

Abstract

The paper analyses an open letter from the leader of the Danish People's party where he argues that emotions should guide political decisions. In a rhetorical criticism that draws on Ostiguy's "high/low" distinction, Moffitt and Tormey's conceptualisation of populism as a political style, and the rhetorical concepts second persona, constitutive rhetoric, and iconicity I show how the text – albeit addressing populist themes and undergirded by epistemic populism – performs its rhetoric on the "high" by virtue of the author's ethos and the identity offered the audience. In this way, the text appeals to several audiences. The gradational approach to populist style advocated by Ostiguy and Moffitt is used to suggest that the analysed text not only warrants attention in itself but may also serve as an indication of what populist elements in mainstream political discourse might look like. It is finally argued that the analysis reveals that key distinctions in Ostiguy and Moffitt's works need to be developed further.

Keywords

Populist style, epistemic populism, rhetorical criticism, audience construction, iconicity, second persona