



# The Trumpian mirror

Is the outsized reaction to Trump's outsized ego really about Trump?

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Donald Trump (Getty)

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**T**rump hatred has been with us since he announced his candidacy five years ago. But we can all feel the escalating fever pitch of fury that has marked the weeks leading up to the election. In social settings, friends of otherwise sound temperament seem uncharacteristically uncontrolled in their visceral rage when referring to the President. Just mention his name and you'll be interrupted with 'Oh I hate him, he's a sociopath' or the requisite 'If he wins, I swear I'm moving out of the country!'

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One possible explanation might come from the father of analytical psychology, Carl Jung said, 'Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves.' I think about that quote when people who find some measure of sympathy for Marxist, anti-Semitic, police-hating, roving mobs of looters in their streets tell me that they 'hate' – really hate – President Trump. Their hatred seems curiously channeled and selective.

It is fair to say that President Trump has a healthy capacity for self-promotion. Some call him a narcissist and are appalled by his unrefined boasting. In fairness, it isn't always easy for his supporters either. But is the outsized reaction to Trump's outsized ego really about Trump? In a world of Instagram posts featuring users' self-obsessed, public records of their every experience, purchase and condescending, socially-conscious meme, can most of the President's critics lay claim to the humility they wish he possessed?

Trump has said boorish things about women. But is this really why he shouldn't be president? Maybe. But it would be more convincing if we didn't regularly celebrate 'boorish' behavior in our culture and give it not only a pass, but often a Golden Globe or a Grammy. Undignified can often describe a lot of people we know, and don't seem to despise. Maybe the President's critics see shades of something in him that they recognize in themselves and are invested in trying to ignore.

They say Trump is a racist – not really for what he does or says, but for what he hasn't done or said. This is an accusation without serious foundation, but an interesting one, often launched by people whose birthday parties and children's weddings are filled with guests who don't 'look like America'. Do some people see their own lack of diverse social circles as a damning mark that they would rather project onto the President?

And then there are the [taxes](#). Did he find legal loopholes to pay as little as was required? Maybe. Did you?

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Not all criticisms of the President are character-based, and some that are aren't entirely incorrect. But we aren't voting to invite someone to our child's Christening. We are looking for someone to protect the country from foreign threat (China or Iran), to provide opportunity for American families (historically low unemployment rates, deregulation) and to preserve a more than 200 year tradition of exceptionalism with unapologetic pride (abolishment of federally sponsored critical race theory propaganda and free speech).

I have many friends who won't vote for President Trump next month. But I hope when they don't, it will be because of authentic policy disagreement rather than personal projection. For some, Donald Trump has become a magnifying mirror held too close to their faces, triggering their Jungian understanding of themselves. It is easier to hate him than their own shortcomings. We all have long lists of character flaws. At least President Trump doesn't hide his.

**By Rebecca Sugar**

