

Donald Trump and the US election

It's common to describe every national election as the most significant in a country's history, but the 2020 US presidential election does seem particularly momentous. Should Donald Trump (behind in the polls but a tenacious fighter) prevail in November, his anarchic leadership style will be unchecked and his unique stamp will be all over the United States for decades to come, aided by a sympathetic Supreme Court. If Joe Biden (the eternal candidate) triumphs – and especially if the Democrats win both Houses of Congress – he may prove to be one of the more liberal and reforming presidents since Lyndon B. Johnson of the Great Society.

In our October issue, two specialists write about different aspects of US politics. Michael L. Ondaatje (Professor of History at the Australian Catholic University) reflects on the failed courtship of black American voters by Donald Trump, while Timothy J. Lynch (Associate Professor in American Politics at the University of Melbourne) reviews three new and highly critical books on Donald Trump, including Mary Trump's mordant portrait of her uncle. He argues that despite these books' 'descriptive richness', none of the authors explains the Trump phenomenon.

Excerpt from 'The world's most dangerous man?'

'We get much of the "what", "when", and "where" of Trump. None applies themselves enough to the "why". Each treats Trump as an aberration. This only gets us so far. This is a man, after all, love him or hate him, who has transformed American, possibly even global, politics. His ignorance, racism, sexism, duplicity, and narcissism, all asserted and documented here, have not prevented him from becoming the most consequential leader since the end of the Cold War. There is a paradox that these books illustrate but cannot resolve: why is a man so chaotic, so reviled, so malignant also so transformational?'



Timothy J. Lynch

Excerpt from 'Black and Republican in the age of Trump'

'Moderate black Republicans are under no illusions about America's racist past and the problems that African-Americans continue to face. Rather, they have worked for decades within the GOP to expand the boundaries of conservatism to accommodate and support black aspirations. In contrast to the soundbite politics of the brash black Trump supporters, moderate black Republicans draw inspiration from ideas and values deeply embedded in black history and articulated by black leaders across the generations from Frederick Douglass to Booker T. Washington and even Malcolm X.'



Michael L. Ondaatje

INTERVIEWS: Both Michael L. Ondaatje and Timothy J. Lynch are available for interview. Call Peter Rose, Editor of *ABR*, on 0439 631 066 or email editor@australianbookreview.com.au