



Universiteit  
Leiden  
The Netherlands

# **The Strategic Use of Conceptual Metaphors in the Inaugural Addresses of US Republican and Democratic Presidents (2001-2021) A Critical Discourse Analysis**

Moor, Nicky

## **Citation**

Moor, N. (2021). *The Strategic Use of Conceptual Metaphors in the Inaugural Addresses of US Republican and Democratic Presidents (2001-2021): A Critical Discourse Analysis*.

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [License to inclusion and publication of a Bachelor or Master thesis in the Leiden University Student Repository](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3238614>

**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

**The Strategic Use of Conceptual Metaphors in the Inaugural Addresses of US  
Republican and Democratic Presidents (2001-2021); A Critical Discourse Analysis**

Nicky Moor



Department of Linguistics, Leiden University

MA Thesis

Thesis supervisor: Dr. J.V. Jeffery

Second reader: Mr.drs. A.A. Foster

July, 2021

### Abstract

Metaphors are linguistic, rhetorical devices that have the ability to increase effectiveness of the perception by adding comprehensibility and relatability, thus boosting persuasion.

Strategic manoeuvring by means of metaphor in political speeches is quite common, yet, only little awareness exists on the subject, especially in the political realm, which is why it is crucial to increase knowledge on this subject. The general purpose of this study is to increase knowledge of the strategic use of metaphors of US Republican and Democratic presidents' inaugural speeches in the past 20 years, employing Critical Discourse Analysis to address how the strategic use of metaphors compares between the (first) inaugural addresses of President G.W. Bush, President Obama, President Trump, and President Biden, and how these metaphors function. The metaphors in the speeches were identified using existing literature and Lakoff's *Master Metaphor List* (1991). Findings revealed that all four presidents' most frequent conceptual metaphors were the *journey*, *object*, *building*, and *war* metaphors, which may be explained by both their high rate of conventionalisation and their exceptional rhetorical properties. Furthermore, the Democratic presidents used more different types of metaphors than the Republican presidents did. The Democratic and Republican Presidents used roughly the same number of metaphors relative to their speeches' word counts. A follow-up analysis may help gain insights on whether voters' perceptions of presidents are influenced by the inaugural addresses and the role of metaphors and other rhetorical tools in the political genre.

*Keywords:* Critical Discourse Analysis, President Bush, President Obama, President Trump, President Biden, conceptual metaphor, inaugural address, strategic manoeuvring , rhetoric

## Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	6
<b>Purpose and Context</b> .....	6
<b>Theoretical Framework</b> .....	9
<b>Methodology</b> .....	9
<b>Relevance of the Study and Expectations</b> .....	10
<b>Literature Review</b> .....	12
<i>Political Discourse</i> .....	12
<i>Critical Discourse Analysis</i> .....	12
<i>The Relevance of Metaphors in this Study</i> .....	14
<i>Persuasiveness of Metaphors</i> .....	18
<i>Pragma-dialectics</i> .....	22
<b>Method</b> .....	24
<b>Samples</b> .....	24
<b>Speakers</b> .....	24
<b>Tools</b> .....	24
<b>Analysis</b> .....	30
<b>General Results</b> .....	30
<i>Journey Metaphor</i> .....	30
<i>Object Metaphor</i> .....	31
<i>Building Metaphor</i> .....	32

<i>War Metaphor</i> .....	33
<b>Variety of Metaphors Compared</b> .....	33
<b>Zooming in on the Individual Inaugural Addresses</b> .....	36
<i>George W. Bush (2001)</i> .....	36
<i>Barack Obama (2009)</i> .....	40
<i>Donald Trump (2017)</i> .....	48
<i>Joe Biden (2021)</i> .....	52
<b>Discussion</b> .....	60
<b>Research Question 1</b> .....	60
<b>Research Question 2</b> .....	62
<i>Journey Metaphor</i> .....	62
<i>Object Metaphor</i> .....	64
<i>Building Metaphor</i> .....	65
<i>War Metaphor</i> .....	66
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	70
<b>References</b> .....	72
<b>Primary Sources</b> .....	72
<b>Secondary Sources</b> .....	73
<b>Appendix A</b> .....	78
President G.W. Bush’s Inaugural Speech.....	78
<b>Appendix B</b> .....	82

President Obama’s Inaugural Speech .....	82
<b>Appendix C</b> .....	89
President Trump’s Inaugural Speech.....	89
<b>Appendix D</b> .....	93
President Biden’s Inaugural Speech .....	93

## **Introduction**

Communication in politics has changed drastically over the past 20 years. Under the influence of new media, style and nonverbal behaviour have become increasingly important, and communication needs to be dynamic as voters are increasingly encouraged to base their opinions on intuitive and emotive perceptions rather than factually based information and content of the message. There is increased focus on the perception of politicians rather than their actual agenda, and this applies to both their appearance as well as their language.

Metaphors are linguistic, rhetorical devices that may increase effectiveness of the perception, and thus boost persuasion.

## **Purpose and Context**

Rhetoric plays an extremely important role in the political genre: Rhetorical strategic manoeuvring directly influences how a message is perceived, without revealing the speaker's intentions. The speaker may use strategic manoeuvring to persuade or manipulate the addressees into agreeing with the speaker, which may be undesirable or even dangerous in certain situations, such as the marginalisation of certain groups. O'Brien (2003, p. 1) argues that research in metaphor and rhetoric may be of extreme importance, especially for the political speech genre "by calling attention to metaphoric themes that have the effect of supporting repressive public policies against marginalized groups, analyzing these themes, and countering the development of social myths at their root" (p. 45). O'Brien (2003) further pleads that the value of research in this area should not be underestimated:

Even in a society that values individual freedom and minority rights, there are obviously valid rationales for social control measures. We should all be concerned, however, when such measures gain support because of rhetorical devices and social myths as opposed to a factual understanding of the threat that is posed by those who are primarily impacted by such laws. Many metaphors, especially those that touch our

subconscious fears and disgust, do not exist in a historical vacuum. They arise time and again to provide credence to those feelings, often by giving them a human face.

(p. 45)

This is a realistic threat, as the demonisation of certain groups or minorities has occurred in history, and is still happening all over the world. For example, Dutch politician Geert Wilders sent out a tweet which said the following: “Een tsunami van 4200 asielzoekers per week in NL en Rutte tekent nog een keer voor 7000 extra daarbovenop. Wat een incompetente neppremier!” (Wilders, 2015, tweet), which translates to “A tsunami of 4200 asylum seekers per week in the Netherlands and Rutte signs for an additional 7000. What an incompetent fake prime minister!”, comparing the asylum seekers to a natural disaster, a tsunami, by means of a metaphor, and attacking the prime minister for his decision to allow this. Another example is one of the Cold War. In the 1950s, Senator Joseph McCarthy claimed the United States government had been infiltrated by the Communist Party, which then led to a witch-hunt among actors, writers, journalists, and labour leaders. Canada soon joined the United States in their battle against ‘homegrown’ communists: in 1955, Canadian jet aircraft manufacturer Canadair published an advertisement saying “Everywhere are evidences of the continuous underground, cancerous movements of Communism... Only eternal vigilance can protect us against Communism and its infiltration into our way of life.” (CBC) thus metaphorically comparing Communism to cancer, while simultaneously implying that Communism is ‘something’ that ‘moves underground’ like vermin. These examples illustrate how strategic manoeuvring by means of metaphor in political speech is something that has been done in both the US and other countries for years. Yet, only little awareness exists on the subject, especially in the political realm, which is why it is important to increase knowledge on this subject.



The aim of this study is to gain insights in the strategic use of metaphors of US Republican and Democratic presidents' inaugural speeches in the past 20 years. The focus of this study is on how the strategic use of metaphors compares between the presidents, and how these metaphors function. This study adopts Pilgram and van Poppel's (2021) definition of "the strategic use of metaphor": "the use of metaphor to reach both the dialectical goal (of being reasonable) and the rhetorical goal (of being effective) in argumentative discourse (i.e., the use of a metaphor as a strategic manoeuvre in argumentative discourse)." (p. 2). This means that the metaphors are employed in a way that is optimal for persuasion of the audience, while supporting the process of resolving opposing views (Pilgram & van Poppel, 2021, p. 2).

This study addresses the following research questions:

Q1: What kinds of metaphors are used by the Republican and the Democratic presidents and how do these compare?

Q2: How do the used metaphors function in terms of strategic manoeuvring ?

The speakers who were studied are George W. Bush (2001-2009), Barack Obama (2009-2017), Donald Trump (2017-2021), and Joe Biden (2021-). Specifically, their inaugural speeches were analysed. Since George W. Bush and Barack Obama served for two consecutive terms, only their first term inaugural address was included. This study is a qualitative research, focusing on the political speech genre. Existing literature on the role of metaphors in political discourse includes studies by Catalano & Musolff (2019), O'Brien (2003), Lakoff (1995), Ritchie (2013), Ritchie, Feliciano, Sparks (2018), Pilgram & van Poppel (2021). Existing research on strategic manoeuvring by use of conceptual metaphors in political speeches predominantly evaluates the metaphors in certain context or between specific speakers, but comparing Democratic and Republican presidents has not been done

yet. Since we know that strategic manoeuvring may have extensive effects, it is important to increase knowledge on the subject, especially in the political genre.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The Critical Discourse Analysis framework was employed, specifically, Van Dijk's Discourse Analysis as Ideology Analysis (1995), which approaches ideologies as the basic frameworks for the social cognitions of a social group. CDA research in this context studies ideologically biased discourse. The structures of speech often signal 'pragmatic properties' of a communicative event such as the intentions of a speaker and their perspective on the discussed subjects. Social cognition here refers to the system of mental representations and processes of the members of the group, who may share certain beliefs and attitudes. Ideologies are usually self-serving and therefore often polarise the representation of the group members and non-members of the group, often resulting in an 'us versus them' situation. The relevant ideologies in this study are the political Democratic and Republican. Polarisation may be more present in campaigning speeches than they are in the inaugural speeches, as campaigning is aimed at getting votes by seeming more apt to be president than the opponent, whereas the inaugural speeches are given after having won the elections, meaning that an 'us versus them' feeling would not benefit the speakers or voters. This should be taken into consideration while analysing the speeches.

### **Methodology**

Some metaphors have become so conventionalised in the everyday language, that it has become difficult to recognise them as metaphors. An extensive tool to identify metaphors which solves that conundrum is the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP), an explicit and practical tool developed by Pragglejaz Group (2007), consisting of four consecutive steps to identify metaphors in a text. In short, these are to first gain an understanding of the whole text-discourse, followed by determining the lexical units, which should then be analysed for

contextual meaning and basic meaning. 'Basic meaning' refers to the lexical unit relating to physical action (such as grabbing something), the unit being concrete, and its historical meaning relative to its current meaning. If the lexical unit has a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts than it does in this context, it should be decided whether the contextual meaning differs from basic meaning but can still be understood from it. If this is the case, then the final step is to mark the lexical unit as metaphorical. The advantage of the MIP is that it is consistent and systematic, however, the disadvantage is that it is time-consuming (Pragglejaz group, 2007, p. 3). This study did not employ this method as the level of detail of this method was not useful for this analysis, and the procedure proved to be too time-consuming. Therefore, studies that had already identified the metaphors in the speeches were consulted where possible. Where there was no study available, the metaphors were identified per phrase rather than by lexical unit, using Lakoff's *Master Metaphor List* (1991).

### **Relevance of the Study and Expectations**

This study is relevant because according to Lakoff (1995) "we think in metaphor" (Lakoff, 1995, p. 1), which makes the metaphor such a powerful instrument to bring across a message, especially in a communicative situation such as a political speech, when one tries to persuade a diverse audience. And even more so in the case of an inaugural speech: a new president wants to make everyone feel like they are the right person for the job, regardless of who they voted for. Metaphors have a valuable role in political speech because they are able to focus the attention of the interpreter on what the speaker wants the interpreter to focus on, while neglecting the aspects that may be damaging to the goals of the speaker. Metaphors have the ability to influence the interpreters' emotions, allowing them to be harmful when they are used to criminalise certain groups of people, and so it is important to recognise these metaphors and understand how and when these metaphors are applied (O'Brien, 2003).

This study focused on inaugural addresses because these display how the president desires to be perceived by the people and what their intentions are for the country, and these addresses often contain metaphors. Every president has given an inaugural address, which makes for an inclusive and homogeneous sample and allows for clear and objective cross comparison. George W. Bush and Barack Obama served for two consecutive terms, so to maintain this homogeneity, only their first inaugural speeches were used.

It was expected that similar results would be found for Republicans and Democrats in terms of how many metaphors they used and what types of metaphors they used, because there is no clear reason to expect them to differ in this context. It is possible that Democrats used more complex kinds of metaphors, because more college-graduates vote Democratic than Republican (Pewresearch, 2015). It is important to be aware of the changes in the political rhetoric in the past two election cycles.

Possible weaknesses in the study were that the similarities and differences could be personal preferences rather than political ones. Another possible flaw was the discussion about the explanatory value of a conceptual metaphor: McGlone (2007) criticises metaphorical value, arguing that metaphorical value is important, but “despite its important atmospheric influence, the conceptual metaphor framework has not fared well as an account of conceptual structure or a model of figurative language understanding” (McGlone, 2007, abstract).

## **Literature Review**

### ***Political Discourse***

Inaugural speeches are a type of political discourse, for which parameters are in place. Political discourse is an extensive genre of discourse, because politics entails a broad range of issues. If we were to narrow it down, political discourse involves decision making from a governing body, involving social resources, regulations, laws, or other norms, and must occur in the context of a political event. Important to note is that a discourse is not political simply because a political issue is being discussed, if it does not occur in the context of a political setting such as a rally, meeting, or hearing. Political discourse is further defined by being characteristically argumentative, for which the argumentative tools may differ per situation; political discourse comes in a wide variety of forms such as news reports, court documents, protests, votes, and speeches, which all have their own rhetorical tools. Each form has its own contexts, societal implications, and rhetorical features and methods.

In the context of who is speaking, the political discourse genre is not limited to politicians, it may involve anyone who is involved in the debate of political power (Spriggs, 2020, p. 15). This is not relevant for this study, as this study only involves presidential inaugural speeches.

### ***Critical Discourse Analysis***

To gain insight in the strategic rhetorical use of metaphors in the inaugural speeches, this study adopts the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework. CDA refers to “the critical linguistic approach of scholars who find the larger discursive unit of text to the basic unit of communication” (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 2). CDA is interested in both consciously and less consciously controlled structures of text or speech, such as intonation, turn taking, syntactic structures, and rhetorical structures. These structures signal ‘pragmatic properties’ of a communicative event such as the speaker’s intentions and perspectives on the subject

that is being discussed, and even more so, interactional interests, such as impression design and positive self-presentation. This way, someone may hide their negative sentiment on another social group, while subtle structural characteristics of their speech still signal their social identity (van Dijk, 2001, p. 106). This framework allows for subjective interpretations and flexible adaptations of discourse of social situations, and differences between language users in similar situations (p. 108).

More specifically, the speeches are analysed using van Dijk's Discourse Analysis as Ideology Analysis (1995) framework. According to van Dijk (2001), CDA research is often interested in the study of ideologically biased discourses, and how these discourses polarise the representation of the group members (us) and non-members of the group (them). Often, a strategy of "positive self-representation" and "negative other-representation" (p. 103) is used, meaning that the positive attributes of the group and its members are highlighted, while emphasising the negative attributes of the non-group members (p. 103). An example of this is when Nixon started using the term "law and order"; Nixon was popular among white conservative voters, and using this rhetoric responded to these voters' fear of a changing social order, demonising the 'them' group (Powell, 2017, *The Guardian*).

Van Dijk's Discourse Analysis as Ideology Analysis (1995) framework approaches ideologies as the basic structures for the social cognitions that members of certain social groups share. Ideologies function as the junctions between mental representations of discourse and the interests of the social group. In this context, social cognition is defined as the "system of mental representations and processes of group members" (p. 18), and members of the group "may also share evaluative beliefs, viz., opinions, organized into social attitudes" (p. 18). Ideologies are mental portrayals of collective attributes of a group, such as values, norms, and identity. Since ideologies are often self-serving, they are organised by group patterns, which represent the relations between themselves and the people who do not

share the same ideology. There is often an ‘us versus them’ idea, where ‘us’ is identified with positive properties, and ‘they’ are associated with bad ones. The ideologies that are discussed in this study are the political Democratic and Republican ideologies. There is no reason to presume that there may be a difference in language between Democratic and Republican presidents or voters, however, adopting the CDA as an ideology analysis, their language may reflect their ideologies, highlighting their own ideology’s positive attributes while reiterating the negative qualities of the other group, and how they use metaphors in strategic rhetorical manoeuvring may also reflect their ideology.

Political speeches are inherently persuasive and ideological. Kayam (2017) says: “Political speeches are, by their nature, both ideological and persuasive. They are means of linguistic actions in which (political) speakers formulate their ideologies (the systems of ideas, beliefs, values, etc.) and try to persuade others to adopt them”. The inaugural speeches are considered ‘political speeches’ because they are given by political figures, in a political setting; the inauguration of the new president of the United States. The aim of this study is to gain insights in the strategic rhetorical use of metaphors of US Republican and Democratic presidents’ inaugural speeches in the past 20 years. Kayam defines the study of rhetoric as a study that “examines the techniques used to bring about the agreement or deepen the agreement of the audience with the positions or arguments presented”. The base of the classical study of rhetoric lays with Aristotle, who argued that the audience is influenced by three kinds of arguments: Ethos, which have to do with the credibility of the speaker, Logos, which are intended to prove to speaker’s case, and Pathos, emotive arguments which try to influence the listener’s mood.

### ***The Relevance of Metaphors in this Study***

According to Lakoff (1995), people think in metaphor; concepts from a concrete cognitive domain are employed to comprehend completely different domains, which becomes

apparent especially in ordinary reasoning. This theory, Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), argues that the human conceptual system is organised in metaphors, and that these metaphors are reflected in language. Sopory and Dillard (2006) define metaphors as linguistic comparisons of the form “A is B”. A and B are different conceptual domains which are linked to one another through metaphor. A is the target, and B is the base; meaning is passed from B to A. This thesis has adopted this definition. Similar to the study by Sopory and Dillard, this study did not distinguish between different types of metaphors (such as simile, analogy, and personification) because they are similar to metaphors in the sense that they also involve the comparison of conceptualisations. More specifically, this study focused on ‘conceptual metaphors’, which “consist of a set of correspondences, or mappings, between a “source” and a “target” domain. The meaning of particular metaphorical linguistic expressions is based on such correspondences” (Kövecses, 2010, p. 197). There are systematic conceptual correspondences between the source and the target domain. Conceptual elements of the source domain are mapped onto the conceptual elements of the target domain. E.g. “*Love is a journey*”:

Source : JOURNEY Target : LOVE

the travelers ⇒ the lovers

the vehicle ⇒ the love relationship itself

the journey ⇒ events in the relationship

the distance covered ⇒ the progress made

the obstacles encountered ⇒ the difficulties experienced

decisions about which way to go ⇒ choices about what to do

the destination of the journey ⇒ the goal(s) of the relationship. (Kövecses, 2010, p. 9)



This study analysed the use of metaphors in the inaugural addresses of the US presidents between 2001 and 2021. Political discourse has changed radically in this period. Politics has changed into something called ‘perception politics’; a commercialised, globalised, visual culture with mass media and new media as key components, where ‘perception’ of the candidate is key. Metaphors are powerful instruments for impression management, as they allow the speaker to emphasise certain topics and weaken attention on others, hereby creating an image of themselves that they deem desirable for the audience.

Due to the increased role of the media, political communication has changed drastically; content is no longer the most important part of the message, rather, style has become increasingly important, causing a dramatised and dynamic kind of political communication that follows the rules of the media. This includes the increase of infotainment, the combination of information and entertainment, and politainment, the combination of politics and entertainment, and increases perception politics. The problem here is that perception politics encourages voters to base their opinions on their intuitive perceptions of political candidates, such as appearance, speaking style, and nonverbal behaviour, rather than their actual political agenda and arguments (De Landtsheer et al., 2008, pp. 219-220). Studies have found that Border Patrol and immigration officials in the US have employed metaphors to justify militarisation of the US border, specifically metaphors that criminalise and dehumanise unaccompanied youth from Central America, and ‘war/wild west metaphors (Catalano and Musolff, 2019). Al Gore argued that parents needed assistance in controlling their children’s access to the internet by saying that the government needed to give parents “the tools to protect their children against cultural pollution”, a metaphor reflecting ‘immorality’ as ‘impurity’ (Cienki, 2005, p. 5).

I would argue that voters have always been drawn to speakers with a lot of charisma, however, the rise of the new media in combination with politainment and infotainment has

accelerated the process. This is well illustrated by the increased use of soundbites and metaphors. Metaphors are a specific type of sound bite, sound bites being comparable to (old fashioned and obsolete) ‘slogans’. De Landtsheer et al. define soundbites as “short utterances by politicians that generally include style elements such as metaphors and alliteration. These messages or word groups are more often quoted by the mass media than other sayings by politicians” (De Landtsheer et al., 2008, pp. 222-223). The shortness of soundbites are typical for the commercial media world, and because they are so short, politicians need to use succinct, condensed, and convincing language. Soundbites can have powerful effects due to their ability to channel suggestive language, and many soundbites contain metaphors, which De Landtsheer et al. define as “applications of alien names” (p. 223) due to their emotive quality.

Metaphors have only recently become relevant in political language; political and communication science scholars used to regard the emotive capacity of metaphors as obstructive to rational politics. It was only in the late 20th century that metaphors were recognised for their ability to convey persuasive messages. Since then, evidence has been found for emotions being effective predictors of voter preferences; studies have found that almost a third of voters have strong sentiments toward political candidates, despite lacking factual and unbiased (or even any) information about these candidates. In terms of information processing, rather than using the central route (arguments), voters use the peripheral route (cues), which emphasises emotional cues and distracts from rational arguments. Politicians and their consultants are aware of these trends and benefit from this knowledge by studying the influence of several aspects of communication, including the verbal message such as sound bites and metaphors, characteristics in appearance, perceived personality traits to nonverbal behaviour, and by applying this knowledge to all political communicative contexts. This is called political impression management. Political impression

management and political marketing theory flawlessly fit together, as political communication is now intertwined with marketing strategies, aiming to create an image that will appeal to the voter. Metaphors are powerful instruments for impression management: using metaphors allows the speaker to emphasise certain topics and weaken attention on others, hereby creating an image of themselves that they deem desirable for the audience. Due to their ability to help people organise information by creating interpretation frames, metaphors can even influence people's actions, though to some extent, the nature and topic of the metaphor are important in terms of persuasion. Visual metaphors are more persuasive than written ones, as are audio messages; the recipient of the metaphor must determine the target and the base of the metaphor, and the relevant semantic relations between those, which extends the processing course and provides the recipient with less opportunity to oppose the given message, thus increasing the persuasiveness of the message (Van Stee, 2018, pp. 560-562). Steen, Reijnders, and Burgers (2014) found no effects of metaphorical frame on reasoning, although they did find that the metaphorical frames were remembered differently. They mentioned how some scholars suggest that metaphorical frames only have effect when they are needed to improve understanding. They also mention this as a reason for why they may not have found effects on reasoning of metaphorical frames, because the participants of their study might have had a good understanding of the themes of their material and therefore did not need a metaphor to increase clarity. Furthermore, metaphorical framing may also strengthen the already existing attitude towards a certain subject, and not only influence the content of belief.

### ***Persuasiveness of Metaphors***

One of the major goals of metaphors is to connect logos (logic) with pathos (emotions). Politicians may use metaphors to frame problems and promote certain solutions. Pilyarchuk and Onysko conducted a research on Donald Trump's acceptance speech, where

they noticed that Trump used particularly metaphors of pain and fear, such as “Middle-income Americans and businesses will experience profound relief”, a metaphor for ‘taxes are pain’, and “Illegal immigrants with criminal records (ordered deported from our country) are tonight roaming free”, a metaphor where immigrants are compared to animals. Metaphors need to be interpreted, for which mostly short-term memory is used, and by reiterating and repeating certain ideas, the order of processing may be influenced. Forming attitudes and opinions are mostly formed with the help of long-term memory, so by repetition of certain metaphors, the themes that come back in these metaphors will be seen as central and remembered by people, causing them to build this ideological model in their mind of immigrants being animals and taxes being pain (Pilyarchuk & Onysko, 2018, pp. 99-100).

There has been much study on the effectiveness of metaphors as persuasion devices, such as the study by Sopory and Dillard (2006), a meta-analysis. To ascertain the effectiveness of the persuasiveness of a metaphor, the metaphor must first be located in a context, using the proper terminology and the theories of metaphor comprehension. The three main theories are the literal primacy view, the salience-imbalance theory, and the structure-mapping theory. The literal primacy view regards metaphor as false language; metaphors are semantic anomalies that require three phases in the process of understanding: first, the literal meaning of a metaphor must be derived, then it must be tested if the literal meaning is sensible, and finally, detecting an anomaly or violation in semantic rules. If the literal meaning turns out to be nonsensical, an alternative meaning must be sought. The salience imbalance theory argues that metaphors are understood through the salience of the lexical items: salience is defined as the proportionate significance of an attribute, meaning that the first attribute one thinks of is the most salient. A metaphor “A is B” is perceived by assembling the shared attributes and selecting those that have high salience for the base, and

low salience for the target. The structure mapping theory assumes that the relations among attributes are compared for similarities within the associative network of memory.

The six main perspectives on metaphor and persuasion according to Sopory and Dillard (2006) are *pleasure or relief*, *communicator credibility*, *reduced counterarguments*, *resource matching*, *stimulated elaboration*, and *superior organisation*. The notion of *pleasure and relief* refers to the semantic anomaly that exists in metaphor according to the literal primacy view, and the negative tension it brings, and when the metaphorical meaning is finally understood, that this negative tension is finally relieved. The reward of pleasure or relief reinforces the metaphorical meaning and the associated evaluation, thereby increasing persuasion.

According to the second view, *communicator credibility*, speakers who use metaphors are judged more credible than ones who use literal language. This may be because creating metaphors is challenging and thus a sign of intelligence, and more importantly, because metaphors emphasise previously unknown similarities between entities. The addressees experience interest and pleasure from understanding the commonalities of these entities, causing them to positively judge the messenger's communicator credibility.

The third theory, the *reduced counterarguments theory*, argues that more cognitive energy is consumed during the processing of metaphorical messages than during literal messages, disrupting counterarguing, leading to increased persuasion. The mental process of comprehending a metaphor generates an overwhelming number of associations, which leaves fewer resources to discredit the content, or the source. This does mean that, according to this view, message recipients are always inclined to counter a message; a debatable stance.

Fourth is *resource matching*, which also employs the idea of cognitive resources, proposing that to derive meaning from a metaphorical expression, cognitive elaboration is needed to ensure a better integration of message arguments in memory, leading to better

persuasion compared to literal messages. Maximum elaboration and thus maximum comprehension can only occur when there is a perfect balance between the compulsory resources to understand the metaphorical message and the resources that are available to the interpreter. However, if the interpreter does not have enough resources, there is less comprehension and thus persuasion is blocked, and in the case of an excess of available resources, unrelated idiosyncratic thoughts are generated, which will in turn diminish the persuasive impact of the message. In short, according to this view, metaphors are only persuasive if the balance between resources available to the interpreter and the needed number of resources is correct. Therefore, resource-enhanced conditions increase the persuasiveness of metaphors.

The fifth view, *stimulated elaboration view*, suggests that metaphors prompt an increased amount of valenced thinking than literal communication does, resulting in improved persuasion. This view is connected to two different metaphor processing theories: Hitchon's theory (1991), and Whaley's (1991) structure-mapping theory. Whaley (1991) proposes that comprehending metaphors stimulates the thought process by putting focus on a comparable relational structure between target and base, as this stimulates a more extensive set of associations in semantic memory than literal language does. Because the number of semantic connections is greater, a greater elaboration of message content is created, and when the processing conditions are positive, this creates increased persuasion. Whaley further argues that certain types of metaphors operate as high-quality arguments, because the processing of these metaphors leads to more elaboration than the processing of literal messages does. Hitchon (1991) implements some notions from the *salience-imbalance theory*, and proposes that when the shared characteristics of the target and the base are combined to understand a metaphor, they form the 'ground', and the evaluation that is linked to those characteristics is also a factor of the ground. To form the ground, the attributes that

are relevant for the ground, and their associated disposition are required, which leads to greater persuasion. It is not necessary to do this when trying to extract the meaning of literal expression, and therefore there is no increased persuasion.

Finally, the sixth theory, *superior organisation*, is derived from the structure mapping theory and proposes that metaphors help structure and organise arguments of a message better than literal language does, due to the great number of semantic relations. Associations that are consistent with the metaphor allow arguments to be connected more coherently through the available semantic routes. In addition, complying with De Landtsheer et al. (2008), metaphors have the ability to highlight arguments, thus making these arguments more salient, making it easier for interpreters to relate the arguments to each other. Increased comprehension should increase persuasion, making metaphors powerful instruments to create more comprehensive and thus more persuasive messages than literal language is able to create (Sopory and Dillard, 2006, pp. 383-387).

### ***Pragma-dialectics***

In pragma-dialectical theory, argumentation is considered to be aiming at resolving a difference of opinion in a reasonable way. This can either be done explicitly between two parties with opposing views, or implicitly, in the case of a monologue (such as a political speech). The aim of the argumentation is to convince the other party of the acceptability of a certain standpoint (van Eemeren & Henkemans, 2016, preface).

Pragma-dialectics offers a framework that allows determining commitments that are associated with certain discussion manoeuvres, while taking these manoeuvres' rhetorical benefits into account. This is done by describing strategic manoeuvring ; how arguers combine reasonableness and effectiveness. One specific strategic manoeuvre is the use of metaphor. The term 'strategic use' refers to 'strategic manoeuvring in argumentative discourse'; the use of the metaphor in argumentative discourse to reach both the dialectical

goal (of being reasonable) and the rhetorical goal (of being effective) (Pilgram & van Poppel, 2021, p.2). This means that the metaphors are employed in a way that is optimal for persuasion of the audience, while supporting the process of resolving opposing views (Pilgram & van Poppel, 2021).

This thesis focused primarily on conceptual metaphors, which are considered cross-domain mappings in thought where a more concrete source domain (vehicle) is connected to a more abstract target domain (tenor). We constantly use one concept to understand another one, such as ‘down is bad’, ‘good is up’, ‘life is a journey’, and also reflect this in our language. Pilgram & van Poppel (2021) proposed to consider metaphors according to the 3D-model by Steen (2008), which assumes that metaphors also have a communicative dimension, aside from the linguistic and conceptual dimensions. The 3D-model argues that metaphors establish conceptual mappings in thought, are expressed by means of metaphorical expressions, and are employed to achieve particular communicative goals; this allows for more strategic manoeuvring (Pilgram & van Poppel, 2021, p. 3).

The strategic functions of metaphors have been subject of much debate; some consider metaphors to be presentational devices, which is true, however, they have more functions; it has been argued that metaphors always have a rhetorical function. This statement is strengthened by the knowledge that metaphors boost acceptance of the given standpoint, and in certain cases they may also have a dialectical function. Some of these functions are “advancing an argument, expressing a standpoint and introducing a shared starting point” (Pilgram & van Poppel, 2021, p. 6). This connects to the idea that metaphors are both framing and reasoning devices, as they enhance the persuasiveness of a discussion point and add content to an argument. They aid achieving both dialectical and rhetorical goals, fulfilling a relevant argumentative function and contributing to a compelling construction of discussion



moves, and when both of these are accomplished, the metaphor is a successful strategic manoeuvre (Pilgram & van Poppel, 2021, p. 6)

### **Method**

To understand and appreciate the kinds of metaphors that were used by President G.W. Bush, President Obama, President Trump, and President Biden, and their strategic functions, the following methodology was used.

### **Samples**

The speeches were selected on the basis of having a time period of approximately 20 years, during which the use of social media has grown immensely, having caused perception politics and more demand for short and concise language (De Landtsheer et al., 2008, pp. 219-220). Selecting the past four presidents as speakers also allowed for a homogeneous sample, as two Republican and two Democratic presidents were compared. This is also why specifically the inaugural speeches were analysed; all of the presidents have given an inaugural speech.

The speeches were found on the website of the University of California Santa Barbara's "The American Presidency Project".

### **Speakers**

The speakers who were studied were Republican George W. Bush (2001-2009), Democrat Barack Obama (2009-2017), Republican Donald Trump (2017-2021), and Democrat Joe Biden (2021-). Since George W. Bush and Barack Obama served two consecutive terms, only the inaugural addresses from their first terms were included.

### **Tools**

To answer research question 1, 'what kinds of metaphors are used by the Republican and the Democratic presidents and how do these compare?', a tool was needed which could correctly identify metaphors, including "stock-expressions": expressions that are

conventionalised to such an extent that they are no longer recognised as metaphors at the first glance. “The argument was shot down” is an example of such a metaphor (McGlone, 2007, p. 107). An extensive tool to identify metaphors, that is unaffected by such stock-expressions and conventionalised metaphors, is the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP), an explicit and practical tool developed by Pragglejaz Group (2007). The Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) is a popular tool among cognitive linguists for identifying and analysing metaphors in a text. The MIP consists of the following steps:

“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 (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).

For example:

/ For / years /, Sonia Gandhi / has / struggled / .

For

(a) contextual meaning: In this context, the preposition “for” indicates temporal duration, that is, it introduces a noun phrase (years) that indicates the period of time spanned by the action/process referred to by the main verb phrase in the sentence (has struggled).

(b) basic meaning: The preposition “for” can be used to introduce the beneficiary or recipient of an action, often involving the transfer of a physical entity from one person to another (e.g., I’ve brought a cup of tea for you). This could be regarded as the basic meaning of the preposition. This is the first sense of “for” in the contemporary dictionary used (discussed later).

(c) contextual meaning versus basic meaning: The contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning. However, we have not found a way in which the contextual meaning can be understood by comparison with the basic meaning.

Metaphorically used? No

years

(a) contextual meaning: In this context, “years” indicates a long period of time encompassing several calendar years. The use of “years” emphasizes the length of the relevant period of time, rather than demarcating it with any precision.

(b) basic meaning: The most basic meaning of year is the cyclical period of time in which the earth completes a full revolution around the sun, consisting of 365 or 366 days (although the precise number of days is not necessarily part of the basic meaning).

(c) contextual meaning versus basic meaning: The contextual meaning is very closely related to the basic meaning and does not significantly contrast with it.

Metaphorically used? No.

Sonia Ghandi

(a) contextual meaning: The proper name refers to a specific, uniquely identifiable individual in a particular historical and geographical context.

(b) basic meaning: The proper name does not have a more basic meaning.

(c) contextual meaning versus basic meaning: The contextual meaning is the same as the basic meaning.

Metaphorically used? No.

has

(a) contextual meaning: In this context, “has” is the operator in the verb phrase “has struggled,” where it signals agreement with the singular grammatical subject “Sonia Ghandi,” and expresses an aspectual meaning, that is, it indicates that the relevant action/process started in the past and has not yet been completed.

(b) basic meaning: As an auxiliary verb, to have does not have a more basic meaning. As a lexical verb, to have has the more basic meaning of possession (prototypically involving physical objects).

(c) contextual meaning versus basic meaning: If we consider to have as an auxiliary verb, the contextual meaning is the same as the basic meaning. If we consider the lexeme to have as a whole, the contextual meaning contrasts with a more basic meaning. However, we have not found a way in which the contextual meaning can be understood by comparison with the basic meaning.

Metaphorically used? No

struggled

(a) contextual meaning: In this context, “struggled” indicates effort, difficulty and lack of success in achieving a goal, namely changing other people’s negative views and attitudes.

(b) basic meaning: The basic meaning of the verb to struggle is to use one’s physical strength against someone or something, as in She picked up the child, but he struggled and kicked. The evidence cited in the etymological dictionary consulted, the Shorter Oxford Dictionary on Historical Principles, also suggests that this meaning is historically prior (p. 2,157).

(c) contextual meaning versus basic meaning: The contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning and can be understood by comparison with it: We can understand abstract effort, difficulty, opposition and conflict in terms of physical effort, difficulty, opposition and conflict.

Metaphorically used? Yes. (Pragglejaz group, 2007, pp. 4-6).

However, the level of detail that the MIP provided was not significant for this study, and caused the analysis to contain chunks of text that were not relevant to explain the strategic use of conceptual metaphors. Therefore, where possible, studies were employed which had already identified the metaphors in the inaugural speeches to determine the types of metaphors that were used, and adapted using the *Master Metaphor List* (1991) by Lakoff et al. and *Metaphors We Live By* (1981) by Lakoff and Johnson where this was necessary. Doing this resulted in the relevant parts of the speeches being included in the analysis.

After identifying the metaphors in the speeches, to answer research question 2, ‘how do the used metaphors function in terms of strategic manoeuvring?’, existing literature on metaphors, strategic manoeuvring, and rhetoric was consulted to analyse the strategic and argumentative functions of the most frequently used metaphor types. Existing literature on the subject included Lakoff et al. 's *Master Metaphor List* (1991), Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* (1981), Cameron's *Patterns of Metaphor Use in Reconciliation Talk* (2007), Pilgram and van Poppel's *The Strategic Use of Metaphor in Argumentation* (2021) and more. Finally, the speakers' use of metaphors was analysed and compared, and the possible rationale of the speakers' most frequent metaphor choices was discussed.

## Analysis

### General Results

This study addresses the strategic use of metaphors of US Republican and Democratic presidents' inaugural speeches in the past 20 years, specifically, how the strategic use of metaphors compares, and how these metaphors function. To answer research question 1, 'what kinds of metaphors are used by the Republican and the Democratic presidents and how do these compare?', a total of 46 types of conceptual metaphors were found. The metaphors that were used in the speeches can be found in table 4 to 7. The most frequent metaphor types were the *journey* metaphor (X is a journey), the *war* metaphor (X is a war), the *object* metaphor (X is an object) and the *building* metaphor (X is a building).

President G.W. Bush, President Obama, and President Trump, all used the *journey* metaphor the most frequently, whereas President Biden's most frequently used metaphor was the *war* metaphor. President Biden's second most frequently used conceptual metaphor was the *journey* metaphor. The *war* metaphor was President Obama's second most frequent metaphor, for President Trump this was the *building* metaphor. President Bush jr.'s second most frequently used metaphor was the *object* metaphor. This amounts to the *journey* metaphor having been used a total number of 36 times, the *war* metaphor having been used 23 times, the *object* metaphor having been used 16 times, and the *building* metaphor was used a total of 14 times.

### *Journey Metaphor*

*Journey* metaphors are effective tools for inaugural speeches, because they typically refer to predetermined objectives of policy and allow for a clear mental vision of where one wants to go in the future. They are therefore especially appealing for politicians who consciously try to communicate that they are aiming for a certain goal, which has been planned; *journey* metaphors are innately purposeful and imply a planned advancement that is

accompanied by an agent who will follow a fixed course towards the intended goal (Cibulskienė, 2012, p. 132).

The *journey* metaphor, *X is a journey*, links experiences of purposive movement to many potential common elements that share some of these elements. The *journey* metaphor is in essence related to any metaphor that functions on the basis of purposive movement, such as *vehicle* (“that argument doesn’t carry much weight”, and in President George W. Bush’s inaugural speech “...acts of decency, which give direction to our freedom”) and *path* (“I don’t see where this is leading us”), which all employ an interconnected set of commonplace experiences, while having the ability to express different nuances (Ritchie, 2013, p. 83), the difference between them being the source and target.

The *journey* metaphor is not subject to one consistent structure or image in which all *journey* metaphors fit. They do have a certain coherency, namely, that they all involve some means of travel, but what kind of travel is not set in stone. Generally, these metaphorical concepts are not defined by concrete images such as ‘flying’ or ‘driving’, rather they are defined by more general words such as ‘passing’ (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 45). Lakoff et al. (1991) explained the *journey* metaphor as being part of the “EVENT STRUCTURE system”; the target domain involves the causative effects that events have on a person who engages in purposeful activities. The change one undergoes as a result of the causative effect is interpreted as motion from one location to another, and control over the location from an outside force.

### ***Object Metaphor***

The *object* metaphor, among other metaphors such as *journey*, *buildings*, *substances*, *seeing*, *food*, and more, are all metaphors relating to concepts which correspond to natural kinds of experience, and are structured clearly enough to define other concepts (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 118). The idea that thoughts are objects implies that they are ‘solid’ and



independent of the thinker (Ritchie, 2013, p. 110). Furthermore, speaking about abstract concepts in terms of objects allows the audience to have a concrete image of said concept, thus increasing comprehensibility. Akuno et al. (2018) studied this phenomenon in Dholuo Benga Music as they noticed that love was often compared to food. They argued that metaphors are grounded to physical experience, and that in the music they studied, the target domain 'love', is an abstract emotional feeling that somehow gets compared to the feeling one gets when eating food. Eating food is a physical experience that everyone can comprehend, and so musicians have tried to describe love by means of a concrete object, food (p. 43). Another study that examined this is a study by Jamil et al. (2019), who studied the effect of using the *object* metaphor for cancer. They found that the *object* metaphor enabled women with cancer to speak and think about cancer in a more concrete manner, and that it helped them understand their feelings (p. 132). These examples illustrate how *object* metaphors help visualise abstract concepts. This relates to the superior organisation theory (Sopory and Dillard, 2006, pp. 383-387), which essentially says that metaphors help structure and organise arguments of a message better than literal language due to the great number of semantic relations that are connected more coherently through the available semantic routes. The hypothesis of the *object* metaphor increasing persuasiveness is further strengthened by the Sopory and Dillard's (2006) resource matching theory, which says that a metaphor is understood best (and therefore most persuasive) when the balance between the available resources to the interpreter and the needed number of resources is correct, which can be achieved by using resource-enhanced conditions (such as the idea of an object rather than an abstract idea).

### ***Building Metaphor***

Buildings have outer shells and foundations, which define the interior for the building. The content of the *building* metaphor is not the interior, rather, the foundation and outer shell

constitute the content. This makes depth function differently than one would normally expect; normally, more depth constitutes increased complexity of the metaphor. For the *building* metaphor, however, more depth is more basic. The more basic parts of the argument are the deepest, namely the foundation and the core, whereas for the *journey* metaphor, to name an example, deep facts are facts that are not obvious; they are hidden and need to be gone into in depth, which is part of the journey. But for the *building* metaphor, the metaphorical orientation of depth corresponds to basicness. However, the surface is content-defining, so more surface is more content (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, pp. 100-102). For example: "... we will act not only to create new jobs but to lay a new foundation for growth" (Obama, inaugural speech, 2009).

### ***War Metaphor***

Vocabulary expressions from 'war' or 'fight' such as 'attack a position', 'win', 'gain ground', etc. are often used in the political genre, in the form of the *politics is war* metaphor. The concept of politics is partially characterised by the conceptual network of battle, causing metaphorical expressions to comply (Risdianto, 2016, p. 168). Besides, as aforementioned, metaphors can have framing properties; *war* metaphors convey a sense of threat and fear, making them quite suitable in terms of the CDA framework and van Dijk's Discourse Analysis as Ideology Analysis (1995), as it allows a clear 'us versus them' perspective. The *disease* metaphor has similar properties, however, a *disease* metaphor may call on emotions such as compassion, care, and perhaps disgust. Additionally, *disease* metaphors may express weakness; this is undesirable as a new president, so a *war* metaphor would be much more suitable (Flusberg et al., 2018, p. 3).

### **Variety of Metaphors Compared**

11 out of the 46 metaphor types were used by at least one Republican and one Democratic president. Democratic presidents used more different types of conceptual

metaphors than Republicans did; Democrats used 33 different conceptual metaphors, whereas the Republican presidents only used 24 different types. The Democratic presidents also used more metaphors in total, however, their speeches also consisted of more words, meaning that there is no significant difference in the total number of used conceptual metaphors, only in the number of metaphor types.

Comparing the kinds of metaphors that were used in the inaugural addresses showed that Obama used more higher complexity construction metaphors than the other presidents did. For instance, President Obama occasionally blended different subtypes of the same metaphor, an example being a phrase where he combined a *journey* metaphor with a *comparison of states in a dynamic situation is comparison of distance*: “The success of our economy has always depended not just on the size of our gross domestic product, but on the reach of our prosperity; on the ability to extend opportunity to every willing heart - not out of charity, but because it is the surest route to our common good” (Obama, inaugural speech, 2009).

As aforementioned, a total of 46 conceptual metaphor types were found. 11 of these were employed in the inaugural speech of at least one president from both parties.

The following metaphor types were used by both a Republican and a Democratic president:

**Table 1**

*Metaphor types that were used by at least one Democratic and at least one Republican president*

- X is an object
- X is war
- X is a building
- X is a journey
- X is a person
- X is an animal
- X is a play

bad is down

X is an adversary/enemy

X is cultivation

X is water/tide

The following metaphor types were only used by President Bush and President Trump, the Republican presidents:

**Table 2**

*Metaphor types only used by Republican presidents; X is a prison and X is a place were used by both presidents, the rest was used by one of the Republican presidents.*

X is a prison

X is a place

X is a disease

X is a job

X is a natural event

X is a sport

X is a vehicle

empty is bad

X is the sun

X is a trap

X is movement

X is stealing

big is good

The following metaphor types were only used by the Democratic presidents, President Obama and President Biden:

**Table 3**

*Metaphor types only used by Democratic presidents; only the first four were used by both President Obama and President Biden, the rest was used by either of them.*

X is cold

X is perceptions

X is possession  
X is destroying  
X is projectiles  
X is a patient  
X is a story  
well-being is up  
coherent is whole  
X has monetary value  
X is linear progress  
value is size  
X is a container  
X is counting  
X is darkness  
X is a path  
state is distance  
mental control is physical  
control  
X is object relative to  
possessor  
X is a burden  
values are old/new  
believing is protecting

### **Zooming in on the Individual Inaugural Addresses**

In order to answer research question 1, what kinds of metaphors are used by the Republican and the Democratic presidents and how do these compare, all speeches are zoomed in on individually.

#### ***George W. Bush (2001)***

To answer research question 1, what kinds of metaphors are used by the Republican and the Democratic presidents and how do these compare, I will now zoom in on the conceptual metaphors used by George W. Bush in his inaugural speech. George W. Bush's inaugural speech contained 42 conceptual metaphors, of which the *journey* metaphor (21%)

and the *object* metaphor (19%) were used the most, respectively nine and eight times. The other types of metaphors that were used were, in order of frequency, the *building* (4), *place* (4), *play* (4), *war* (4), *bad=down* (2), *vehicle* (1), *job* (1), *natural event* (1), *sport* (1), *disease* (1), *prison* (1), and *enemy* (1) metaphor.

**Table 4*****George W. Bush's Inaugural Speech's Conceptual Metaphors***

Linguistic Realisation	Conceptual Metaphor (1)	Conceptual Metaphor (2)
The peaceful transfer of authority...	Politics is war	
With a simple oath, we affirm old traditions and make new beginnings.	Politics is a journey	
...a contest conducted with spirit and ended with grace	Elections are a journey	
I am honored and humbled to stand here where so many of America's leaders have come before me, and so many will follow.	Politics is a journey	Politics is a place
We have a place, all of us, in a long story, a story we continue but whose end we will not see.	History is a place	History is a journey
Americans are called to enact this promise in our lives...	Life is a play	
...though our Nation has sometimes halted and sometimes delayed, we must follow no other course	Politics is a journey	

America's faith in freedom and democracy was a rock in a raging sea...	Politics is a natural event	
...an ideal we carry but do not own	Ideals are objects	
...a trust we bear and pass along.	Trust is an object	
...after nearly 225 years, we have a long way yet to travel	Politics is a journey	
...sometimes our differences run so deep, it seems we share a continent but not a country	Bad is down	
I will work to build a single nation of justice and opportunity...	Nations are buildings	
I know this is in our reach.	Politics is a journey	
...we are guided by a power larger than ourselves, who creates us equal, in His image	Power is an object	
We are bound by ideals that move us beyond our backgrounds.	Politics is a journey	
If we permit our economy to drift and decline, the vulnerable will suffer most.	Bad is down	Economy is a building
We must show courage in a time of blessing by confronting problems.	Courage is an object	Problems are enemies
...confronting problems instead of passing them on to	Problems are objects	

future generations.

...we will reduce taxes to  
recover the momentum of our  
economy and reward the  
effort and enterprise of  
working Americans.      Economy is a moving  
object

We will build our defenses  
beyond challenge, lest  
weakness invite challenge.      Defense is a building

America remains engaged in  
the world, by history and by  
choice, shaping a balance of  
power that favors freedom.      Power is an object

We will defend our allies and  
our interests.      Politics is war

...they will have an honored  
place in our plans and in our  
laws.      Political attitude is a place

Many in our country do not  
know the pain of poverty...      Poverty is a disease

I can pledge our Nation to a  
goal...      Politics is a sport

...children and community are  
the commitments that set us  
free      Problems are a prison

...acts of decency, which give  
direction to our freedom      Freedom is a vehicle

I will live and lead by these  
principles: to advance my  
convictions with civility, to  
serve the public interest with  
courage...      Politics is a journey



... to defend needed reforms against easy attacks,..	Politics is war	
I ask you to be citizens: Citizens, not spectators;..	Politics is a play	
... responsible citizens building communities of service and a nation of character.	Nations are buildings	
... we hold beliefs beyond ourselves.	Beliefs are objects	People are places
When this spirit is present, no wrong can stand against it.	Politics is war	
We are not this story's author, who fills time and eternity with his purpose.	Politics is a play	
This work continues,..	Politics is a job	
the story goes on,..	Politics is a play	

*Note.* Conceptual metaphors and metaphor type were retrieved from Almas & Dagher (2018) and edited using Lakoff et al.'s (1991) *Master Metaphor List* where deemed necessary.

### ***Barack Obama (2009)***

Answering research question 1, what kinds of metaphors are used by the Republican and the Democratic presidents and how do these compare, Barack Obama's most frequently used metaphors were the *journey* metaphor (12) and the *war* metaphor (5), similar to George W. Bush. Other metaphors in Barack Obama's inaugural speech were *harm* (3), *building* (2), *water/tide* (2), *person* (2), *perception* (2), *temperature* (2), *mental control is physical control* (2), *object relative to possessor* (2), *possessions* (2), *object* (2), *sides* (1), *state is distance* (1), *believing is protecting* (1), *burden* (1), *cultivation* (1), *values are old/new* (1).

**Table 5*****Barack Obama's Inaugural Speech's Conceptual Metaphors***

Linguistic Realisation	Conceptual Metaphor (1)	Conceptual Metaphor (2)
<p>Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real. They are serious and they are many.</p>	<p>Politics is war</p>	
<p>Our challenges may be new, the instruments with which we meet them may be new, but those values upon which our success depends, honesty and hard work, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity, loyalty and patriotism - these things are old.</p>	<p>Politics is war</p>	<p>Values are old</p>
<p>I stand here today humbled by the task before us, grateful for the trust you have bestowed, mindful of the sacrifices borne by our ancestors.</p>	<p>Receiving trust is getting an object</p>	<p>Politics is a journey</p>
<p>What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility -- a recognition, on the part of every American, that we have duties to ourselves, our nation and the world, duties that we do not grudgingly accept but rather seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of our character than giving our all to a difficult task.</p>	<p>Obligations are possessions</p>	

... let it be said by our  
children's children that when  
we were tested, we refused to  
let this journey end, that we did  
not turn back nor did we  
falter...

Politics is a journey

And for those who seek to  
advance their aims by inducing  
terror and slaughtering  
innocents, we say to you now  
that, "Our spirit is stronger and  
cannot be broken. You cannot  
outlast us, and we will defeat  
you."

Politics is war

Our founding fathers faced  
with perils that we can scarcely  
imagine, drafted a charter to  
assure the rule of law and the  
rights of man, a charter  
expanded by the blood of  
generations.

Perils are physical harm

Recall that earlier generations  
faced down fascism and  
communism not just with  
missiles and tanks, but with the  
sturdy alliances and enduring  
convictions.

Politics is war

Our nation is at war against a  
far-reaching network of  
violence and hatred.

Politics is war

To those who cling to power  
through corruption and deceit  
and the silencing of dissent,  
know that you are on the  
wrong side of history, but that  
we will extend a hand if you  
are willing to unclench your

Mental control is physical  
control

History has two sides

fist.

We honor them not only  
because they are guardians of  
our liberty, but because they  
embody the spirit of service: a  
willingness to find meaning in  
something greater than  
themselves.

Ideas are objects

"Let it be told to the future  
world that in the depth of  
winter, when nothing but hope  
and virtue could survive, that  
the city and the country,  
alarmed at one common  
danger, came forth to meet it." Fear is cold

On this day, we come to  
proclaim an end to the petty  
grievances and false promises,  
the recriminations and worn-  
out dogmas that for far too  
long have strangled our  
politics.

Political harm is physical  
harm

...that as the world grows  
smaller, our common humanity  
shall reveal itself; and that  
America must play its role in  
ushering in a new era of peace.

Perception is shape  
recognition

America, in the face of our common dangers, in this winter of our hardship, let us remember these timeless words; with hope and virtue, let us brave once more the icy currents, and endure what storms may come; let it be said by our children's children that when we were tested we refused to let this journey end, that we did not turn back nor did we falter; and with eyes fixed on the horizon and God's grace upon us, we carried forth that great gift of freedom and delivered it safely to future generations.

Fear is cold

Politics is a journey

Our journey has never been one of shortcuts or settling for less.

Politics is a journey

This is the journey we continue today.

Politics is a journey

The success of our economy has always depended not just on the size of our gross domestic product, but on the reach of our prosperity; on the ability to extend opportunity to every willing heart - not out of charity, but because it is the surest route to our common good.

Politics is a journey

Comparison of states in a dynamic situation is comparison of distance

At these moments, America  
has carried on not simply  
because of the skill or vision of  
those in high office, but  
because We the People have  
remained faithful to the ideals  
of our forbearers, and true to  
our founding documents.      Politics is a journey

Where the answer is yes, we  
intend to move forward.      Politics is a journey

To the Muslim world, we seek  
a new way forward, based on  
mutual interest and mutual  
respect      Politics is a journey

We are the keepers of this  
legacy, guided by these  
principles once more, we can  
meet those new threats that  
demand even greater effort,  
even greater cooperation and  
understanding between nations.      Believers of the theory  
protect the theory from  
collapse

Rather, it has been the risk-  
takers, the doers, the makers of  
things -- some celebrated, but  
more often men and women  
obscure in their labor -- who  
have carried us up the long,  
rugged path towards prosperity  
and freedom.      Politics is a journey      Obligations are burdens

It has not been the path for the  
faint-hearted, for those who  
prefer leisure over work, or  
seek only the pleasures of  
riches and fame.      Politics is a journey

And so, to all other peoples  
and governments who are  
watching today, from the  
grandest capitals to the small  
village where my father was  
born: know that America is a  
friend of each nation and every  
man, woman and child who  
seeks a future of peace and  
dignity, and we are ready to  
lead once more.

America is a person

As we consider the road that  
unfolds before us, we  
remember with humble  
gratitude those brave  
Americans who, at this very  
hour, patrol far-off deserts and  
distant mountains.

Politics is a journey

The words have been spoken  
during rising tides of  
prosperity and the still waters  
of peace.

Easy events to deal with are smooth water      A powerful enduring directed force is a tide

The time has come to reaffirm  
our enduring spirit; to choose  
our better history; to carry  
forward that precious gift, that  
noble idea, passed on from  
generation to generation: the  
God-given promise that all are  
equal, all are free, and all  
deserve a chance to pursue  
their full measure of happiness.

Assigning obligation is  
giving possessions

We will harness the sun and  
the winds and the soil to fuel  
our cars and run our factories.

Interaction between  
progress and external events  
affecting progress is  
interaction between two  
moving individuals

And because we have tasted  
the bitter swill of civil war and  
segregation and emerged from  
that dark chapter stronger and  
more united, we cannot help  
but believe that the old hatreds  
shall someday pass; that the  
lines of tribe shall soon  
dissolve...

Perceiving is eating

To those leaders around the  
globe who seek to sow conflict  
or blame their society's ills on  
the West, know that your  
people will judge you on what  
you can build, not what you  
destroy.

Creation is cultivation

Nations are buildings

The state of our economy calls  
for action: bold and swift. And  
we will act not only to create  
new jobs but to lay a new  
foundation for growth.

Growth is a building

We'll begin to responsibly  
leave Iraq to its people and  
forge a hard-earned peace in  
Afghanistan.

Forces influencing beliefs  
are shaping forces

Starting today, we must pick  
ourselves up, dust ourselves  
off, and begin again the work  
of remaking America.

America is a building

This is the source of our  
confidence: the knowledge that  
God calls on us to shape an  
uncertain destiny.

Causation is control over an  
object relative to a  
possessor



We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus, and nonbelievers. We are shaped by every language and culture, drawn from every end of this Earth.	Causation is control over an object relative to a possessor
Homes have been lost, jobs shed, businesses shuttered.	Harm is lacking a needed possession

*Note.* Conceptual metaphors and metaphor type were retrieved from Lesz (2011) and edited using Lakoff et al.'s (1991) *Master Metaphor List* where deemed necessary.

### ***Donald Trump (2017)***

The first research question was aimed at gaining insight in how the use of metaphor types differed between the Democratic and Republican Democrats. Similarly to George W. Bush, and Barack Obama, the most frequent metaphor in Donald Trump's inauguration speech was the *journey* metaphor (6). The second most frequently used metaphor type was the *building* metaphor (5), followed by the *war* metaphor (4). The inaugural speech further contained the following conceptual metaphors: *place* (3), *person* (2), *sun* (2), *stealing* (2), *movement* (2), *object* (2), *big is good* (1), *prison* (1), *empty is bad* (1), *fluid* (1), *agriculture* (1), *trap* (1), *enemy* (1), *animal* (1).

### **Table 6**

#### ***Donald Trump's Inaugural Speech's Conceptual Metaphors***

Linguistic Realisation	Conceptual Metaphor (1)	Conceptual Metaphor (2)
We, the citizens of America, are now joined in a great national effort to rebuild our country.		The nation is a building
Together, we will determine the course of America and the world...		Politics is a journey

We will face challenges, we  
will confront hardships... Problems are enemies

...to carry out the orderly and  
peaceful transfer of power,.. Politics is war

...today we are not merely  
transferring power from one  
administration to another or  
from one party to another,  
but we are transferring power  
from Washington, DC, and  
giving it back to you, the  
people. Power is an object

For too long, a small group  
in our Nation's Capital has  
reaped the rewards of  
Government while the  
people have borne the cost. Politics is agriculture

Their victories have not been  
your victories; their triumphs  
have not been your  
triumphs... Politics is war

That all changes, starting  
right here and right now... Political attitude is a  
place

You came by the tens of  
millions to become part of a  
historic movement... Policy is a movement Politics is a journey

At the center of this  
movement is a crucial  
conviction: that a nation  
exists to serve its citizens. Policy is a movement

Mothers and children trapped  
in poverty in our inner cities;  
rusted-out factories scattered  
like tombstones across the Poverty is a trap

landscape of our Nation...

an education system, flush  
with cash, but which leaves  
our young and beautiful  
students deprived of all  
knowledge...

Money is a fluid

...the crime and the gangs  
and the drugs that have  
stolen too many lives and  
robbed our country of so  
much unrealized potential.

Killing is stealing

This American carnage stops  
right here and stops right  
now.

Political attitude is a  
place

... while America's  
infrastructure has fallen into  
disrepair and decay.

The nation is a building

We, assembled here today,  
are issuing a new decree to  
be heard in every city...

Politics is a journey

We must protect our borders  
from the ravages of other  
countries making our  
products, stealing our  
companies, and destroying  
our jobs.

Economic competition is  
stealing

Jobs are buildings

I will fight for you with  
every breath in my body...

Politics is war

America will start winning  
again, winning like never  
before.

Politics is a journey

... rebuilding our country  
with American hands and  
American labor.

The country is a building

We do not seek to impose  
our way of life on anyone,  
but rather to let it shine as an  
example...

America is a sun

...we will shine—for  
everyone to follow.

America is a sun

...which we will eradicate  
completely from the face of  
the Earth.

The earth is a person

At the bedrock of our  
politics...

Politics is a building

When America is united,  
America is totally  
unstoppable.

Politics is a journey

... we must think big and  
dream even bigger.

Big is good

The time for empty talk is  
over. Now arrives the hour of  
action.

Empty is bad

Time is a moving object

No challenge can match the  
heart and fight and spirit of  
America.

America is a person

Politics is war

We stand at the birth of a  
new millennium...

Political attitude is a  
place

...to free the Earth from the  
miseries of disease, and to  
harness the energies,  
industries, and technologies  
of tomorrow.

Disease is a prison

Energy is a (wild) animal

And your courage and  
goodness and love will  
forever guide us along the  
way. Politics is a journey

*Note.* Conceptual metaphors and metaphor type were retrieved from Almas & Daghir (2018) and edited using Lakoff et al.'s (1991) *Master Metaphor List* where deemed necessary.

### ***Joe Biden (2021)***

The final speech that was analysed to compare the use of metaphors by Democratic and Republican presidents was that of Joe Biden. The most frequently used metaphors here were the *war* metaphor (10) and the *journey* metaphor (9). Joe Biden used 55 conceptual metaphors in his inauguration speech. He further used the following metaphors: *object* (4), *possession* (4), *story* (3), *building* (3), *the country is a patient* (2), *well-being is up* (2), *challenges are projectiles being sent in some manner* (2), *person* (1), *democracy has monetary value* (1), *politics is a play* (1), *animal* (1), *linear scales are paths* (1), *down is bad* (1), *destroy* (1), *value is size* (1), *ideas are perceptions* (1), *container* (1), *accounting* (1), *bad is darkness* (1), *dislike is cold* (1), *problems are adversaries* (1), *being better in a dynamic situation is being farther along on a path* (1), *coherent is whole* (1).

### **Table 7**

#### ***Joe Biden's Inaugural Speech's Conceptual Metaphors***

Linguistic Realisation	Conceptual Metaphor (1)	Conceptual Metaphor (2)
This is democracy's day.	Democracy is a person	
We've learned again that democracy is precious, democracy is fragile.	Democracy is an object	Democracy has monetary value
... to carry out the peaceful transfer of power as we have for more than two	Politics is war	

centuries.

I know the resilience of our Constitution.      The constitution is an object

But the American story depends not on any one of us...      Politics is a play

Over the centuries, through storm and strife, in peace and in war, we've come so far. But we still have far to go.      Politics is a journey

...for we have much to do in this winter of peril and significant possibilities: much to repair, much to restore, much to heal, much to build, and much to gain.      The nation is a building      The nation is a patient

A once-in-a-century virus that silently stalks the country has taken as many lives in one year as America lost in all of World War II.      Harm is physical injury due to predation by vicious animals

Millions of jobs have been lost...      Being harmed is losing a needed possession

A cry for racial justice some 400 years in the making moves us      Linear scales are paths

And now, a rise of political extremism, White supremacy, domestic terrorism that we must confront and we will defeat.      Politics is war

...uniting to fight the foes  
we face: anger, resentment,  
and hatred; extremism,  
lawlessness, violence;  
disease, joblessness, and  
hopelessness. Politics is war

We can reward work and  
rebuild the middle class and  
make health care secure for  
all. Socio-economic groups  
are buildings

I know the forces that divide  
us are deep and they are  
real. Down is bad

Our history has been a  
constant struggle between  
the American ideal that we  
all are created equal and the  
harsh, ugly reality that  
racism, nativism, fear,  
demonization have long torn  
us apart. The battle is  
perennial. And victory is  
never assured. Politics is war

In each of these moments,  
enough of us—enough of  
us—have come together to  
carry all of us forward. Politics is a journey

History, faith, and reason  
show the way: the way of  
unity. Politics is a journey

This is our historic moment  
of crisis and challenge, and  
unity is the path forward. Politics is a journey

And so today, at this time,  
in this place, let's start Politics is a journey

afresh, all of us.

Politics doesn't have to be a raging fire destroying everything in its path.	Harm causes objects to be nonfunctional by destroying them.
--	---

Every disagreement doesn't have to be a cause for total war.	Politics is war
--	-----------------

And we must reject the culture in which facts themselves are manipulated and even manufactured.	Facts are objects
--	-------------------

To all those who supported our campaign, I am humbled by the faith you've placed in us.	Responsibilities are possessions
--	-------------------------------------

To all those who did not support us, let me say this: Hear me out as we move forward.	Politics is a journey
--	-----------------------

Take a measure of me and my heart.	Value is size
---------------------------------------	---------------

The right to dissent peaceably, within the guardrails of our Republic, is perhaps this Nation's greatest strength.	Politics is a journey
--	-----------------------

And I promise you, I will fight as hard for those who did not support me as for those who did.	Politics is war
---	-----------------



And each of us has a duty  
and a responsibility, as  
citizens, as Americans, and  
especially as leaders—  
leaders who have pledged to  
honor our Constitution and  
protect our Nation—to  
defend the truth and defeat  
the lies. Politics is war

Look, I understand that  
many of my fellow  
Americans view the future  
with fear and trepidation. Ideas are perceptions

We must end this uncivil  
war that pits red against  
blue, rural versus urban,  
conservative versus liberal Politics is war

We can do this if we open  
our souls instead of  
hardening our hearts, if we  
show a little tolerance and  
humility, and if we're  
willing to stand in the other  
person's shoes, as my mom Problems are locked  
would say, just for a containers for their  
moment. solutions

There is no accounting for  
what fate will deal you.  
Some days when you need a  
hand. There are other days  
when we're called to lend a Explaining the causation is  
hand. counting the factors

My fellow Americans, in  
the work ahead of us, we're  
going to need each other. Politics is a journey

We need all our strength to Bad is darkness Dislike is cold

persevere through this dark winter.

We will repair our alliances and engage with the world once again, not to meet yesterday's challenges, but today's and tomorrow's challenges.

Alliances are objects

Challenges are projectiles, which the sender conveys in some manner

So I ask you, let's say a silent prayer for those who have lost their lives, for those they left behind, and for our country.

Being harmed is losing a needed possession

Being better in a dynamic situation is being farther along on a path

We face an attack on our democracy and on truth, a raging virus, growing inequity, the sting of systemic racism, a climate in crisis, America's role in the world. Any one of these would be enough to challenge us in profound ways. But the fact is, we face them all at once, presenting this Nation with one of the gravest of responsibilities we've had.

Politics is war

Are we going to step up?

Well-being is up

Will we rise to the occasion, is the question.

Well-being is up

Will we master this rare and difficult hour? Will we meet our obligations and pass along a new and better world to our children? I believe we must; I'm sure you do as well. I believe we

Obligations are projectiles, which the sender conveys in some manner

Difficult subjects are adversaries

will.

And when we do, we will  
write the next great chapter  
in the history of the United  
States of America: the  
American story, a story that  
might sound something like  
a song that means a lot to  
me. It's called "American  
Anthem," and there's one  
verse that stands out, at least  
for me, and it goes like this: Politics is a story

...let us add our own work  
and prayers to the unfolding  
story of our great Nation. Politics is a story

If we do this, then when our  
days are through, our  
children and our children's  
children will say of us:  
"They gave their best. They  
did their duty. They healed  
a broken land." Properties are possessions The land is a patient

I will always level with you.  
I will defend the  
Constitution. I will defend  
our democracy. I will  
defend America. Politics is war

And together, we shall write  
an American story of hope,  
not fear; of unity, not  
division; of light, not  
darkness. A story of  
decency and dignity, love  
and healing, greatness and Politics is a story

goodness.

May this be the story that  
 guides us, the story that  
 inspires us, and the story  
 that tells ages yet to come  
 that we answered the call of  
 history, we met the moment;  
 democracy and hope, truth  
 and justice, did not die on  
 our watch, but thrived; that  
 America secured liberty at  
 home and stood once again  
 as a beacon to the world.  
 That is what we owe our  
 forebearers, one another,  
 and generations to follow.    Politics is a journey

So with purpose and resolve  
 we turn to those tasks of our  
 time, sustained by faith,  
 driven by conviction, and  
 devoted to one another and  
 the country we love with all  
 our hearts.                      Politics is a building                      Coherent is whole

## Discussion

### Research Question 1

To recapitulate the results of research question 1 that were discussed in the analysis ‘what kinds of metaphors are used by the Republican and the Democratic presidents and how do these compare?’, Bush jr., Obama, and Trump, all three used the *journey* metaphor the most frequently. Biden used the *journey* metaphor second most frequently, the *war* metaphor being his most frequently used metaphor. The *war* metaphor was Obama’s second most frequent metaphor, for Trump this was the *building* metaphor. Bush jr.’s second most frequently used metaphor was the *object* metaphor. This amounts to the *journey* metaphor having been used a total number of 36 times, the *war* metaphor having been used 23 times, the *object* metaphor having been used 16 times, and the *building* metaphor was used a total of 14 times. This begs the question: why were the *journey* and *war* metaphor the most frequently used metaphors? Are they the most effective in terms of rhetoric and persuasion? Are they the most conventionalised into regular speech? According to Cameron (2007), the latter is indeed the case; in the English language, *journey* metaphors are highly conventionalised and frequently occurring. They are specific archetypes of the more general ‘event-structure’, which typically consist of a ‘source-path-goal’ form (p. 207). According to McGlone (2007), novel metaphorical expressions and frequent ones are understood through different processes. When encountering a new type of metaphorical expression, multiple mappings are still available, making it more difficult to interpret the expression. The processes used to interpret any metaphorical expression changes as a function of its conventionality. The *war* metaphor is a “stock-expression”; an expression that can be understood directly and literally. Stock expressions such as “the argument was shot down” can be understood directly through conceptual mappings such as the *argument is war* metaphor, due to its highly conventionalised nature (p. 107). This relates back to Sopory and

Dillard's *resource matching* view, which proposed that metaphors are more persuasive compared to literal language if the balance between resources available to the interpreter and the needed number of resources is correct. When these highly conventionalised metaphors are employed, maximum elaboration and comprehension and thus increased persuasion occurs. And of course, when a metaphor is highly conventionalised, it may be difficult to exclude them from an argument; one may simply not even be aware of using a metaphor. We can therefore conclude that it is sensible that the *journey* and the *war* metaphor specifically were the most frequent; they are the most conventional and therefore the most persuasive, both in political and in non-political context.

The Democratic presidents used more different types of conceptual metaphors than the Republicans did; the Democrats used 33 different conceptual metaphors, whereas the Republican presidents only used 24 different types. It is unclear why the Democratic presidents used more different types of conceptual metaphors than the Republican presidents.

When comparing the use of conceptual metaphors between the presidents, one president in particular stood out: Obama used more higher complexity construction metaphors than the other presidents did, an example being a phrase where he combined a *journey* metaphor with a *comparison of states in a dynamic situation is comparison of distance*: "The success of our economy has always depended not just on the size of our gross domestic product, but on the reach of our prosperity; on the ability to extend opportunity to every willing heart - not out of charity, but because it is the surest route to our common good" (Obama, inaugural speech, 2009). Obama's speech containing more convoluted metaphors is not surprising: Obama is known for his exceptional rhetoric. Even though Obama, too, employed a speechwriter, the language he used in the books he wrote before going into politics is consistent with the language of his speeches. His speechwriter, Jon Favreau, a "self-declared rhetoric geek" (Leith, 2012, p. 219) once declared that he wrote

Obama's speeches in a way that matched Obama's style, and so, according to Obama himself, instead of Obama sounding like his speechwriter (which sometimes happens with presidents), Favreau made Obama sound like himself (Leith, 2012, p. 219).

## **Research Question 2**

To understand the rationale of how and why the most frequent metaphors in the speeches were used, the second research question, 'how do the used metaphors function in terms of strategic manoeuvring?', is answered below by providing a brief explanation of the metaphor type, followed by how they were employed in the inaugural addresses.

### ***Journey Metaphor***

*Journey* metaphors typically refer to predetermined objectives and create a mental image of how this objective may be reached, which makes them effective tools for inaugural speeches. Cibulskienė (2012) describes the *journey* metaphor as follows: "...journeys imply some type of planned progress and assume a conscious agent who will follow a fixed path towards an imagined goal. Journeys are inherently purposeful. It is this directionality that is important for political leaders who are conscious of the need to appear to have planned intentions" (p. 132). The main target of the *journey* metaphor involves change due to some causative effect that is interpreted as motion from one location to another, and control over the location from an outside force, allowing different kinds of structures to fit in this metaphor type (p. 132).

President Bush jr. used both a 'train trip' kind of *journey* metaphor: "though our Nation has sometimes halted and sometimes delayed, we must follow no other course", as well as a general kind of journey: "...after nearly 225 years, we have a long way yet to travel" and "We are bound by ideals that move us beyond our backgrounds," (G.W. Bush, inaugural speech, 2001), giving the audience a sense of control and direction. President Obama used the *journey* metaphor as an instrument to imagine a positive future: "let it be said by our

children's children that when we were tested, we refused to let this journey end, that we did not turn back nor did we falter”(Obama, inaugural speech, 2009). The *journey* metaphor in a context such as this one is especially powerful coming from Barack Obama, the first Black US president (Panukornthamrong, 2018, p. 48). Another instance of the *journey* metaphor in Obama’s speech is one where he chose to combine it with the *comparison of states in a dynamic situation is comparison of distance* metaphor: “The success of our economy has always depended not just on the size of our gross domestic product, but on the reach of our prosperity; on the ability to extend opportunity to every willing heart - not out of charity, but because it is the surest route to our common good” (Obama, inaugural speech, 2009). With the recent stock market crash in mind, the *journey* metaphor, as well as referring to the economy as a distance, made the rebuilding of the economy seem achievable, thus encouraging people to trust their new president’s plans. Another way how Obama employed the *journey* metaphor was by emphasising his wish for unity: “To the Muslim world, we seek a new way forward, based on mutual interest and mutual respect” (2009). This idea of unity is intertwined in the whole speech in several ways; by repeating the word ‘generation’ throughout the entire speech, Obama cleverly implied to the American people that they are a family, which he then extended by uniting himself with the voters: “We the People have remained faithful to the ideas of our forebearers [sic], and true to our founding documents” (Panukornthamrong, 2018, p. 18). President Trump invoked this idea of unity too, using the *journey* metaphor, albeit in a different way. He put emphasis on the power and winning that the journey would bring: “Together, we will determine the course of America and the world”, “When America is united, America is totally unstoppable,” “We, assembled here today, are issuing a new decree to be heard in every city,..” and “America will start winning again, winning like never before” (Trump, inaugural speech, 2017).



The *journey* metaphor, in short, induces the idea of the president having a goal and a plan to reach this goal. The *journey* metaphor allows for a comprehensive explanation of the president's intentions rather than using literal language or legalese, which would be incognisable for most people. Thus, by increasing comprehensibility, the *journey* metaphor increases persuasion (Sopory and Dillard, 2006, pp. 383-387), making the *journey* metaphor a valuable argumentative tool for inauguration speeches.

### ***Object Metaphor***

The *object* metaphor allows for a concrete image of an abstract concept, with a structure that is clear enough to define other concepts (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 118), thus increasing comprehensibility (Akuno et al., 2018, p. 43).

President Bush jr. employed the *object* metaphor cleverly to refer to abstract concepts such as 'ideals', 'trust', 'courage', 'belief', and 'power', allowing the audience to envision these concepts and feel a sense of control over them. President Obama employed the *object* metaphor in a similar way: "I stand here today humbled by the task before us, grateful for the trust you have bestowed, mindful of the sacrifices borne by our ancestors" (Obama, inaugural speech, 2009); receiving trust as if it were an object that was given to him by the American people. President Trump referred to 'power' as an object, and that he is "giving it [sic] back to you, the people", allowing the Americans who voted for Trump to feel like they are really the ones in power rather than the president. Pilyarchuk and Onysko further hypothesised that, due to its basic nature, and more importantly, due its high measure of conventionalisation, most of the times when Trump used the *object* metaphor, he did not do this consciously. Some exceptions, however, may be instances where he used the *object* metaphor to indicate a non-object as being a valuable object, because this illustrates him as a businessman; "We cannot afford to be so politically correct anymore" - a statement from his acceptance speech (Pilyarchuk & Onysko, 2018, p. 104). This is also a clear example of self-representation and

of polarisation between Trump and people who voted for him, and the former president(s) and their voters. President Biden did not use the *object* metaphor as often as the other presidents, and the one instance when he did use the *object* metaphor it was to accentuate the contrast between himself and former President Trump: “And we must reject the culture in which facts themselves are manipulated and even manufactured” (Biden, inaugural address, 2021). It is likely that this was aimed at Donald Trump, president of the US before Biden, and Biden’s former presidential opponent, as researchers from Cornell have concluded that President Trump has spread an enormous amount of misinformation about COVID-19 (Evanega et al., 2020).

### ***Building Metaphor***

Buildings depend on their outer shell and foundation, *building* metaphors are defined by their surface. Other metaphor types such as the *journey* metaphor are characterised by how their deepest parts need to be reached by first going through the basis in order to reach the hidden, deeper parts. For the *building* metaphor, however, the most basic parts of the argument are the deepest; the foundation and the shell, similar to a building. For example: “...to lay a new foundation for growth” (Obama, inaugural speech, 2009). The goal is growth, for which a foundation is necessary.

Donald Trump started his inaugural speech with a *building* metaphor: “We, the citizens of America, are now joined in a great national effort to rebuild our country” (Trump, inaugural speech, 2017). By comparing America to a building that needed rebuilding, he insinuated that the building had been broken down by an unnamed force, invoking the idea of unity of the audience. He did this again later in his speech: “... while America's infrastructure has fallen into disrepair and decay,” “and destroying our jobs,” “... rebuilding our country with American hands and American labor” (Trump, inaugural speech, 2017). It is only at the end of his speech that he used the *building* metaphor in a way that does not involve

destruction, but the idea of a building's structure: "At the bedrock of our politics..." (Trump, inaugural speech, 2017).

One of the things President Bush jr. is known for is his explicit wish to facilitate equal educational opportunities for every child, regardless of whether their parents are immigrants or not. He used a *building* metaphor to summarise his plans for the country: "I will work to build a single nation of justice and opportunity..." (G.W. Bush, inaugural speech, 2001). This also put emphasis on his own responsibility and almost compared his presidency to physical labor. President Obama also spoke about the nation as a building, while, in light of the recent economic crash, he also referred to abstract concepts as buildings: "... we will act not only to create new jobs but to lay a new foundation for growth" (Obama, inaugural speech, 2009), and President Biden, his speech being centred on unity, employed the *building* metaphor to highlight the importance of working together: "We can reward work and rebuild the middle class and make health care secure for all" (Biden, inaugural speech, 2021). Interestingly, in light of the CDA framework, the *building* metaphor stands out from the others in its role of positive self-representation.

### ***War Metaphor***

The political speech genre often employs metaphorical expressions in the form of the *politics is war* metaphor. War metaphors have framing properties and convey a sense of threat (Flusberg et al., 2018, p. 3), which makes them practical to use in light of van Dijk's Discourse Analysis as Ideology Analysis (1995), as it allows a clear 'us versus them' perspective.

Bush jr. applied the *war* metaphor to refer to reforms as well as allies and interests; "I ask you to seek a common good beyond your comfort, to defend needed reforms against easy attacks, to serve your Nation, beginning with your neighbor" and "We will defend our allies and our interests" (Bush, inaugural speech, 2001). The first is interesting in particular because

it is an indication of the former president's awareness that the policies he wanted to implement might receive backlash, and he nevertheless chose to emphasise that these reforms were necessary. In doing so, he showed leadership and that he was taking responsibility, but also emphasised the necessary unity of the voters by suggesting a possible 'us vs them' confrontation.

Trump employed the *war* metaphor to highlight certain realities and hide others in order to justify radical policy change, similar to what President Carter did when faced with the energy crisis. By comparing politics to war, the listener gets an idea of politics being all about strategies, attacking the opposing side, gaining ground, and winning or losing (Risdiyanto, 2016). To effectively employ the *war* metaphor, an external, hostile enemy is needed, emphasising an 'us versus them' situation, and the goal of the policy needs to be given top priority (in this case "making America great again") and people would have to make sacrifices: "I will fight for you with every breath in my body" (Trump, inaugural speech, 2017). This last quote also had the effect of depicting President Trump as a warrior (Pilyarchuk & Onysko, 2018, p. 108). The *war* metaphor has the power to define reality while justifying certain policies: after all, if there is no external threat, battle, and competing forces, there is no war to be won, (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, pp. 156-157) and these factors are exactly what Trump based his entire campaign on. Trump created an 'us vs them' feeling by first mentioning "a small group in our Nation's Capital" that would have benefited from certain policies while the citizens suffered from them, and then emphasised this by using the *war* metaphor: "Their victories have not been your victories; their triumphs have not been your triumphs", ending on a positive, uniting note: "No challenge can match the heart and fight and spirit of America" (Trump, Inaugural speech, 2017). President Trump's *war* metaphors were mostly directed inwards, towards the 'fixing' of the United States itself, but during President Obama's reign, the *war* metaphor had a different direction, namely outward:

“...for those who seek to advance their aims by inducing terror and slaughtering innocents, we say to you now that, "Our spirit is stronger and cannot be broken. You cannot outlast us, and we will defeat you”” (Obama, inaugural speech, 2009).

The war metaphor is also present in President Biden’s inaugural address. In the year prior to President Biden’s inauguration, the US experienced an enormous wave of protests concerning police brutality aimed at Black citizens, commonly referred to as the Black Lives Matter movement. Considering these protests, combined with the fact that President Biden’s running mate Vice President Kamala Harris is a Black and South Asian woman, it came as no surprise that President Biden’s speech contained several references to this issue, among which several *war* metaphors: “Our history has been a constant struggle between the American ideal that we all are created equal and the harsh, ugly reality that racism, nativism, fear, demonization have long torn us apart. The battle is perennial. And victory is never assured,” and “We face an attack on our democracy and on truth, a raging virus, growing inequity, the sting of systemic racism, a climate in crisis, America's role in the world” (Biden, inaugural speech, 2021). This could provide an explanation for why President Biden used more *war* metaphors than the other presidents (20% of the conceptual metaphors used by President Biden were *war* metaphors, whereas the *war* metaphor filled approximately 10% of the other three presidents’ metaphors); to show condemnation and distanciation from a specific ‘them’ group, while simultaneously showing support to the ‘us’ group. Additionally, President Biden used the *war* metaphor similarly to the other presidents; by announcing his patriotism by means of his intention to defend certain ideals: “I will defend the Constitution. I will defend our democracy. I will defend America” (Biden, inaugural speech, 2021).

What is interesting is that the US presidents had the same overall preference for the kind of conceptual metaphors they used. Most of the metaphors were fairly simple and all served the purpose of allowing the audience to relate to the speech, as well as add an emotive

character to the speech, which is in accordance with Van Stee's (2018, pp. 560-562) interpretation of the metaphor; increased understanding and increased emotion enhances persuasion, which means that the metaphors in the inaugural speeches were employed in an apt manner. In terms of strategic manoeuvring it was impossible to measure whether the rhetorical goal - the effectiveness of the arguments - or more specifically, the metaphors, was successful, as it is impossible to tell how many people 'agree' with a president after their inaugural address. We do see that the rhetorical goal was successful in some way by the fact that the objectives of the metaphors were understood. These inaugural speeches showed clearly that metaphors are both framing and reasoning devices, adding content to the arguments they belong to, and enhancing persuasiveness by contributing to the compelling construction of discussion moves, thus being successful strategic manoeuvres as defined by Pilgram & van Poppel (2021, p. 6).

As stated in the introduction, similar results were expected in terms of metaphor types and frequency. Contrary to what was expected, there was a difference in the number of metaphor types between the Democratic presidents and the Republican ones: Barack Obama and Joe Biden together used 33 different types of conceptual metaphors, whereas George W. Bush and Donald Trump combined only used 24 different metaphor types. It is unclear why this would be the case. It did become apparent that President Obama used more conceptual metaphors with complex structures. This is clearly idiosyncratic since it complies with the writing style of his books that were written prior to his political career.

Considering the total number of conceptual metaphors per inaugural speech, only Donald Trump really diverges in number: he only used 36 conceptual metaphors, which is six fewer than his fellow Republican President Bush, who used a total of 42 conceptual metaphors. Barack Obama used 45 conceptual metaphors, and Joe Biden 55. The differences in both the total number of conceptual metaphors per speech and the number of metaphor

types can be explained; the Democratic presidents had a much higher word count than the Republicans. This means that relatively, the Republicans may have actually used a similar or higher number of metaphors compared to the Democrats, considering the sizes of their inaugural speeches. It is not clear why there is such a difference in word count, however, one might speculate that Republicans may use fewer words in their inaugural addresses because the addresses are written for the voters, and according to PewResearch (2015), more college-graduates vote Democratic than Republican. A shorter speech may be less elaborate and therefore sometimes more clear than a lengthy speech. Still, these are merely speculations, as the sample size is too small to draw definitive conclusions.

### **Conclusion**

This study analysed the use of conceptual metaphors by four US presidents in their inaugural speeches and the persuasiveness of these metaphors as a rhetorical device. Similar results were expected in terms of number of metaphors and type of metaphors, however, there were differences, namely that the Democratic presidents used more different types of metaphors, but both the Democratic and the Republican presidents used a similar number of metaphors relative to the size of their speeches. The hypothesis that the Democrats would use more complex types of metaphors was true, however, this is mostly idiosyncratic; Barack Obama is known for having a distinct rhetoric style, and this showed in the results, whereas Joe Biden's metaphor types were not of an especially complex nature.

Metaphors are known to function both as framing devices as well as reasoning devices, enhancing persuasion of an argument due to their ability to add relatability and emotion to arguments (Van Stee, 2018). All four presidents had more or less the same preference for the types of metaphors they used most frequently, namely the *journey* metaphor and the *war* metaphor, followed by the *object* and the *building* metaphor. All of these have clear rhetorical goals that were met in the inaugural addresses. They were all used

as both framing devices as well as reasoning devices, adding to the persuasiveness of the speeches by strengthening the compelling construction of discussion moves, and adding content to their arguments (Pilgram & van Poppel, 2021, p. 6) Additionally, the metaphors were able to add an emotive character to the speeches and increase the relatability of the speeches for the audience, thus increasing understanding and adding to the persuasiveness of the speeches.

The *journey* and *war* metaphor having been used the most frequently, presumably due to their conventionalised nature, combined with the mere fact that all four inaugural speeches contained ample conceptual metaphors, prompts the question about the rhetorical functionality of metaphors in the political genre specifically.

Research about the persuasiveness of conceptual metaphors and the use of (conceptual) metaphors in the political register exists, but I have not been able to find research on whether the opinions or views of US citizens on their new president had changed in some way after the inaugural addresses. A follow-up analysis of US citizens' perception of presidents before and after the inaugural speech may help address this matter and contribute to more knowledge on the role of metaphors and other rhetorical tools in the political genre.



## References

### Primary Sources

Barack Obama, Inaugural Address Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/217053>

Donald J. Trump, Inaugural Address Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/320188>

George W. Bush, Inaugural Address Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/211268>

Joseph R. Biden, Inaugural Address Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/347806>

### Secondary Sources

- Al Mas, H., & Chasib Dagher, S. (2018). Conceptual Metaphors in Two Republicans' Inaugural Speeches: A Comparison. *مجلة ابحاث البصرة للعلوم الانسانية*, 43(2), 114-131.
- Akuno, L. Oloo, P., & Achieng' Lilian, M. (2018). THE OBJECT OF LOVE IS FOOD Conceptual Metaphor in Selected Dholuo Benga Music of 1970s and 2000s. *Linguistics and Literature Studies* 6(1). DOI: 10.13189/lls.2018.060106
- Biber, D., & Conrad, S. (2019). Register, Genre, and Style (2nd ed., Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics). *Cambridge: Cambridge University Press*. doi:10.1017/9781108686136
- Cameron, L. J. (2007). Patterns of metaphor use in reconciliation talk. *Discourse & Society*, 18(2), 197–222. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926507073376>
- Catalano, T., & Musolff, A. (2019). "Taking the shackles off": Metaphor and metonymy of migrant children and border officials in the U.S. *Metaphorik.de*, 29
- Cibulskienė, J. (2012). The development of the journey metaphor in political discourse: Time-specific changes. *Metaphor & the Social World*, 2(2), 131–153. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/10.1075/msw.2.2.01cib>
- Cienki, A. (2005). Researching conceptual metaphors that (may) underlie political discourse.
- De Landtsheer, C., De Vries, P., & Vertessen, D. (2008) Political Impression Management: How Metaphors, Sound Bites, Appearance Effectiveness, and Personality Traits Can Win Elections, *Journal of Political Marketing*, 7:3-4, 217-238, DOI: 10.1080/15377850802005083
- Evanega, S., Lynas, M., Adams, J., & Smolenyak, K. (2020). Coronavirus misinformation: quantifying sources and themes in the COVID-19 'infodemic'. The Cornell Alliance for Science, Department of Global Development, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 2  
Cision Global Insights, Ann Arbor, MI

- Flusberg, S.J., Matlock, T., & Thibodeau, P.H. (2018). War metaphors in public discourse, *Metaphor and Symbol*, 33:1, 1-18, DOI:  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10926488.2018.1407992>
- Gee, J., & Handford, M. (Eds.). (2012). *The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (1st ed.), chapter 14 by Biber. Routledge.  
<https://doi-org.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/10.4324/9780203809068>
- Greco, S., van Eemeren, F., & Snoeck Henkemans, F. (2018). Argumentation: Analysis and Evaluation. *Argumentation* 32, 151–153. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10503-017-9433-y>
- Jamil, N.S., Rashid, S., & Kasim, Z.M. (2019). The OBJECT Metaphor in the Conceptualisation of Cancer in Malay Women’s Narratives. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 8, 131-138.
- Kayam, O. (2017). A rhetorical change that changed reality; Rouhani vs. Ahmadinejad at the UN. *Language and Dialogue Vol. 7:2*, pp. 163–188.  
<https://doi.org/10.1075/ld.7.2.02kay>
- Kövecses, Z. (2010). Metaphor and Culture. *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae: Philologica*, 2, 197-220.
- Lakoff, G. (1995). Metaphor, Morality, and Politics, Or, Why Conservatives Have Left Liberals in the Dust. *Social Research*, 62(2), 177-214. Retrieved from  
<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7vp15113>
- Lakoff, G., Espenson, J., & Schwartz, A. (1991). The master metaphor list. Draft 2nd ed. Technical Report, University of California at Berkeley.
- Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Leith, S. (2012). “You talkin’ to me?” Rhetoric from Aristotle to Obama. Profile Books Ltd.

Lesz, B. (2011). To shape the world for the better: an analysis of metaphors in the speeches of Barack Obama.

Mcglone, Matthew. (2007). What Is the Explanatory Value of a Conceptual Metaphor? *Language & Communication*. 27. 109-126. 10.1016/j.langcom.2006.02.016.

O'Brien, G. (2003, 01). Indigestible Food, conquering hordes, and waste materials: Metaphors of immigrants and the early immigration restriction debate in the United States. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 18(1), 33–47. 10.1207/S15327868MS1801\_3

A Deep Dive Into Party Affiliation (2015, April 7). *Pew Research Center*, from:

<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2015/04/07/a-deep-dive-into-party-affiliation/>

Panukornthamrong, C. (2018). FIGURES OF SPEECH USED IN PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA'S ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN SPEECHES. (Thesis)

Pilgram, R. & Poppel, L. (2021). The Strategic Use of Metaphor in Argumentation. 10.1007/978-3-030-52907-9\_10.

Pilyarchuk, K. & Onysko, A. (2018). Conceptual Metaphors in Donald Trump's Political Speeches: Framing his Topics and (Self-)Constructing his Persona. *Colloquium: New Philologies*. 3. 98-156. 10.23963/cnp.2018.3.2.5.

Powell, J. A. (2017, November 8). Us vs them: the sinister techniques of 'Othering' - and how to avoid them. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2017/nov/08/us-vs-them-the-sinister-techniques-of-othering-and-how-to-avoid-them>

Pragglejaz Group (2007) MIP: A Method for Identifying Metaphorically Used Words in Discourse, *Metaphor and Symbol*, 22:1, 1-39, DOI: 10.1080/10926480709336752

Risdianto, F. (2016). The Use of Metaphor in Barack Obama's Inauguration Speech. *Language Circle: Journal of Language and Literature*, X/2.

Ritchie, L. D. (2013). *Metaphor (Key topics in semantics and pragmatics)*. Cambridge; New York : Cambridge University Press. - chapter 9 specifically

- Ritchie, L. D., Feliciano, A., & Sparks, A. (2018). Rhetorical confinement, contrasting metaphors, and cultural polarities: "Yes we can" meets "Carnage in the cities." *Metaphor and the Social World*, 8(2), 247–266. 10.1075/msw.17014.rit
- Sopory, P., & Dillard, J. (2006). The Persuasive Effects of Metaphor: A Meta-Analysis. *Human Communication Research*. 28. 382 - 419.  
10.1111/j.1468-2958.2002.tb00813.x.
- Spriggs, M. (2020). A STORY OF 'US VS. THEM': A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF BLAME TACTICS IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGN SPEECHES. Hofstra University. (Thesis)
- Steen GJ., Reijnierse WG., Burgers C. (2014). When Do Natural Language Metaphors Influence Reasoning? A Follow-Up Study to Thibodeau and Boroditsky (2013). *PLoS ONE* 9(12): e113536. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0113536>
- The Red Scare; Canada searches for communists during the height of Cold War tensions.* (n.d.). CBC.  
<https://www.cbc.ca/history/EPISCONTENTSE1EP15CH1PA2LE.html>
- Van Stee, S. (2018) Meta-Analysis of the Persuasive Effects of Metaphorical vs. Literal Messages, *Communication Studies*, 69:5, 545-566, DOI: 10.1080/10510974.2018.1457553
- Van Dijk, T.A., (1995). Discourse Analysis as Ideology Analysis. In *Language and Peace* (1). Routledge.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (2001) 'Multidisciplinary CDA: A Plea for Diversity', in Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (eds) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, pp. 95–120. London: Sage.

- Warell, P. (2020). Metaphors of populists – A cognitive linguistic study of conceptual metaphors in political speeches by Donald J. Trump and Nigel Farage (Dissertation). Retrieved from <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:umu:diva-171752>
- Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (Eds.) (2001). Methods of critical discourse analysis. SAGE Publications Ltd, <https://www.doi.org/10.4135/9780857028020>
- Wilders, G. [@geertwilderspvv]. (2015, 22 September). *Een tsunami van 4200 asielzoekers per week in NL en Rutte tekent nog een keer voor 7000 extra daarbovenop*[tweet]. Twitter.com. <https://twitter.com/geertwilderspvv/status/646415844533256193>

## Appendix A

### President G.W. Bush's Inaugural Speech

Thank you, all. Chief Justice Rehnquist, President Carter, President Bush, President Clinton, distinguished guests, and my fellow citizens. The peaceful transfer of authority is rare in history, yet common in our country. With a simple oath, we affirm old traditions and make new beginnings.

As I begin, I thank President Clinton for his service to our Nation, and I thank Vice President Gore for a contest conducted with spirit and ended with grace.

I am honored and humbled to stand here where so many of America's leaders have come before me, and so many will follow. We have a place, all of us, in a long story, a story we continue but whose end we will not see. It is a story of a new world that became a friend and liberator of the old, the story of a slaveholding society that became a servant of freedom, the story of a power that went into the world to protect but not possess, to defend but not to conquer.

It is the American story, a story of flawed and fallible people united across the generations by grand and enduring ideals. The grandest of these ideals is an unfolding American promise that everyone belongs, that everyone deserves a chance, that no insignificant person was ever born.

Americans are called to enact this promise in our lives and in our laws. And though our Nation has sometimes halted and sometimes delayed, we must follow no other course.

Through much of the last century, America's faith in freedom and democracy was a rock in a raging sea. Now it is a seed upon the wind, taking root in many nations. Our democratic faith is more than the creed of our country. It is the inborn hope of our humanity, an ideal we carry but do not own, a trust we bear and pass along. Even after nearly 225 years, we have a long way yet to travel.

While many of our citizens prosper, others doubt the promise, even the justice of our own country. The ambitions of some Americans are limited by failing schools and hidden prejudice and the circumstances of their birth. And sometimes our differences run so deep, it seems we share a continent but not a country. We do not accept this, and we will not allow it. Our unity, our Union, is a serious work of leaders and citizens and every generation. And this is my solemn pledge: I will work to build a single nation of justice and opportunity. I know this is in our reach because we are guided by a power larger than ourselves, who creates us equal, in His image, and we are confident in principles that unite and lead us onward.

America has never been united by blood or birth or soil. We are bound by ideals that move us beyond our backgrounds, lift us above our interests, and teach us what it means to be citizens. Every child must be taught these principles. Every citizen must uphold them. And every immigrant, by embracing these ideals, makes our country more, not less, American.

Today we affirm a new commitment to live out our Nation's promise through civility, courage, compassion, and character. America at its best matches a commitment to principle with a concern for civility. A civil society demands from each of us good will and respect, fair dealing and forgiveness.

Some seem to believe that our politics can afford to be petty because in a time of peace the stakes of our debates appear small. But the stakes for America are never small. If our country does not lead the cause of freedom, it will not be led. If we do not turn the hearts of children toward knowledge and character, we will lose their gifts and undermine their idealism. If we permit our economy to drift and decline, the vulnerable will suffer most.

We must live up to the calling we share. Civility is not a tactic or a sentiment; it is the determined choice of trust over cynicism, of community over chaos. And this commitment, if we keep it, is a way to shared accomplishment.



America at its best is also courageous. Our national courage has been clear in times of depression and war, when defeating common dangers defined our common good. Now we must choose if the example of our fathers and mothers will inspire us or condemn us. We must show courage in a time of blessing by confronting problems instead of passing them on to future generations.

Together we will reclaim America's schools before ignorance and apathy claim more young lives. We will reform Social Security and Medicare, sparing our children from struggles we have the power to prevent. And we will reduce taxes to recover the momentum of our economy and reward the effort and enterprise of working Americans.

We will build our defenses beyond challenge, lest weakness invite challenge. We will confront weapons of mass destruction, so that a new century is spared new horrors. The enemies of liberty and our country should make no mistake: America remains engaged in the world, by history and by choice, shaping a balance of power that favors freedom.

We will defend our allies and our interests. We will show purpose without arrogance. We will meet aggression and bad faith with resolve and strength. And to all nations, we will speak for the values that gave our Nation birth.

America at its best is compassionate. In the quiet of American conscience, we know that deep, persistent poverty is unworthy of our Nation's promise. And whatever our views of its cause, we can agree that children at risk are not at fault.

Abandonment and abuse are not acts of God; they are failures of love. And the proliferation of prisons, however necessary, is no substitute for hope and order in our souls. Where there is suffering, there is duty. Americans in need are not strangers; they are citizens—not problems but priorities. And all of us are diminished when any are hopeless.

Government has great responsibilities for public safety and public health, for civil rights and common schools. Yet, compassion is the work of a nation, not just a government. And some

needs and hurts are so deep they will only respond to a mentor's touch or a pastor's prayer.

Church and charity, synagogue and mosque lend our communities their humanity, and they will have an honored place in our plans and in our laws.

Many in our country do not know the pain of poverty. But we can listen to those who do. And I can pledge our Nation to a goal: When we see that wounded traveler on the road to Jericho, we will not pass to the other side.

America at its best is a place where personal responsibility is valued and expected.

Encouraging responsibility is not a search for scapegoats; it is a call to conscience. And though it requires sacrifice, it brings a deeper fulfillment. We find the fullness of life not only in options but in commitments. And we find that children and community are the commitments that set us free.

Our public interest depends on private character, on civic duty and family bonds and basic fairness, on uncounted, unhonored acts of decency, which give direction to our freedom.

Sometimes in life we're called to do great things. But as a saint of our times has said, "Every day we are called to do small things with great love." The most important tasks of a democracy are done by everyone.

I will live and lead by these principles: to advance my convictions with civility, to serve the public interest with courage, to speak for greater justice and compassion, to call for responsibility and try to live it, as well. In all these ways, I will bring the values of our history to the care of our times.

What you do is as important as anything Government does. I ask you to seek a common good beyond your comfort, to defend needed reforms against easy attacks, to serve your Nation, beginning with your neighbor. I ask you to be citizens: Citizens, not spectators; citizens, not subjects; responsible citizens building communities of service and a nation of character.

Americans are generous and strong and decent, not because we believe in ourselves but because we hold beliefs beyond ourselves. When this spirit of citizenship is missing, no Government program can replace it. When this spirit is present, no wrong can stand against it. After the Declaration of Independence was signed, Virginia statesman John Page wrote to Thomas Jefferson, "We know the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. Do you not think an angel rides in the whirlwind and directs this storm?"

Much time has passed since Jefferson arrived for his inauguration. The years and changes accumulate, but the themes of this day, he would know: our Nation's grand story of courage and its simple dream of dignity.

We are not this story's author, who fills time and eternity with his purpose. Yet, his purpose is achieved in our duty. And our duty is fulfilled in service to one another. Never tiring, never yielding, never finishing, we renew that purpose today, to make our country more just and generous, to affirm the dignity of our lives and every life. This work continues, the story goes on, and an angel still rides in the whirlwind and directs this storm.

God bless you all, and God bless America.

### **Appendix B**

#### President Obama's Inaugural Speech

My fellow citizens, I stand here today humbled by the task before us, grateful for the trust you have bestowed, mindful of the sacrifices borne by our ancestors. I thank President Bush for his service to our Nation, as well as the generosity and cooperation he has shown throughout this transition.

Forty-four Americans have now taken the Presidential oath. The words have been spoken during rising tides of prosperity and the still waters of peace. Yet every so often, the oath is taken amidst gathering clouds and raging storms. At these moments, America has carried on

not simply because of the skill or vision of those in high office, but because we the people have remained faithful to the ideals of our forebears and true to our founding documents.

So it has been; so it must be with this generation of Americans.

That we are in the midst of crisis is now well understood. Our Nation is at war against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred. Our economy is badly weakened, a consequence of greed and irresponsibility on the part of some, but also our collective failure to make hard choices and prepare the Nation for a new age. Homes have been lost, jobs shed, businesses shuttered. Our health care is too costly. Our schools fail too many. And each day brings further evidence that the ways we use energy strengthen our adversaries and threaten our planet.

These are the indicators of crisis, subject to data and statistics. Less measurable but no less profound is a sapping of confidence across our land, a nagging fear that America's decline is inevitable, that the next generation must lower its sights. Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real. They are serious, and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this, America: They will be met.

On this day, we gather because we have chosen hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord. On this day, we come to proclaim an end to the petty grievances and false promises, the recriminations and worn-out dogmas that for far too long have strangled our politics.

We remain a young nation, but in the words of Scripture, the time has come to set aside childish things. The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit, to choose our better history, to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness.

In reaffirming the greatness of our Nation, we understand that greatness is never a given. It must be earned. Our journey has never been one of shortcuts or settling for less. It has not been the path for the fainthearted, for those who prefer leisure over work or seek only the pleasures of riches and fame. Rather, it has been the risk-takers, the doers, the makers of things--some celebrated, but more often men and women obscure in their labor--who have carried us up the long, rugged path toward prosperity and freedom.

For us, they packed up their few worldly possessions and traveled across oceans in search of a new life. For us, they toiled in sweatshops and settled the West, endured the lash of the whip, and plowed the hard Earth. For us, they fought and died in places like Concord and Gettysburg, Normandy and Khe Sanh.

Time and again, these men and women struggled and sacrificed and worked 'til their hands were raw so that we might live a better life. They saw America as bigger than the sum of our individual ambitions, greater than all the differences of birth or wealth or faction.

This is the journey we continue today. We remain the most prosperous, powerful nation on Earth. Our workers are no less productive than when this crisis began. Our minds are no less inventive. Our goods and services no less needed than they were last week or last month or last year. Our capacity remains undiminished. But our time of standing pat, of protecting narrow interests and putting off unpleasant decisions, that time has surely passed. Starting today, we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of remaking America.

For everywhere we look, there is work to be done. The state of the economy calls for action, bold and swift, and we will act not only to create new jobs but to lay a new foundation for growth. We will build the roads and bridges, the electric grids and digital lines that feed our commerce and bind us together. We will restore science to its rightful place and wield technology's wonders to raise health care's quality and lower its cost. We will harness the sun

and the winds and the soil to fuel our cars and run our factories. And we will transform our schools and colleges and universities to meet the demands of a new age. All this we can do. All this we will do.

Now, there are some who question the scale of our ambitions, who suggest that our system cannot tolerate too many big plans. Their memories are short, for they have forgotten what this country has already done, what free men and women can achieve when imagination is joined to common purpose and necessity to courage.

What the cynics fail to understand is that the ground has shifted beneath them, that the stale political arguments that have consumed us for so long no longer apply. The question we ask today is not whether our Government is too big or too small, but whether it works; whether it helps families find jobs at a decent wage, care they can afford, a retirement that is dignified. Where the answer is yes, we intend to move forward. Where the answer is no, programs will end. And those of us who manage the public's dollars will be held to account to spend wisely, reform bad habits, and do our business in the light of day, because only then can we restore the vital trust between a people and their government.

Nor is the question before us whether the market is a force for good or ill. Its power to generate wealth and expand freedom is unmatched. But this crisis has reminded us that without a watchful eye, the market can spin out of control. The Nation cannot prosper long when it favors only the prosperous. The success of our economy has always depended not just on the size of our gross domestic product, but on the reach of our prosperity, on our ability to extend opportunity to every willing heart, not out of charity, but because it is the surest route to our common good.

As for our common defense, we reject as false the choice between our safety and our ideals. Our Founding Fathers, faced with perils that we can scarcely imagine, drafted a charter to assure the rule of law and the rights of man, a charter expanded by the blood of generations.

Those ideals still light the world, and we will not give them up for expedience's sake. And so to all the other peoples and governments who are watching today, from the grandest capitals to the small village where my father was born, know that America is a friend of each nation and every man, woman, and child who seeks a future of peace and dignity, and we are ready to lead once more.

Recall that earlier generations faced down fascism and communism not just with missiles and tanks but with sturdy alliances and enduring convictions. They understood that our power alone cannot protect us, nor does it entitle us to do as we please. Instead, they knew that our power grows through its prudent use. Our security emanates from the justness of our cause, the force of our example, the tempering qualities of humility and restraint.

We are the keepers of this legacy. Guided by these principles once more, we can meet those new threats that demand even greater effort, even greater cooperation and understanding between nations. We will begin to responsibly leave Iraq to its people and forge a hard-earned peace in Afghanistan. With old friends and former foes, we will work tirelessly to lessen the nuclear threat and roll back the specter of a warming planet. We will not apologize for our way of life, nor will we waver in its defense. And for those who seek to advance their aims by inducing terror and slaughtering innocents, we say to you now that our spirit is stronger and cannot be broken. You cannot outlast us, and we will defeat you.

For we know that our patchwork heritage is a strength, not a weakness. We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus and nonbelievers. We are shaped by every language and culture, drawn from every end of this Earth. And because we have tasted the bitter swill of civil war and segregation and emerged from that dark chapter stronger and more united, we cannot help but believe that the old hatreds shall someday pass, that the lines of tribe shall soon dissolve; that as the world grows smaller, our common humanity shall reveal itself, and that America must play its role in ushering in a new era of peace.

To the Muslim world, we seek a new way forward based on mutual interest and mutual respect. To those leaders around the globe who seek to sow conflict or blame their society's ills on the West, know that your people will judge you on what you can build, not what you destroy. To those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent, know that you are on the wrong side of history, but that we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist.

To the people of poor nations, we pledge to work alongside you to make your farms flourish and let clean waters flow, to nourish starved bodies and feed hungry minds. And to those nations like ours that enjoy relative plenty, we say we can no longer afford indifference to suffering outside our borders, nor can we consume the world's resources without regard to effect, for the world has changed, and we must change with it.

As we consider the road that unfolds before us, we remember with humble gratitude those brave Americans who, at this very hour, patrol far-off deserts and distant mountains. They have something to tell us today, just as the fallen heroes who lie in Arlington whisper through the ages. We honor them not only because they are guardians of our liberty, but because they embody the spirit of service, a willingness to find meaning in something greater than themselves. And yet at this moment, a moment that will define a generation, it is precisely this spirit that must inhabit us all.

For as much as Government can do and must do, it is ultimately the faith and determination of the American people upon which this Nation relies. It is the kindness to take in a stranger when the levees break, the selflessness of workers who would rather cut their hours than see a friend lose their job, which sees us through our darkest hours. It is the firefighter's courage to storm a stairway filled with smoke, but also a parent's willingness to nurture a child, that finally decides our fate.



Our challenges may be new. The instruments with which we meet them may be new. But those values upon which our success depends--honesty and hard work, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity, loyalty and patriotism--these things are old. These things are true. They have been the quiet force of progress throughout our history. What is demanded then is a return to these truths. What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility, a recognition on the part of every American that we have duties to ourselves, our Nation, and the world. Duties that we do not grudgingly accept but, rather, seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of our character, than giving our all to a difficult task.

This is the price and the promise of citizenship. This is the source of our confidence, the knowledge that God calls on us to shape an uncertain destiny. This is the meaning of our liberty and our creed; why men and women and children of every race and every faith can join in celebration across this magnificent Mall, and why a man whose father less than 60 years ago might not have been served at a local restaurant can now stand before you to take a most sacred oath.

So let us mark this day with remembrance of who we are and how far we have traveled. In the year of America's birth, in the coldest of months, a small band of patriots huddled by dying campfires on the shores of an icy river. The Capital was abandoned. The enemy was advancing. The snow was stained with blood. At a moment when the outcome of our Revolution was most in doubt, the Father of our Nation ordered these words be read to the people:

"Let it be told to the future world . . . that in the depth of winter, when nothing but hope and virtue could survive . . . that the city and the country, alarmed at one common danger, came forth to meet [it]."

America, in the face of our common dangers, in this winter of our hardship, let us remember these timeless words. With hope and virtue, let us brave once more the icy currents and endure what storms may come. Let it be said by our children's children that when we were tested, we refused to let this journey end; that we did not turn back, nor did we falter. And with eyes fixed on the horizon and God's grace upon us, we carried forth that great gift of freedom and delivered it safely to future generations.

Thank you. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

### **Appendix C**

#### President Trump's Inaugural Speech

Chief Justice Roberts, President Carter, President Clinton, President Bush, President Obama, fellow Americans, and people of the world: Thank you.

We, the citizens of America, are now joined in a great national effort to rebuild our country and restore its promise for all of our people. Together, we will determine the course of America and the world for many, many years to come. We will face challenges, we will confront hardships, but we will get the job done.

Every 4 years, we gather on these steps to carry out the orderly and peaceful transfer of power, and we are grateful to President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama for their gracious aid throughout this transition. They have been magnificent. Thank you.

Today's ceremony, however, has very special meaning. Because today we are not merely transferring power from one administration to another or from one party to another, but we are transferring power from Washington, DC, and giving it back to you, the people.

For too long, a small group in our Nation's Capital has reaped the rewards of Government while the people have borne the cost. Washington flourished, but the people did not share in its wealth. Politicians prospered, but the jobs left, and the factories closed. The establishment protected itself, but not the citizens of our country. Their victories have not been your

victories; their triumphs have not been your triumphs; and while they celebrated in our Nation's Capital, there was little to celebrate for struggling families all across our land.

That all changes, starting right here and right now, because this moment is your moment: It belongs to you. It belongs to everyone gathered here today and everyone watching all across America. This is your day. This is your celebration. And this, the United States of America, is your country.

What truly matters is not which party controls our Government, but whether our Government is controlled by the people. January 20, 2017, will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this Nation again. The forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer. Everyone is listening to you now.

You came by the tens of millions to become part of a historic movement the likes of which the world has never seen before. At the center of this movement is a crucial conviction: that a nation exists to serve its citizens. Americans want great schools for their children, safe neighborhoods for their families, and good jobs for themselves. These are just and reasonable demands of righteous people and a righteous public.

But for too many of our citizens, a different reality exists: Mothers and children trapped in poverty in our inner cities; rusted-out factories scattered like tombstones across the landscape of our Nation; an education system, flush with cash, but which leaves our young and beautiful students deprived of all knowledge; and the crime and the gangs and the drugs that have stolen too many lives and robbed our country of so much unrealized potential.

This American carnage stops right here and stops right now. We are one Nation, and their pain is our pain, their dreams are our dreams, and their success will be our success. We share one heart, one home, and one glorious destiny.

The oath of office I take today is an oath of allegiance to all Americans.

For many decades, we've enriched foreign industry at the expense of American industry, subsidized the armies of other countries while allowing for the very sad depletion of our military. We've defended other nations' borders while refusing to defend our own and spent trillions and trillions of dollars overseas while America's infrastructure has fallen into disrepair and decay. We've made other countries rich while the wealth, strength, and confidence of our country has dissipated over the horizon.

One by one, the factories shuttered and left our shores, with not even a thought about the millions and millions of American workers that were left behind. The wealth of our middle class has been ripped from their homes and then redistributed all across the world.

But that is the past. And now we are looking only to the future.

We, assembled here today, are issuing a new decree to be heard in every city, in every foreign capital, and in every hall of power. From this day forward, a new vision will govern our land.

From this day forward, it's going to be only America first. America first.

Every decision on trade, on taxes, on immigration, on foreign affairs, will be made to benefit American workers and American families.

We must protect our borders from the ravages of other countries making our products, stealing our companies, and destroying our jobs. Protection will lead to great prosperity and strength. I will fight for you with every breath in my body, and I will never, ever let you down.

America will start winning again, winning like never before. We will bring back our jobs. We will bring back our borders. We will bring back our wealth. And we will bring back our dreams.

We will build new roads and highways and bridges and airports and tunnels and railways all across our wonderful Nation.

We will get our people off of welfare and back to work, rebuilding our country with American hands and American labor. We will follow two simple rules: Buy American and hire American.

We will seek friendship and good will with the nations of the world, but we do so with the understanding that it is the right of all nations to put their own interests first. We do not seek to impose our way of life on anyone, but rather to let it shine as an example—we will shine—for everyone to follow.

We will reinforce old alliances and form new ones and unite the civilized world against radical Islamic terrorism, which we will eradicate completely from the face of the Earth. At the bedrock of our politics will be a total allegiance to the United States of America, and through our loyalty to our country, we will rediscover our loyalty to each other. When you open your heart to patriotism, there is no room for prejudice. The Bible tells us, "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity." We must speak our minds openly, debate our disagreements honestly, but always pursue solidarity. When America is united, America is totally unstoppable. There should be no fear: We are protected, and we will always be protected. We will be protected by the great men and women of our military and law enforcement, and most importantly, we will be protected by God.

Finally, we must think big and dream even bigger. In America, we understand that a nation is only living as long as it is striving.

We will no longer accept politicians who are all talk and no action, constantly complaining, but never doing anything about it. The time for empty talk is over. Now arrives the hour of action.

Do not allow anyone to tell you that it cannot be done. No challenge can match the heart and fight and spirit of America. We will not fail. Our country will thrive and prosper again.

We stand at the birth of a new millennium, ready to unlock the mysteries of space, to free the Earth from the miseries of disease, and to harness the energies, industries, and technologies of tomorrow. A new national pride will stir our souls, lift our sights, and heal our divisions. It's time to remember that old wisdom our soldiers will never forget: that whether we are Black or Brown or White, we all bleed the same red blood of patriots, we all enjoy the same glorious freedoms, and we all salute the same great American flag.

And whether a child is born in the urban sprawl of Detroit or the windswept plains of Nebraska, they look up at the same night sky, they fill their heart with the same dreams, and they are infused with the breath of life by the same almighty Creator.

So to all Americans in every city near and far, small and large, from mountain to mountain, from ocean to ocean, hear these words: You will never be ignored again. Your voice, your hopes, and your dreams will define our American destiny. And your courage and goodness and love will forever guide us along the way.

Together, we will make America strong again. We will make America wealthy again. We will make America proud again. We will make America safe again.

And, yes, together, we will make America great again. Thank you. God bless you, and God bless America. Thank you. God bless America.

## **Appendix D**

### President Biden's Inaugural Speech

Chief Justice Roberts, Vice President Harris, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Vice President Pence, and my distinguished guests, and my fellow Americans: This is America's day. This is democracy's day, a day of history and hope, of renewal and resolve. Through a crucible for the ages America has been tested anew, and America has risen to the challenge.

Today we celebrate the triumph not of a candidate, but of a cause, the cause of democracy. The people—the will of the people has been heard, and the will of the people has been heeded. We've learned again that democracy is precious, democracy is fragile. And at this hour, my friends, democracy has prevailed.

So now, on this hallowed ground where just a few days ago violence sought to shake the Capitol's very foundation, we come together as one Nation under God, indivisible, to carry out the peaceful transfer of power as we have for more than two centuries. As we look ahead in our uniquely American way—restless, bold, optimistic—and set our sights on the Nation we know we can be and we must be, I thank my predecessors of both parties for their presence here today. I thank them from the bottom of my heart. And I know the resilience of our Constitution and the strength, the strength of our Nation, as does President Carter, who I spoke with last night, who cannot be with us today, but whom we salute for his lifetime of service.

I have just taken the sacred oath each of these patriots have taken, the oath first sworn by George Washington. But the American story depends not on any one of us, not on some of us, but on all of us, on "We the People," who seek a more perfect Union.

This is a great Nation; we are good people. Over the centuries, through storm and strife, in peace and in war, we've come so far. But we still have far to go. We'll press forward with speed and urgency, for we have much to do in this winter of peril and significant possibilities: much to repair, much to restore, much to heal, much to build, and much to gain.

Few people in our Nation's history have been more challenged or found a time more challenging or difficult than the time we're in now. A once-in-a-century virus that silently stalks the country has taken as many lives in one year as America lost in all of World War II. Millions of jobs have been lost; hundreds of thousands of businesses closed. A cry for racial justice some 400 years in the making moves us. The dream of justice for all will be deferred

no longer. A cry for survival comes from the planet itself, a cry that can't be any more desperate or any more clear. And now, a rise of political extremism, White supremacy, domestic terrorism that we must confront and we will defeat.

To overcome these challenges—to restore the soul and secure the future of America—requires so much more than words. It requires the most elusive of all things in a democracy: unity. Unity.

In another January on New Year's Day in 1863, Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. When he put pen to paper, the President said, and I quote, "If my name ever goes down into history it will be for this act, and my whole soul is in it." My whole soul is in it.

Today, on this January day, my whole soul is in this: bringing America together, uniting our people, uniting our Nation. And I ask every American to join me in this cause: uniting to fight the foes we face: anger, resentment, and hatred; extremism, lawlessness, violence; disease, joblessness, and hopelessness.

With unity we can do great things, important things. We can right wrongs. We can put people to work in good jobs. We can teach our children in safe schools. We can overcome the deadly virus. We can reward work and rebuild the middle class and make health care secure for all. We can deliver racial justice, and we can make America, once again, the leading force for good in the world.

I know speaking of unity can sound to some like a foolish fantasy these days. I know the forces that divide us are deep and they are real. But I also know they are not new. Our history has been a constant struggle between the American ideal that we all are created equal and the harsh, ugly reality that racism, nativism, fear, demonization have long torn us apart. The battle is perennial. And victory is never assured.



Through the Civil War, the Great Depression, World War, 9/11, through struggle, sacrifice, and setbacks, our "better angels" have always prevailed. In each of these moments, enough of us—enough of us—have come together to carry all of us forward. And we can do that now. History, faith, and reason show the way: the way of unity.

We can see each other not as adversaries, but as neighbors. We can treat each other with dignity and respect. We can join forces, stop the shouting, and lower the temperature. For without unity, there is no peace, only bitterness and fury. No progress, only exhausting outrage. No nation, only a state of chaos.

This is our historic moment of crisis and challenge, and unity is the path forward. And we must meet this moment as the United States of America. If we do that, I guarantee you, we will not fail. We have never, ever, ever, ever failed in America when we have acted together. And so today, at this time, in this place, let's start afresh, all of us. Let's begin to listen to one another, hear one another, see one another, show respect to one another. Politics doesn't have to be a raging fire destroying everything in its path. Every disagreement doesn't have to be a cause for total war. And we must reject the culture in which facts themselves are manipulated and even manufactured.

My fellow Americans, we have to be different than this. America has to be better than this. And I believe America is so much better than this.

Just look around. Here we stand, in the shadow of the Capitol dome, as was mentioned earlier, completed amid the Civil War, when the Union itself was literally hanging in the balance. Yet we endured, we prevailed.

Here we stand looking out on the great Mall where Dr. King spoke of his dream.

Here we stand, where 108 years ago, at another Inaugural, thousands of protesters tried to block brave women marching for the right to vote. And today we mark the swearing-in of the

first woman in American history elected to national office: Vice President Kamala Harris.

Don't tell me things can't change.

Here we stand across the Potomac from Arlington Cemetery, where heroes who gave the last full measure of devotion rest in eternal peace.

And here we stand, just days after a riotous mob thought they could use violence to silence the will of the people, to stop the work of our democracy, to drive us from this sacred ground.

It did not happen. It will never happen, not today, not tomorrow, not ever—not ever.

To all those who supported our campaign, I am humbled by the faith you've placed in us. To all those who did not support us, let me say this: Hear me out as we move forward. Take a measure of me and my heart. And if you still disagree, so be it. That's democracy. That's America. The right to dissent peaceably, within the guardrails of our Republic, is perhaps this Nation's greatest strength. Yet hear me clearly: Disagreement must not lead to disunion. And I pledge this to you: I will be a President for all Americans—all Americans. And I promise you, I will fight as hard for those who did not support me as for those who did.

Many centuries ago, Saint Augustine, a saint of my church, wrote that a people was a multitude defined by the common objects of their love—defined by the common objects of their love. What are the common objects we as Americans love? That define us as Americans? I think we know: opportunity, security, liberty, dignity, respect, honor, and yes, the truth.

Recent weeks and months have taught us a painful lesson. There is truth, and there are lies: lies told for power and for profit. And each of us has a duty and a responsibility, as citizens, as Americans, and especially as leaders—leaders who have pledged to honor our Constitution and protect our Nation—to defend the truth and defeat the lies.

Look, I understand that many of my fellow Americans view the future with fear and trepidation. I understand they worry about their jobs. I understand, like my dad, they lay at

bed at night staring at the ceiling, wondering: "Can I keep my health care? Can I pay my mortgage?" Thinking about their families, about what comes next. I promise you, I get it. But the answer is not to turn inward, to retreat into competing factions, distrusting those who don't look like you or worship the way you do or don't get their news from the same sources you do. We must end this uncivil war that pits red against blue, rural versus urban, conservative versus liberal. We can do this if we open our souls instead of hardening our hearts, if we show a little tolerance and humility, and if we're willing to stand in the other person's shoes, as my mom would say, just for a moment. Stand in their shoes.

Because here is the thing about life: There is no accounting for what fate will deal you. Some days when you need a hand. There are other days when we're called to lend a hand. That's how it has to be. That is what we do for one another. And if we are this way, our country will be stronger, more prosperous, more ready for the future. And we can still disagree.

My fellow Americans, in the work ahead of us, we're going to need each other. We need all our strength to persevere through this dark winter. We're entering what may be the toughest and deadliest period of the virus. We must set aside politics and finally face this pandemic as one Nation. One Nation. And I promise you this: As the Bible says, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." We will get through this, together—*together*.

Look, folks, all my colleagues that I served with in the House and the Senate up here. We all understand the world is watching, watching all of us today. So here is my message to those beyond our borders: America has been tested, and we have come out stronger for it. We will repair our alliances and engage with the world once again, not to meet yesterday's challenges, but today's and tomorrow's challenges. And we'll lead not merely by the example of our power, but by the power of our example. We will be a strong and trusted partner for peace, progress, and security.

Look, you all know, we have been through so much in this Nation. And, in my first act as President, I'd like to ask you to join me in a moment of silent prayer to remember all those we lost this past year to the pandemic, those 400,000 fellow Americans: moms, dads, husbands, wives, sons, daughters, friends, neighbors, and coworkers. We will honor them by becoming the people and Nation we know we can and should be.

So I ask you, let's say a silent prayer for those who have lost their lives, for those they left behind, and for our country.

*[At this point, a moment of silence was observed.]*

Amen.

Folks, this is a time of testing. We face an attack on our democracy and on truth, a raging virus, growing inequity, the sting of systemic racism, a climate in crisis, America's role in the world. Any one of these would be enough to challenge us in profound ways. But the fact is, we face them all at once, presenting this Nation with one of the gravest of responsibilities we've had.

Now we're going to be tested. Are we going to step up? All of us? It is time for boldness, for there is so much to do. And this is certain, I promise you: We will be judged, you and I, by how we resolve these cascading crises of our era. Will we rise to the occasion, is the question. Will we master this rare and difficult hour? Will we meet our obligations and pass along a new and better world to our children? I believe we must; I'm sure you do as well. I believe we will.

And when we do, we will write the next great chapter in the history of the United States of America: the American story, a story that might sound something like a song that means a lot to me. It's called "American Anthem," and there's one verse that stands out, at least for me, and it goes like this:

"The work and prayers of centuries have brought us to this day

What shall be our legacy? What will our children say? . . .

Let me know in my heart when my days are through

America, America, I gave my best to you."

Let's add—let's us add our own work and prayers to the unfolding story of our great Nation.

If we do this, then when our days are through, our children and our children's children will say of us: "They gave their best. They did their duty. They healed a broken land."

My fellow Americans, I close today where I began, with a sacred oath. Before God and all of you I give you my word: I will always level with you. I will defend the Constitution. I will defend our democracy. I will defend America. And I will give all, all of you, keep everything you—I do, in your service, thinking not of power, but of possibilities; not of personal interest, but of the public good. And together, we shall write an American story of hope, not fear; of unity, not division; of light, not darkness. A story of decency and dignity, love and healing, greatness and goodness.

May this be the story that guides us, the story that inspires us, and the story that tells ages yet to come that we answered the call of history, we met the moment; democracy and hope, truth and justice, did not die on our watch, but thrived; that America secured liberty at home and stood once again as a beacon to the world. That is what we owe our forebearers, one another, and generations to follow.

So with purpose and resolve we turn to those tasks of our time, sustained by faith, driven by conviction, and devoted to one another and the country we love with all our hearts.

May God bless America, and may God protect our troops. Thank you, America.