-and-entertainment program.” “What channel is it on?” “Well, I don’t know what channel it is where you live. Where we live it’s Channel 29.” Anything other than saying the words ‘Comedy Central’ (Smith, 2016).

Many of the comedians who started as correspondents on *The Daily Show* later went on to host their own comedy news programs. Probably the most notable example is Stephen Colbert, the program’s correspondent from 1997 until 2005, who hosted *The Daily Show*’s spin-off program titled *The Colbert Report* from 2005 until 2014. In this show, Colbert’s host persona was a parody of conservative political commentators such as Bill O’Reilly from Fox News (Lichter, Baumgartner and Morris, 2015, p. 27). In 2015, Colbert became the host of *The Late Show* on CBS after David Letterman’s retirement and he has shifted the show’s focus towards more political content (Prudom, 2017). Other comedy news programs hosted by *The Daily Show*’s former correspondents include John Oliver’s *Last Week Tonight* on HBO, Samantha Bee’s *Full Frontal* on TBS or Larry Wilmore’s *The Nightly Show* on Comedy Central (Oleksinski, 2017).

Another integral part of the program are the guest interviews. Although a portion of the guests who appear on *The Daily Show* are from the entertainment world, more importantly, many prominent political figures have appeared on the program as well, including former president Barack Obama (Gallagher, 2013). Interestingly, communication scholars Paul R. Brewer and Emily Marquardt analyzed 52 episodes of *The Daily Show* from 2005 and found that regardless of the guests’ professions, “around half (52%) [of the interviews] included discussion of politics [...], 25% included discussion of world affairs [...], and 15% included discussion of the news media” (Brewer, Marquardt, 2007, p. 263). The consistent goal of the guest interviews, especially the ones with politicians and expert commentators, is an effort to discuss political and societal issues in a thoughtful way, to achieve better understanding of them and reveal their potential solutions (Baym, 2005, p. 271).

2.4.3 *The Daily Show's* Relevance

I believe that at this point it would be redundant to lengthily illustrate the relevance of *The Daily Show* again because it has already been discussed in the previous part of this chapter. Essentially all the research on the influence of comedy news programs mentioned in the subchapter “Comedy News Effects” was done on *The Daily Show* and its spin-off program *The Colbert Report*. However, it is worth highlighting that *The Daily Show* was the trailblazer in going beyond superficial satire. Jon Stewart and his team of writers and correspondents actually founded a genre which is based on revealing the often preposterous ways in which politicians spin various issues to serve their goals (Lichter, Baumgartner and Morris, 2015, p. 212).

2.5 *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*

Last Week Tonight with John Oliver is a weekly comedy news program hosted by British comedian John Oliver on HBO, a premium cable channel. It premiered in 2014 and it is currently running its fifth season (*Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*, IMDb.com). Just like in the case of *Real Time with Bill Maher*, last year HBO announced that the show will be on air until 2020 with the possibility of further renewal (Koblin, 2017).

2.5.1 Host

Originally a stand-up comedian, John Oliver got his first big break on American television in 2006 when he became a “European news correspondent” on Jon Stewart’s *The Daily Show*. For the next seven years, he made regular appearances in this role on the show (Friedmann, 2017). In 2013, he temporarily stepped in for Jon Stewart as the show host, while Stewart went on to direct a film for the summer (Sneed, 2013). A few months later, Oliver left *The Daily Show* to start working on his own comedy news show, *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* (Patten, 2014). Oliver has been very open about the influence Jon Stewart had on his comedic style and the program itself (Hiatt, 2014). Some commentators remarked that Oliver’s foreign nationality allows him to analyze and satirize the States’ political, economic and social issues from an outsider’s perspective, which makes his comedic style feel not so partisan to American viewers.

Oliver's program also features more international news than most other comedy news programs (Breger, 2015).

2.5.2 Format and Content

Like most comedy news programs, *Last Week Tonight* is shot in a studio with live audience and the host sitting behind a newscaster-like desk on the stage. The coverage of the stories is accompanied by clips and images appearing in the top left of the screen (Crouch, 2014). Each approximately 30-minute episode starts with a quick segment in which Oliver comments on both US and international news from the past week. The following longer segment is then dedicated to an in-depth exploration of one particular topic, most often a social, economic or political issue – such as net neutrality, death penalty, pay day loans, gerrymandering etc. These explorations typically begin with a simple introduction to the discussed issue and gradually double down on urgency and *cris de coeur* before they finish with a monumentally silly ending.

Multiple observers noticed how well-researched these long segments are, often making reference to academic research, legislature and international media coverage (Seale, 2014). It seems like a lot of this effort comes from the writing staff of the show, which includes fact-checkers and journalists from The New York Times, Al Jazeera and ProPublica (Bauder, 2015). For these reasons some commentators argue that the show in fact falls into the categories of investigative journalism or “explainer journalism” (Poniewozik, 2014). The show indicates a potentially new direction of the genre, especially because the long segments are sometimes followed by a direct call to action, which allow viewers to take action on the issues (Steinberg, 2014). However, John Oliver and HBO vehemently deny that *Last Week Tonight* is anything but a late night comedy show, potentially avoiding the responsibility and the code of conduct which are required of journalists (Suebsaeng, 2014).

Apart from well-qualified writing staff, there is another aspect which allows *Last Week Tonight* to dive into complicated topics with such dedication. The program airs on HBO, a private pay cable channel. That gives the showrunners a significant amount freedom in the use of strong language and the choice of covered topics because the network is independent and it does not rely on any commercial sponsors. In addition to

that, there are no commercial breaks, which would take time away from the segments (Sneed, 2014).

Additionally, *Last Week Tonight* does not rely just on their TV audience to gain traction – it effectively spreads its content through social media. The show’s YouTube channel features most of the long segments and other content, including some web exclusive clips which are typically posted online during season breaks. Their most-watched online content, a 22-minute segment about Donald Trump, has gained an impressive 85 million views on Facebook and YouTube in March 2016, making it “[...] a record for any piece of HBO content” (Stelter, 2016b). The show also often creates its own GIFs, hashtags and websites which connect to the topics it covers and allow social media users to easily spread the show’s content. Some of the hashtags has gone viral on Facebook and Twitter (Solomon, 2015).

2.5.3 *Last Week Tonight’s* Relevance

In 2015, a TIME article titled “How the 'John Oliver Effect' Is Having a Real-Life Impact” pointed out an interesting phenomenon surrounding the show:

Comedians mock our cultural and political institutions on TV all the time. But it’s not every day that a comic’s jokes crash a government website or directly inspire legislators to push for new laws.

Last Week Tonight’s well-researched coverage of serious issues combined with calls to action wrapped in jokes seem to inspire individuals and institutions to actually take action. Not only that state legislators, senators, journalists and non-profits have praised Oliver for his ability to make people care about complicated and boring issues, some of his satirical stunts have directly led to real-life change (Luckerson, 2015). One example of Oliver’s impact is the reaction to his segment about net neutrality from 2014, in which he criticized the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for planning to prioritize certain Internet content over the rest and encouraged viewers to flood the FCC website with comments. It resulted in over 45,000 comments crashing the government servers and 300,000 e-mails (Hu, 2014). In the following months, the FCC agreed to put net neutrality regulations in place (Luckerson, 2015). Another instance of the show

having real-life impact is the steep spike in donations reported by the Society of Women Engineers, a non-profit offering scholarships to women, after Oliver criticized the Miss America pageant for exaggerating their supposed contributions to the contestants' scholarships and suggested that the aforementioned non-profit offers a more transparent way to support women's education (Holter, 2016). Other notable examples include Oliver founding his own megachurch to point out how easy it is to get tax exemption and to use faith in the financial exploitation of religious individuals (HollywoodReporter.com, 2015), a segment about the inequalities surrounding bail followed by New York mayor's announcement to moderate the bail requirements just a month after the segment aired, and several more (Kowitt, 2015).

2.6 Real Time with Bill Maher

Real Time with Bill Maher is a weekly comedy news program hosted by stand-up comedian and political activist Bill Maher on HBO, a premium cable channel. It premiered in 2003 and it is currently running its sixteenth season (Real Time with Bill Maher, IMDb.com). Last year HBO announced that Maher's show will be renewed for two more seasons until 2020 (Holloway, 2017).

2.6.1 Host

Bill Maher was born into a New York family with a Catholic father and Jewish mother. Due to his father's disagreements with the Catholic Church, the family stopped attending service, which laid the foundation for Maher's anti-religious views. As a young boy, he looked up to *The Tonight Show* host Johnny Carson. He got his big break when he started appearing on late night talk shows. After a failed attempt at an acting career, Maher found his calling when he became the host of the show *Politically Incorrect* on ABC in 1993. The show consisted of political debate with comedy. It continued until 2001 when Maher made a controversial comment about the September 11th, 2001 terrorists that eventually caused the show to be cancelled. In 2003, however, Maher launched his new show *Real Time with Bill Maher* on HBO (Britannica.com). Maher is known to be a divisive and provocative public figure, mainly because of his disdain for religion. In 2008, he wrote the script for and starred in a documentary titled

Religulous in which he set out to prove the ridiculousness of organized religion (Religulous, IMDb.com).

2.6.2 Format and Content

According to Maher himself, the program format is somewhat flexible, although each episode typically starts with a monologue in which Maher discusses the latest news as well as announces the guests and panelists who appear in the episode. The monologue is usually followed by a live interview with an actor, activist, politician, musician or fellow comedian. The biggest portion of the program consists of a panel discussion between pundits, authors, politicians and journalists analyzing current political news (HBO.com). There are two or three panelists plus sometimes the previously interviewed guest joins in the debate (Waxman, 2009). At the end of each episode Maher introduces the week's "New Rules" – a short editorial in which he suggests sarcastic solutions to current political problems. The panel discussion then continues and sometimes both the host and the panelists discuss questions previously submitted by the viewers. This final segment is available exclusively on the program's official YouTube channel.

Probably the most notable quality of Maher's program is that he invites well-spoken guests from all sides of the political spectrum, including those who vehemently disagree with him. The panel is frequently an open debate about various political, social and economic issues, such as one of Maher's favorites – the environment and climate change (Corry, 2017). In the program he promotes this issue to millennials who he says will be around to deal with the aftermath after he is gone. He also speaks for secular values as well as the ethical treatment of animals (Mak, 2012). Additionally, Maher demands that his viewers be up to date on current events, otherwise they will miss many of his references. He is open about his left-wing views and his disdain for politicians who misuse their power. However, on the program he simultaneously compliments those who do not bow down to special interests (Wade, 2018). Like in the case of *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*, Maher is given a lot of freedom by HBO in the choice of topics discussed and guests invited on the program (Holloway, 2017).

2.6.3 *Real Time's* Relevance

As I previously mentioned, what makes program unique is that Maher invites guests with opposing viewpoints for compelling and insightful conversations. Moreover, Maher does not hold back in critiquing those who fall on his side of the political spectrum. He is also very open about his disdain for political correctness (Wilstein, 2018). His choice of guests as well as his own remarks on the program have caused many controversial reactions and they have sparked debates about whether Maher helps or hurts liberal (political) efforts. In 2013, he Donald Trump started publicly doubting Barack Obama's citizenship and offered to donate 5 million dollars to charity if Obama released his birth certificate before the 2012 presidential election. As a response, Maher jokingly suggested on the program that he would donate 5 million dollars to charity as well if Trump proved he was not "the spawn of his mother having sex with an orangutan." Trump took upon the challenge and reportedly presented Maher with his birth certificate. Maher did not actually donate the sum and Trump retaliated with a lawsuit (Payne, 2013). In 2017, Maher invited far-right commentator and controversial Breitbart News editor Milo Yiannopoulos in the show. Maher was heavily criticized for giving a platform to Yiannopoulos who is known for his Twitter trolling, inflammatory and xenophobic opinions (Oppenheim, 2017). Maher also jokingly used a racial slur often used to insult black people in a 2017 episode. Many liberal commentators called for his show to be cancelled and for him to be fired (Morris, 2017). He subsequently apologized for using the slur and was publicly called out on the issue by African American rapper Ice Cube, a guest on Maher's show (Carmichael, 2017). In my opinion, the controversy revolving around *Real Time* and Bill Maher himself adds onto the uniqueness of the program and serves as a barometer of what American liberals and society as a whole deem publicly (un)acceptable.

I have now outlined the origins of comedy news programs, presented some of the reasons why these programs are relevant to social sciences and introduced the three comedy news programs which are the subject of my analysis. However, before I move on to the analysis itself, it is necessary to introduce the theoretical framework and to outline the methodological approach which will serve as a guide for the analysis. These topics will be discussed in the following two chapters.

3. Conceptual Metaphor Theory

The focal point of my analysis is the language, which comedy news programs used to portray Donald Trump as a candidate before the 2016 presidential election. Therefore, I needed to assess which theoretical and methodological approaches are best suited for my objectives. Although nowadays a large number of scholars use Critical Discourse Analysis to analyze the relationship between social and linguistic practices, I decided to focus on one linguistic practice in particular – the use of metaphorical language. Accordingly, the more specific objective of this thesis is to explore how comedy news programs used metaphors to paint a picture of Donald Trump as a presidential candidate; his actions, statements and potential presidency. In this chapter, I will define metaphors within the context of the thesis and explain how the use of metaphors shapes the way we think and act. Additionally, I will introduce the foundations of conceptual metaphor theory. I will draw upon the work of linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson as well as communication scholar Dvora Yanow. The final part of this chapter will summarize the conclusions of these scholars' works, which I will apply to my own analysis.

3.1 Definition of Metaphor

The traditional approach to metaphors is to define them simply as figures of speech or literary devices – their sole purpose being to decorate literal language. Literal language represents the opposite of metaphorical language. This understanding of metaphors suggests that metaphorical language cannot provide the same level of accuracy and rationality as the superior literal language. However, in the last few decades, another way of understanding metaphorical language has emerged, which sees metaphors as indicators of cognitive activity (Yanow, 1992, p. 91). This new approach was famously outlined in George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's groundbreaking work *Metaphors We Live By*.

“Metaphor is for most people a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish – a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language. Moreover, metaphor is typically viewed as characteristic of language alone, a matter of words rather than thought or action. For this reason, most people

think they can get along perfectly well without metaphor. We have found, on the contrary, that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature” (Lakoff, Johnson, 2003, p. 3).

In Lakoff and Johnson’s view, the conceptual system which defines people’s everyday life and shapes the way they perceive, understand and relate to the world around them is, to a great extent, metaphorical. This conceptual system resides in the subconscious and the language we use, and the metaphors we use in particular, provide evidence for the nature of the system. Lakoff and Johnson provide numerous examples of metaphorical concepts and how they structure our thoughts and actions. For instance, they demonstrate that the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR mirrors in a number of common expressions.

ARGUMENT IS WAR

Your claims are *indefensible*.

He *attacked every weak point* in my argument.

His criticisms were *right on target*.

I *demolished* his argument.

I’ve never *won* an argument with him.

You disagree? Ok, *shoot!*

If you use that *strategy*, he’ll *wipe you out*.

He *shot down* all of my arguments.

More importantly, these are not solely linguistic expressions; in reality, we win or lose arguments and we perceive the people with whom we argue as our opponents. This example illustrates the fundamental function of metaphors – they enable us to understand and experience one thing in terms of another (Lakoff, Johnson, 2003, p. 3-5). There are two distinct parts to such conceptual metaphors – the source domain and the target domain. The source domain is the conceptual domain from which metaphors are drawn, whereas the target domain is the conceptual domain that is understood through the metaphors (Kövecses, Benczes, 2010, p. 24). Nevertheless, metaphors are so embedded in our thinking that we are unable to detect them. They are part of our

everyday language as well as policy, organizational and other discourses (Yanow, 2009, p. 6). Metaphorical thinking and language are so conventional and deep-rooted that we do not realize that they are not literal descriptions of reality (Lakoff, Johnson, 2003, p. 11). This approach to metaphorical language is known as conceptual metaphor theory and it has become the blueprint for the works of numerous social scientists, sociolinguists and communication scholars. Let us now examine certain aspects of the workings of metaphors.

3.2 Workings of Metaphors

3.2.1 Highlighting, Obscuring and Cultural Context

When we say that metaphors enable us to understand and experience one thing in terms of another, it implies that the characterization of the source domain is transferred onto to the target domain. However, the transfer of characterization is not total, it is only partial (Lakoff, Johnson, 2003, p. 13). That is the reason why the use of metaphors inevitably highlights some aspects of the concept and hides others that are inconsistent with the metaphor itself. If we draw upon the ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor once again, we see that in the middle of an argument, one can become so focused on battling the opponent's claims and defending one's own that one becomes unaware of the cooperative aspect of an argument. The cooperative aspect of an argument suggests that while arguing, both sides are devoting their time in an effort at mutual understanding (Ibid, p. 10). This highlighting/obscuring function of metaphors means that the used metaphor effectively frames the situation and at the same time it blinds us toward other possible ways of reframing it (Yanow, 2005, p. 7). As a result, the use of metaphors can actually shape our perceptions of reality (Yanow, 1992, p. 92).

In relation to the highlighting/obscuring function of metaphors, we must also consider that the way a metaphor is formed and received is at least partially determined by the cultural context in which it is used. For example, Lakoff and Johnson found that in case of orientational metaphors, which imbue a concept with spatial orientation (e.g. HAPPY IS UP, reflected in expressions like "I'm feeling up today"), the way cultures perceive reality plays an important role – some cultures see the future as located in front of us while other cultures see the future as located behind us (Lakoff, Johnson, 2003, p. 14).

Additionally, the conceptual metaphors that people live by in a given culture must correspond with the most essential values of the culture. Even in the case of subcultures, the priority given to different values may vary from the mainstream culture, but the values remain the same nonetheless (Ibid, p. 22-23).

3.2.2 Metaphors as Models for Action

So far we have discussed metaphors on a general level, which allows us to move on to the more specific questions of through which mechanisms metaphors impact our perceptions and actions. In her work, communication scholar Dvora Yanow seeks answers to these questions: “[...] are metaphors-in-practice models of some prior and typically as yet unarticulated understanding of the situation they describe and characterize? Or are they models for taking action in that situation?” (Yanow, 2005, p. 4). Yanow claims that at first glance, in real life metaphors simply enable us to understand a new, unknown situation (target domain) by likening it to an old, well-known situation (source domain). The metaphorical process of ‘seeing as’ often occurs implicitly. For example, the term “housing decay” is based on the tacit metaphor of housing disintegrating in the same fashion as teeth. This suggests that we understand housing decay in terms of prior knowledge of tooth decay. However, the metaphor does not only offer an explanation to an unknown phenomenon. When people suffer from tooth decay, they turn to a specialist – a dentist. Correspondingly, when the problem of “decaying” housing arises, people turn to specialists in urban planning to fix the issue (Ibid, p. 4-5). That means metaphors also indicate a possible course of action to be taken in relation to the new situation.

“When we consider the link between perception and action, metaphors that initially appear to be merely descriptive often acquire a prescriptive aspect. No longer are we presenting only new insights into a situation; we are also suggesting possible action in response to the situation described by the metaphor” (Yanow, 1992, p. 91-92).

Therefore, Yanow suggests that metaphors should not be understood only as “models of prior understanding,” but also as “models for subsequent action.” Undetected, metaphors transfer meaning from the source domain to to the target domain, and in

doing so they trigger a learning process based on applying previously gained knowledge onto new situations. And most importantly, they provide us with clues on how the new situation should be dealt with. One cannot extract metaphors from one's thoughts or actions and only think or act in literal ways because metaphors are intrinsic parts of our daily speech and thought (Yanow, 2005, p. 8). When this understanding of metaphors is applied to real-life situations, such as the language use in policy texts, political debates or implementing organizations, it has the potential to remove communication issues between actors who are involved in the situation and it can lead to mutual understanding (Ibid, p. 3).

3.3 Summary

To summarize the takeaway for my analysis, we see that the conceptual system which defines people's everyday life and shapes the way they perceive, understand and relate to the world around them is, to a great extent, metaphorical in nature. This conceptual system resides in the subconscious and the language we use, and the metaphors we use in particular, provide evidence for the nature of the system. The fundamental function of metaphors is that they enable us to understand and experience one thing in terms of another. However, metaphors are so embedded in our thinking that we are unable to detect them. They are part of our everyday language as well as policy, organizational and other discourses. Because they apply the understanding of one concept onto another in a partial way, the use of metaphors inevitably highlights some aspects of the concept and hides others that are inconsistent with the metaphor. As a result, the use of metaphors can actually shape our perceptions of reality. Additionally, the way a metaphor is formed and received is at least partially determined by the cultural context in which it is used and the conceptual metaphors that people live by in a given culture must correspond with the most essential values of the culture. When we examine how metaphors shape our perception, at first it might seem as if they simply enable us to understand a new, unknown situation by likening it to an old, well-known situation. However, metaphors also indicate a possible course of action to be taken in relation to the new situation – they inform how the new situation should be dealt with. It is impossible to extract metaphors from our thoughts or actions and only think and act in literal ways since metaphors are intrinsic parts of our daily speech and thought.

In the following chapter, I will outline the implications of conceptual metaphor theory for my analysis, introduce the data corpus as well as discuss the processes of selecting data, identifying metaphors in text and selecting relevant metaphors. Finally, I will introduce the research questions for my analysis.

4. Methodological Approach

In this chapter I will introduce the methodological approach in which I ground my analysis. I will first outline the research questions which I intend to answer by analyzing the metaphors, after which I will describe the data corpus as well as the process of identifying metaphorical expressions in the data. Finally, I will discuss how relevant metaphors were selected for the analysis.

4.1 Research Questions

The main focus of my analysis is metaphorical language used in comedy news programs in relation to Donald Trump as a presidential candidate. Based on the findings of Lakoff, Johnson and Yanow discussed in the previous chapter, I have formulated the following research questions for my analysis:

- What metaphors did comedy news programs use to characterize Donald Trump's actions, statements and potential presidency?
- What are the chosen metaphors highlighting and obscuring? What image of Donald Trump are they creating?
- Did the individual comedy news programs differ in their choice of metaphors for Donald Trump? How did their use of metaphors for Donald Trump change over time?

The research questions therefore reflect both the nature of the metaphors and the overall image they create, as well as their development over time throughout the election year.

4.2 Data Corpus

The data for my analysis consists of episodes of the comedy news programs I introduced in the second chapter – *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah*, *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* and *Real Time with Bill Maher*. The second chapter also includes each program’s relevance, which indicates the reasons for choosing these particular programs. The selection of individual episodes, which were used in the analysis, was determined by both the season air dates as well as the researcher’s limitations, as I did not use any automated analysis software.

The first time period included in the analysis is the month of February 2016, which provides a sense of how comedy news programs spoke about Donald Trump early on in the election year. At that point, he was simply one of many Republican candidates and his predicted chance to win was in fact slim. The second time period consists of the May episodes, which were chosen based on the fact that the Republican primaries were coming to an end at the time and Donald Trump hit an important milestone of winning the Republican nomination – I assumed that the programs would offer more Trump-related content because of these events. Finally, the last month and a half leading to the general election, October/November, was chosen as the third time period for the analysis. This was the time period when debates between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump took place and the majority of Trump’s scandals, such as the *Access Hollywood* tape, appeared in the media. All three time periods included 73 episodes in total and in Table 1, I provide an overview of all the episodes which were included in the data corpus.

	February	May	October/November
<i>The Daily Show with Trevor Noah</i>	Season 21 Episodes 56-68	Season 21 Episodes 100-115	Season 22 Episodes 1-22
<i>Last Week Tonight with John Oliver</i>	Season 3 Episodes 1-3	Season 3 Episodes 11-13	Season 3 Episodes 24-29
<i>Real Time with Bill</i>	Season 14	Season 14	Season 14

<i>Maier</i>	Episodes 4-6	Episodes 15-17	Episodes 34-37
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Table 1. Overview of episodes selected for the analysis

The episodes were accessed via online streaming. *The Daily Show* episodes are available for free on Comedy Central’s website²; *Last Week Tonight* and *Real Time* were accessed through an HBO Now subscription³. Additionally, the data corpus includes *Real Time*’s extended content for each episode, *Overtime*, which is available on *Real Time*’s YouTube channel⁴. I did not have access to episode transcripts and therefore I made verbatim transcripts of any mentions of Donald Trump, both direct and indirect, which appeared in each episode. This included not only Trump-related statements made by the hosts (Trevor Noah, John Oliver and Bill Maher), but also statements made by the programs’ guests.

4.3 Identifying Metaphors

As I suggested in the previous chapter, metaphors are such an integral part of our language and thinking that it can be difficult to even recognize a metaphor is being used. That is why I used the “metaphor identification procedure” (MIP) to identify metaphors in the data corpus. MIP is a helpful analytical tool developed by a group of researchers called the Pragglejazz Group. Having MIP as a point of reference turned out to be crucial for the process of identifying metaphorical language in the data corpus. The metaphor identification procedure goes as follows:

1. Read the entire text–discourse to establish a general understanding of the meaning.
2. Determine the lexical units in the text–discourse
3. (a) For each lexical unit in the text, establish its meaning in context, that is, how it applies to an entity, relation, or attribute in the situation evoked by the text

² <http://www.cc.com/>

³ <https://play.hbonow.com/>

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/user/RealTime>

(contextual meaning). Take into account what comes before and after the lexical unit.

(b) For each lexical unit, determine if it has a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts than the one in the given context. For our purposes, basic meanings tend to be

—More concrete; what they evoke is easier to imagine, see, hear, feel, smell, and taste.

—Related to bodily action.

—More precise (as opposed to vague)

—Historically older. Basic meanings are not necessarily the most frequent meanings of the lexical unit.

(c) If the lexical unit has a more basic current–contemporary meaning in other contexts than the given context, decide whether the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with it.

4. If yes, mark the lexical unit as metaphorical. (Pragglejaz Group, 2007, p. 3)

Based on this method, I examined all the data in the corpus and for every word, expression, sentence and quote, I determined whether a metaphor is present. If there was no metaphor in a lexical unit present, I disregarded said lexical unit in my analysis. I paid attention to the context in which each lexical unit was located since the metaphorical nature of it was sometimes only detectable through the context.

4.4 Selection of Relevant Metaphors

Before moving onto the analysis itself, let us discuss the criteria for selecting relevant metaphors which became part of the analysis. According to Lakoff and Johnson, not all metaphors are created equal. It is important to distinguish between metaphorical expressions which are conventional and integrated in metaphorical systems (such as ARGUMENT IS WAR), and idiosyncratic metaphorical expressions that stand alone and are not part of any metaphorical system, such as “the foot of the mountain.” This

expression is theoretically an aspect of the metaphor A MOUNTAIN IS A PERSON, but this metaphor appears only marginally in our language and it is not tied to any deep-rooted conceptual system. Lakoff and Johnson call these metaphors “dead” and they do not consider them useful in the effort of uncovering the metaphorical nature of our thoughts and actions. However, they admit that these idiosyncratic metaphors can serve an important purpose in certain context, such as in comedy (Lakoff, Johnson, 2003, p. 54-55). Additionally, Dvora Yanow suggests that both implicit metaphors, which provide evidence for the tacit metaphorical nature of our thoughts and actions, and explicit metaphors, which are consciously used by the speaker, should be included in the analysis (Yanow, 1996, p. 129-155). Based on these assertions, my analysis includes both implicit and explicit metaphors.

However, another aspect requires further consideration – the frequency and pervasiveness of each metaphor in the data corpus. My assumption is that the more frequent and the more pervasive a metaphor is in the data corpus, the more it shapes the image of Donald Trump which the analyzed comedy news programs create through the use of metaphorical language. Therefore, in my analysis, I primarily focus on metaphors which either appear repeatedly, across multiple time periods or across multiple comedy news programs.

5. Metaphor Analysis

5.1 February

Of all three time periods included in my analysis, February had the least frequent mentions of Donald Trump. That is of course logical, given the fact that the presidential election was still 8 months away and there were still many candidates running at that point. The only exception was Episode 3 of *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*, whose main segment was dedicated specifically to Donald Trump and his campaign strategy.

The first metaphor for Donald Trump I observed across all three programs was that DONALD TRUMP IS NOT AN ADULT. This metaphor ranged from labeling him as immature to likening him to an infant.

Like, [Ted] Cruz is trying so hard to paint himself as a real challenger to Trump. But the only thing Trump is really challenged by is maturity. (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 21, Episode 63)

But I must say, Donald Trump made a speech right after, very gracious... For an hour. Have you ever seen a baby fall? For a minute he's [confused] and [then] he starts to cry? (Bill Maher, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 4)

Don't vote for him cause he's tough, he's a baby with even smaller fingers. (John Oliver, *Last Week Tonight*, Season 3, Episode 3)

However, the majority of the metaphors used in all three programs actually framed Donald Trump as non-human. To begin with, the DONALD TRUMP IS A (PREDATORY) ANIMAL metaphor emerged.

Trump is the main attraction. He's the T-Rex in Jurassic Park. And to see him in action, all you need to do is leave out some poor little animal as bait. (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 21, Episode 60)

This year a new predator has entered the political habitat. The Trumpasaurus Wrecks. And unlike previous politicians, it does not discuss politics, it only hurls insults. (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 21, Episode 68)

I've witnessed this first-hand when [Trump] attacked my first boss [...]
(John Oliver, *Last Week Tonight*, Season 3, Episode 3)

The idea of Donald Trump not being human also manifested in another metaphor – DONALD TRUMP IS AN OBJECT. Sometimes this metaphor conveyed the idea of Trump as an unspecified inanimate object.

This week saw a battle between an infallible force [the Pope] and an illogical object [Donald Trump]. And it was amazing. The most inclusive Pope in recent history questioned Trump's faith [...] (John Oliver, *Last Week Tonight*, Season 3, Episode 2)

You know, the sad thing is, instead of focusing on all these issues, all the attention these days is going to one thing: Donald Trump. (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 21, Episode 63)

More frequently, this metaphor specifically referred to a certain object.

[...] if you're Donald Trump, you're a content machine, you don't need to have any advertising. Because everybody's covering you. (Joanna Coles, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 6)

I mean he's like a human terror alert system. (Bill Maher, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 4)

Donald Trump became the first pile of old garbage covered in vodka sauce to win a presidential primary. (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 21, Episode 61)

[...] those notes are apparently written in gold Sharpie, which is so quintessentially Donald Trump. Something that gives the passing appearance of wealth but is actually just a cheap tool. (John Oliver, *Last Week Tonight*, Season 3, Episode 3)

Moving away from the tangible world, another metaphor was based on the idea that Donald Trump is a concept – more specifically, DONALD TRUMP IS A BRAND. This particular metaphor was specifically developed in *Last Week Tonight*.

Trump's biggest selling point as a candidate is his success.

So let's move onto his next selling point that he is truly independent [...]

And some of those licensed buildings sell his reputation hard [...]

[...] he has spent decades turning his own name into a brand, synonymous with success and quality.

The very name Trump is the cornerstone of his brand.

Don't vote for him cause he's a builder, he's more of a shitty lifestyle brand.

(John Oliver, *Last Week Tonight*, Season 3, Episode 3)

Lastly, the metaphor which became increasingly present in all three programs over time was DONALD TRUMP IS A NATURAL PHENOMENON/DISASTER. Although at this point in time, this metaphor appeared only briefly in *Real Time with Bill Maher*.

The threat to America posed by his candidacy has now been raised to severe. (Bill Maher, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 4)

5.2 May

The three comedy news programs paid considerably more attention to Donald Trump and his campaign in May. In the course of this month, the Republican primaries were coming to an end and eventually ended with Trump first becoming the presumptive nominee and later the official Republican presidential nominee.

In *Real Time*, Bill Maher dedicated the whole closing segment of Episode 15 to drawing a parallel between Donald Trump and the stereotypical portrayal of a 1950s housewife. From this, the metaphor DONALD TRUMP IS A (HYSTERICAL) WOMAN emerged. I consider this metaphor related to the metaphor DONALD TRUMP IS NOT AN ADULT (MAN), which appeared in February – both of which suggest that he is neither adult-like, strong nor mature.

Does anyone fit the stereotypical 50s description of a woman better than Donald Trump? Any cringe-inducing line they ever said about a secretary on *Mad Men* is true about Trump.

I mean, who gets more hysterical than Lady Donald Trump saying, “Mexican rapists everywhere! [...] We must build a wall, a giant wall and battle the Muslims!”

So never forget, Lady Trump, that Hillary Clinton was born a woman. But you chose to live your life as a [...] whiny little bitch. Which is why if

Hillary is the Democratic nominee, I'll be voting for the only one who has balls.

(Bill Maher, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 15)

Just like in the February episodes, the three comedy news programs continued to use the metaphor DONALD TRUMP IS NON-HUMAN. It appeared even more frequently in the May episodes. Once again, the DONALD TRUMP IS AN ANIMAL metaphor was used.

Like Trump is going to change. This is what magical thinking gets you. When you believe in a talking snake, you believe an orangutan can transform into a statesman. (Bill Maher, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 15)

The world was ready for Megyn Kelly to face the beast with her hard-hitting journalism and unrelenting pursuit for accountability. (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 21, Episode 104)

It's his nature. He's like a monkey at the zoo who's like, "What am I gonna do? Not masturbate in front of tourists? It's who I am! Donald Champ!" (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 21, Episode 112)

Additionally, in some cases, Trump was even described through the metaphor DONALD TRUMP IS A MONSTER.

Because certainly the other Republican didn't find a strategy that even touched Godzilla. (Bill Maher, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 15)

[Donald Trump is] a mutant from a carrot-juicing accident. (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 21, Episode 104)

The metaphor DONALD TRUMP IS AN INANIMATE OBJECT continued to emerge as well.

"I love Hispanics!" And they love him! Oh, they love him. He's in all the children's parties here in LA. As the piñata. (Bill Maher, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 15)

It's just that he's like an orange blanket that covers everything. [...] But you make a good point, he's everywhere. (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 21, Episode 100)

But let's move on now to the browser tab that America refuses to close – Donald Trump. (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 21, Episode 110)

But Trump, like the human mullet that he is, saved room for the party in the back. (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 21, Episode 112)

The Daily Show's Trevor Noah developed another subcategory of the Donald Trump as an inanimate object metaphor – DONALD TRUMP IS (ORANGE) FOOD. The color orange in this metaphor refers to Trump's skin color.

But in all fairness though, I can see why Trump likes taco bowls. I mean they're just like him. You know, a pile of cheesy slops stuffed inside a thin orange shell. (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 21, Episode 103)

[Hillary Clinton] is losing to an overcooked sweet potato. How the hell did this happen? (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 21, Episode 115)

The Trump metaphor which remained salient in the three comedy news programs' content through all three time periods, included in the analysis, was the metaphor TRUMP IS A NATURAL PHENOMENON/DISASTER. Although it was marginal in February, it was one of the most frequently used metaphors in May.

Hillary should stay focused on the issues and take the high ground. So it shows greater contrast to her opponent. Don't get sucked into [Trump's] energy. You get sucked into that vortex [...] (Bryan Cranston, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 15)

[...] you know, this Trump phenomenon... [...] And I don't think he intentionally did this, I think he's just being himself, [he] has opened the floodgates. (Jack Hunter, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 16)

[...] Donald Trump, Rome burning in man form. (John Oliver, *Last Week Tonight*, Season 3, Episode 12)

[...] Donald Trump, America's walking talking brushfire. (John Oliver, *Last Week Tonight*, Season 3, Episode 13)

Sedulous warning friends, for the prophecy speaks of a fevered orange fire that consumes all it touches and burns the land itself to ash. (Nikolai Coster-Waldau, *The Daily Show*, Season 21, Episode 100)

We've reached peak Trump today. (Mike Allen, *The Daily Show*, Season 21, Episode 115)

The metaphor DONALD TRUMP IS A NATURAL PHENOMENON/DISASTER was sometimes intensified to the point where it transformed into another metaphor – DONALD TRUMP IS AN APOCALYPSE.

[...] now the only thing that stands between us and the end of civilization is Hillary Clinton. (Bill Maher, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 15)

And he would be not only an embarrassment, a real danger to this entire world if he were to become president. (Bernie Sanders, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 17)

I know that Trump may be a [...] horseman of the apocalypse but don't forget – when he's president and it's all going to shit, we'll all get to look at that smile. Aww. (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 21, Episode 110)

I don't know if God sent us Donald Trump, although it wouldn't surprise me. I mean God has sent us a lot of things. Mosquitos, the plague, [...] (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 21, Episode 115)

In *Real Time*, Bill Maher did not only compare Donald Trump to a natural force, but he also used the metaphor DONALD TRUMP IS A DESTRUCTIVE ECONOMIC FORCE.

Does it matter to you that Trump is gonna crash the market? Because let me tell you something, what the markets hate. They hate volatility, he is personification of volatility. They hate uncertainty, that's exactly who he is. [...] They hate trade wars, they hate debt. He is all those things put together. (Bill Maher, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 15)

Similarly, the metaphor TRUMP IS A DESTRUCTIVE ECONOMIC FORCE was amplified and transformed into the metaphor DONALD TRUMP IS THE END OF DEMOCRACY.

Donald Trump [...] thinks that he's gonna be elected to be George the Third, not the president of the United States and would govern like that. (Bob Graham, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 16)

[...] it seems no one now can stop the ascent of the Mad King – a man with neither honor nor volume control [...] and a band of villainous advisors threatens to take the throne. (Nikolai Coster-Waldau, *The Daily Show*, Season 21, Episode 100)

Hillary Clinton would be the first woman president, Marco Rubio or Ted Cruz would've been the first Cuban president, Donald Trump would be the last president. (Mike Allen, *The Daily Show*, Season 21, Episode 115)

5.3 October/November

With just a little over a month left until the presidential election, comedy news programs doubled down on the criticism directed at Donald Trump in October and

November. They mainly focused on the *Access Hollywood* tape scandal, the subsequent sexual assault allegations against Trump as well as his statements regarding the election being rigged. Unlike in February and May, the programs' content was almost exclusively dedicated to the election in October and November. *The Daily Show* even covered some of the debates and the election live.

A new metaphor emerged in the October/November episodes – DONALD TRUMP IS AN AUTOCRAT. Although it is related to the metaphor DONALD TRUMP IS THE END OF DEMOCRACY, it is also different in that it does not frame Trump as non-human.

I promise you that this will not make your life better and also, when fascists get power, they don't give it up. You've got President Trump for life.

White Evangelicals go for Trump over Hillary 75 to 14 but but only 19% of Utah Mormons have a favorable view of Orange Hitler.

(Bill Maher, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 37)

I mentioned a year ago that Trump reminded me of an African dictator. And last night reminded me of why I said that. Because jailing your opponent is straight out of the African dictator playbook. (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 22, Episode 5)

The metaphors DONALD TRUMP IS A CHILD and DONALD TRUMP IS A WOMAN (e.g. DONALD TRUMP IS NOT AN ADULT MAN) were still present in October/November. However, they appeared only marginally.

Donald Trump's performance consisted mainly of incoherent jumble of snuffle and nonsense. Like a racist toddler coming out of dental surgery. (John Oliver, *Last Week Tonight*, Season 3, Episode 24)

This is what he says. Grab them by the pussy? Sounds like what Hillary did to him at the first debate. (Bill Maher, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 34)

The DONALD TRUMP IS AN ANIMAL and DONALD TRUMP IS A MONSTER metaphors appeared in the October/November episodes as well. In comparison to February and May, the TRUMP IS A MONSTER metaphor was more prevalent than the TRUMP IS AN ANIMAL metaphor.

I'm very happy that Paul Ryan has decided to treat Donald Trump like he's a Zika mosquito. Avoid contact or you will be infected. (Ana Navarro, *The Daily Show*, Season 22, Episode 8)

I think it is rather appropriate that this election is so close to Halloween. Because what happens in every scary movie? You think you kill the monster. You killed him ten times. And then a tiny orange hand comes out. (Bill Maher, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 36)

[Voting for Hillary Clinton] is the only adult thing to do. [...] This is a time to stop this monster from destroying our political system. (Andrew Sullivan, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 35)

Yes, the shackles are off, which is actually an apt metaphor as it calls to mind both Frankenstein's monster and a rabid dog. (John Oliver, *Last Week Tonight*, Season 3, Episode 26)

Additionally, another perspective on the metaphor DONALD TRUMP IS NON-HUMAN emerged – DONALD TRUMP IS AN EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL BEING.

It's like he's living on another planet. (Chelsea Handler, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 36)

People go, "He's an outsider, he's not establishment." Yeah, he's not part of the human race establishment. We don't know what that is. (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 22, Episode 20)

[...] Donald Trump is like an outsider of humans. He's an outsider of everything. (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 22, Episode 21)

As for the recurring metaphor DONALD TRUMP IS AN INANIMATE OBJECT, it was by far the most frequently used in October/November.

Donald Trump's campaign is built of course on many fallacies, but the one we really need to debunk is that America is in such a desperate place that a wild card like Trump is worth the risk. (Bill Maher, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 34)

I feel like he is the acid test. If you can put up a candidate like Donald Trump and people still vote for him, [...] (Bill Maher, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 36)

Then he says that he never pretended to be someone he's not, right before claiming "These words don't reflect who I am." Which is absolutely absurd, they could not capture his essence more if they were spoken by a spray tanned Furby eating KFC and screaming at a Gold Star family. (John Oliver, *Last Week Tonight*, Season 3, Episode 25)

So look people, remember. This Tuesday you're not just choosing between Madam WikiLeaks and the sunburnt tumbleweed. (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 22, Episode 19)

You've never had a Donald Trump. Nobody's had a Donald Trump. No one even knows what that thing is. (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 22, Episode 20)

We will just have to wait a little bit longer than expected to find out if America prefers a competent sane woman or a misogynist Troll doll. (Desi Lydic, *The Daily Show*, Season 22, Episode 21)

And once again, the metaphor DONALD TRUMP IS AN INANIMATE OBJECT sometimes (partially) referred to food.

As for Donald Trump, the human equivalent of a clear plastic bag filled with cheeseburgers and confederate flag belt buckles, [...] (John Oliver, *Last Week Tonight*, Season 3, Episode 29)

Now currently, Republicans have a 54/46 majority in the Senate. But this year, thanks partly to the actions of a chewed up piece of carrot cake [picture of Donald Trump appears on the screen], there's a chance that the Democrats could take the Senate back. (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 22, Episode 19)

[...] Donald Trump is a racist soft serve machine that only dispenses diarrhea. (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 22, Episode 19)

[...] Now regardless of who wins the election this week, whether it be Hillary Clinton or a rapey can of Fanta... (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 22, Episode 19)

[...] America votes for one of two people – in this case a person and a pumpkin-spiced dildo. (Ronny Chieng, *The Daily Show*, Season 22, Episode 21)

Even though the metaphor DONALD TRUMP IS A NATURAL PHENOMENON/DISASTER still appeared in the October/November episodes, it was actually the least frequent out of all three time periods.

It looks like we dodged a bullet with that storm. However, with Donald Trump talking about women, it has been upgraded to a category 5 shitstorm. (Bill Maher, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 34)

Anybody sitting on the sidelines or deciding to engage in a protest vote... That's a vote for Trump. And that would be badly damaging for this country and that would be damaging for the world. So no complacency this time. (Barrack Obama, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 37)

Rather than a natural phenomenon/disaster, the programs recurrently used a different but somewhat related metaphor – DONALD TRUMP IS AN (UNSPECIFIED) DESTRUCTIVE FORCE.

First, he burnt bridges with his own party calling Paul Ryan weak and ineffective [...] (John Oliver, *Last Week Tonight*, Season 3, Episode 26)

We are at a point where [Donald Trump] has a genuine shot at a presidency despite having blown up a political party, undermined confidence in our election system, declared open season on journalists and unleashed a river of racism and misogyny. (John Oliver, *Last Week Tonight*, Season 3, Episode 29)

It's a scary time and a scary place for us to be in because of how much damage Donald Trump can do. (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 22, Episode 21)

With increased gradation over the course of all three time periods included in the analysis, the metaphor DONALD TRUMP IS AN APOCALYPSE was the most persistent in October/November.

In fact, the rest of America will be a dystopian, post-apocalyptic hellscape with giant immigrant walls and women being grabbed by their pussies. (Desi Lydic, *The Daily Show*, Season 22, Episode 18)

[...] I really hope you got wasted and had an insane weekend because you realize this could be our final weekend of our lives. (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 22, Episode 20)

This is it, the end of the presidential race. And it feels like the end of the world. (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 22, Episode 21)

I got a bottle of whiskey right here, okay? And in 10 minutes I'm gonna start drinking it. And all I need to know is if I'm gonna get happy-drunk or apocalypse-drunk. (Ronny Chieng, *The Daily Show*, Season 22, Episode 21)

Douglas Brinkley: [...] But I think history has shown that this is Brexit, Brexit was the warning sign. [...] People are shattered right now all over the globe.

Trevor Noah: [...] Have you seen any sign that this would come?
(*The Daily Show*, Season 22, Episode 21)

The Halloween episode of *The Daily Show* (Season 22, Episode 16) was even supposed to imagine a future where Donald Trump is President with America as a dystopian, post-apocalyptic world with famine, where black people and comedians are outlaws, where women have their rights taken away if they are considered unattractive and the whole country is in isolation from the rest of the world.

Additionally, the metaphor DONALD TRUMP IS THE END OF DEMOCRACY continued to be used in the October/November episodes.

These are attitudes and views that have never been uttered at this level in American history. This is an attack upon the entire system. It is an attack upon our liberal democracy. And that is what he is doing. (Andrew Sullivan, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 35)

[Donald Trump] continued to destabilize the foundations of our democracy.
(John Oliver, *Last Week Tonight*, Season 3, Episode 27)

[...] and other people will be voting for DT because then they won't have to worry about voting ever again. (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 22, Episode 19)

Lastly, the three comedy news programs started referring to "reaching (rock) bottom" in relation to Donald Trump in the October/November episodes.

Every week I say, “When are we gonna reach the bottom with DT?” Obviously this was not the week. (Bill Maher, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 34)

That is a candidate for the president of the United States urging America to check out a sex tape. Just do me a favour; look up to the sky right now. Higher. No, higher still. Do you see that? Way up there, way up above the clouds. That’s rock bottom. And we are currently way down here. (John Oliver, *Last Week Tonight*, Season 3, Episode 24)

And let me just remind you that last Sunday I told you that if you looked above the clouds, you would see rock bottom. But if you look up there now, just way way up there, all the way up high, you will see right up in the distance where we were at this time last week. Because since then we have sunk so low we are breaking through the Earth’s crust where drowning in boiling magma will come as sweet sweet relief. (John Oliver, *Last Week Tonight*, Season 3, Episode 25)

Now 2 weeks ago I told you that if you looked up, you could see rock bottom. And then last week, I told you that if you looked up, you could see the place where we were a week ago. Well this week if you look up, all you can see are the thin plywood boards surrounding us on all sides because we are in a coffin and we are buried alive in a horror that is this election. (John Oliver, *Last Week Tonight*, Season 3, Episode 26)

My understanding is that this “reaching (rock) bottom” expression is related to the metaphor DONALD TRUMP IS AN APOCALYPSE in that it is potentially another biblical reference – Hell. Therefore, Donald Trump taking the country to the bottom suggests another metaphor – DONALD TRUMP IS THE DEVIL. This metaphor was used in both explicit and implicit ways.

The Bible says, “Thou shalt not covet your neighbor’s wife.” Trump says, “Fine, what about my daughter?” He did. He’s the devil. [...] (Bill Maher, *Real Time*, Season 14, Episode 37)

Do you think that'll happen or do you think Donald Trump is going to take the Republican party with him? (Trevor Noah, *The Daily Show*, Season 22, Episode 8)

5.4 Findings

Based on the analysis of the data corpus, I draw several conclusions about the nature of the metaphorical language which appeared in the three comedy news programs. As I suggested in the methodological chapter of this thesis, the purpose of the analysis is to offer insight to the following questions:

- What metaphors did comedy news programs use to characterize Donald Trump's actions, statements and potential presidency?
- What are the chosen metaphors highlighting and obscuring? What image of Trump are they creating?
- Did individual comedy news programs differ in their choice of metaphors for Trump? How did their use of metaphors for Trump change over time?

The metaphors used to characterize Donald Trump's actions, statements and potential presidency are outlined in Table 2. The individual metaphors are listed in the right column whereas the metaphors which represent more general metaphorical categories are listed in the left column. The results of the analysis point to the fact, except for a handful of instances, all three comedy news programs used the same metaphors in their effort to portray Donald Trump, his statements, actions and campaign. Additionally, there were very few metaphors, which only appeared once or in one of the programs. This suggests that the metaphorical language used to portray Donald Trump was, to a certain degree, aligned in all three comedy news programs.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DONALD TRUMP IS AN AUTOCRAT
DONALD TRUMP IS NOT AN ADULT (MAN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DONALD TRUMP IS A CHILD • DONALD TRUMP IS A (HYSTERICAL) WOMAN

DONALD TRUMP IS AN ANIMAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DONALD TRUMP IS AN ANIMAL • DONALD TRUMP IS A PREDATORY ANIMAL
DONALD TRUMP IS NON-HUMAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DONALD TRUMP IS AN EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL BEING • DONALD TRUMP IS A MONSTER • DONALD TRUMP IS THE DEVIL
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DONALD TRUMP IS AN INANIMATE OBJECT • DONALD TRUMP IS (ORANGE) FOOD • DONALD TRUMP IS A BRAND
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DONALD TRUMP IS A NATURAL PHENOMENON/DISASTER • DONALD TRUMP IS AN (UNSPECIFIED) DESTRUCTIVE FORCE • DONALD TRUMP IS AN APOCALYPSE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DONALD TRUMP IS A DESTRUCTIVE ECONOMIC FORCE • DONALD TRUMP IS THE END OF DEMOCRACY

Table 2. Overview of Donald Trump metaphors which appeared in the three comedy news programs

Secondly, it is clear that the majority of the metaphors framed Donald Trump as non-human and this trend grew stronger as the election approached. Therefore, the used metaphors increasingly obscured Trump's humanity and highlighted his supposed inhumanity. One possible explanation for this choice of the highlighted and obscured aspects is that the liberal comedy news programs interpret some of Donald Trump's statements and actions, such as his proposed Muslim ban or the allegations of sexual assault made against him, as inhumane. From their point of view, being humane is an intrinsic aspect of being human. Therefore, the metaphors which these programs use are based on the idea that only a non-human could say and do inhumane things. Accordingly, Donald Trump represents the ultimate non-human because the ultimate acts of inhumanity are the annihilation of human life on Earth, mirrored in the metaphor

DONALD TRUMP IS AN APOCALYPSE, and causing eternal suffering to the humankind, mirrored in the metaphor DONALD TRUMP IS THE DEVIL.

The use of metaphors framing Donald Trump as non-human points to an underlying objective of his portrayal in these programs – dehumanization. The role of metaphors in the process of dehumanization has been discussed by cognitive psychologists and some research in this area indicates that individuals who are perceived as “evil” tend to be referred to in metaphorical language which frames them as animals, machines and objects (Morera, Quiles, Correa, Delgado, Leyens, 2018). The results of my analysis can be aligned with these findings – Donald Trump’s dehumanization is therefore the result of the effort to portray him as evil. The use of the metaphor DONALD TRUMP IS THE DEVIL corresponds with this depiction as well. Interestingly, the fact that the three liberal comedy news programs dehumanized Donald Trump through the use of metaphorical language seems paradoxical since some of their criticism of Trump or the Republicans is based on the idea that the legislature proposed by the Republicans is dehumanizing to ethnic or sexual minorities and other marginalized groups.

Furthermore, there were apparent changes in the way the three comedy news programs used metaphorical language as the presidential election kept approaching. I already hinted at the fact that the metaphors which portrayed Donald Trump as human (DONALD TRUMP IS A CHILD, DONALD TRUMP IS A WOMAN) were overall less and less frequent throughout the election year. The only exception was the metaphor DONALD TRUMP IS AN AUTOCRAT, but from my point of view, it did not affect the overall trend. Another continual change was the clear gradation of the metaphors DONALD TRUMP IS A NATURAL PHENOMENON/DISASTER and DONALD TRUMP IS AN APOCALYPSE, which ultimately led to the images of “the bottom” (Hell) and the metaphor DONALD TRUMP IS THE DEVIL. Therefore, the metaphorical language, which was used the most frequently towards the end of the election, was decidedly biblical. I find this finding noteworthy, considering the fact that comedy news hosts often mock the Republicans’ religious rhetoric and they distance themselves from religion. Bill Maher of *Real Time* even promotes his ostentatiously anti-religious views in his 2008 documentary *Religulous* (*Religulous*, IMDb.com).

Finally, although metaphor analysis in social sciences is mostly applied to the statements of politicians, extremist groups or to policy texts, I believe that my analysis demonstrates that metaphor analysis can be applied to other actors in public political discourse, including the liberal voices.

5.5 Limitations

Naturally, the analysis and findings presented in this thesis have several limitations. First of all, the specific comedy news programs and time periods, which were selected for the analysis, may not be sufficient in fully reflecting the overall portrayal of Donald Trump. This limitation is due to the scope of the thesis. Nevertheless, I attempted to minimize this potential issue by selecting some of the most-watched and longest-running comedy news programs as well as selecting time periods that featured the most-discussed moments of the US presidential election. Additionally, the fact that I chose to focus solely on metaphors which either appear repeatedly, across multiple time periods or across multiple comedy news programs, poses another potential limitation. However, the overwhelming majority of metaphors used in the three comedy news programs appeared repeatedly, so I believe the influence of this factor is minimal.

Another limitation of this thesis lies in the fact that there is a clear liberal bias in comedy news programs. The research might yield more impactful results if I were able to compare the metaphorical language used in liberal and conservative comedy news programs. However, essentially all of the prominent comedy news programs are liberal and there are no conservative equivalents that I am aware of.

Moreover, as a non-native English speaker, I am also potentially limited by the fact I might not grasp the meaning of certain expressions or metaphors. I did not necessarily find myself struggling with the understanding of the language used in the three comedy shows, but I was mindful of the fact that the possibility for misunderstanding was present. This is why I sought the advice of several native English speakers for clarification and I consulted my analysis and findings with them in order to decrease the risk of misinterpretation.

Lastly, it is important to recognize that my interpretations of metaphorical language are, to a great extent, subjective. As Dvora Yanow puts it, “Another researcher might equally well have written a story different from mine after experiencing the same interviews and events, and each story could be a “good” one. The nature of its “goodness” would be judged in part by its ability to “resonate” with other readers and researchers because they share sufficient consensus regarding meanings and interpretations” (Yanow, 1996, p. 53). Once again, I aimed to get a sense of what this consensus might be through consultations of my analysis and findings with native English speakers, but the “accuracy” of my findings will be largely dependent on their ability to resonate with the readers.

5.6 Conclusion

The analysis presented in this thesis offers insight into the workings of metaphorical language used to portray Donald Trump in comedy news programs, increasingly influential television programs. We now know that these programs dehumanized Trump and depicted him mostly as an evil, non-human entity. The question is, what sort of influence did this portrayal of Donald Trump have on the viewers? Did the viewers tacitly perceive any prescriptive aspects of these metaphors? In other words, did the metaphorical language have an effect on their thoughts about Trump or even on their political decisions? Unfortunately, this thesis leaves these questions unanswered due to its limited scope. However, I believe that these questions represent a potential new direction for further research on the impact of metaphorical language as well as the impact of comedy news programs. With the growing number of people turning away from traditional media outlets and tuning in to comedy news programs to get their daily dose of news, I argue that it is imperative to continue examining the effects these programs have on their audience.

Finally, my hope is that this thesis has demonstrated the extensive potential of conceptual metaphor analysis in social sciences. It allows us to bring to light meanings which lie beneath the language we routinely use and to understand the tacit models for action which metaphors deliver to those for whom they are addressed.

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