

Metaphor-Based Analysis of Joe Biden's and George Washington's Inaugural Speeches

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Abstract

This paper analyzes how conceptual metaphor is used as a persuasive tool in Joseph Biden's and George Washington's inaugural speeches. The speeches are analyzed using Conceptual Metaphor Theory. A source-based approach to metaphor analysis is adopted in this paper. Statistical findings are used to examine how metaphor is utilized to frame certain political topics. The study demonstrates that metaphor is a vital persuasive tool in political discourse. The use of conceptual metaphors persuades and appeals to people's emotions. The paper shows that Biden utilized more conceptual metaphors than Washington. This indicates the need and importance Biden attaches to persuasive rhetoric of which the use of metaphor successfully provides and attains. The nature of conceptual metaphor in both speeches reveals the existence of diachronic differences in how metaphors were used. This metaphor variation which reflects changes in society is ascribed to the differences in ideologies and the zeitgeist of the two eras in which the speeches took place.

Keywords: conceptual metaphor, metaphor analysis, metaphor variation, persuasion, political discourse, political speech

1. Introduction

Metaphor may be considered by some as a linguistic ornament which we resort to when we want to make our language seem more articulate and eloquent. This fallacy is rooted in the Aristotelian legacy that defines metaphor as a figure of speech that is concerned with the literal level of language only (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Metaphor, however, is not just a matter of language, but of thought as well. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) stated in their influential book *Metaphors We Live By* that metaphor is a pervasive phenomenon in our daily lives and that conceptual concepts structure our perception and function in everyday activities. They further add that "the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (p. 5).

Metaphor is indeed a matter of cognition as Thibodeau and Boroditsky (2011) stated when they argued that metaphors have a strong influence on how we reason giving the example of opinion differences between Republicans and Democrats which are formed by how metaphorical frames are used. Lakoff (2004) demonstrates this point in *Don't Think of an Elephant: Why Republicans Win the Frame Battle* which analyzes the framing strategies conservatives deploy while explaining and providing ways for the progressives in order to reframe political issues in their favor. Lakoff (2004) further argued that people vote for the conservatives even when their policies are unfavorable. This is due to the fact that conservatives use metaphor as a technique to advocate their ideologies and agendas by framing values in alignment with the people's.

Metaphor plays a vital role in our daily lives. Political speech is a good example to demonstrate that metaphor has a persuasive force that can impact lives. Metaphor is a powerful tool which is resorted to for persuasion purposes in political discourses (Van Dijk, 2006). Chilton (1996, p. 47) also states that language plays a vital role in politics saying that "It is therefore not surprising that language plays a central (if not always recognized) role in politics, and that much political action is either wholly or partly, linguistic action." Metaphor is utilized in different ways in order to render a political speech persuasive. These techniques include foregrounding, connecting pathos to logos, and myth making.

Metaphor is used in political speeches to frame how people understand certain issues. Foregrounding is a strategy that assists in the framing process and it occurs when particular favorable aspects are highlighted while others are screened out (Ana, 1999). Foregrounding also takes place when other perspectives or points of view

are intentionally disregarded in favor of the politician's agenda (Mio, 1997). Lau and Redlawsk (2001) stated that people base their voting decisions on mental shortcuts wherein they focus on a certain aspect of an issue while disregarding others. Accordingly, politicians can adeptly use metaphors to direct attention towards certain aspects which serve their political interests and thus facilitate and influence the people's judgments and decisions.

The second persuasive strategy which is used in political discourse is connecting pathos to logos. Mio (1997) argued that connecting the logical with the emotional is the main purpose of metaphor. Building on the logical side of an issue gives a rational edge to politicians. The connection is created when this rational thinking is then utilized, by means of imbedding metaphors into discourse, to appeal the emotions of the public. Last but not least, myth making is another technique which politicians have recourse to when preparing their political speeches. Metaphor is just the right linguistic device to create and imbed myths in politics owing to the fact that metaphor is open to interpretations and allows people to understand it based on the meanings they cast to the discourse (Charteris-Black, 2011). Charteris-Black (2011) gives the example of the American Dream which "creates a very flexible myth of an imagined ideal future that accommodates to personal desires" (p. 39).

With advancement in metaphor studies, a number of researchers including Mio (1997), Lakoff (2004), Charteris-Black (2011, 2014), Bougher (2012), and Gibbs (2015) have followed the lead to study how metaphor is used in politics as a persuasive tool to frame issues in a particular way. The present paper, however, does not only analyze the use of conceptual metaphors in two political speeches, but it also sheds light on the nature of metaphor evolution through comparison. Diachronic variation in metaphor is believed to transpire between the two speeches' time frame since language is a dynamic entity whose metaphorical concepts within semantic domains change, thus, revealing societal changes (Anderson, 2017).

2. Methodology

Critical Metaphor Theory is used to analyze the two political speeches in this paper. This tool is chosen for its ability to vigorously and thoroughly assist in analyzing the use and meaning behind a text within a social setting. Political speeches are usually complex texts which use high level of abstraction to persuasively convey certain messages. Critical Metaphor Theory is useful to identify, categorize, analyze, and fully understand how certain abstract concepts are conceptually mapped in terms of physical ones so as to facilitate understanding and the conveyance of meanings. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), the core of metaphor is understanding and experiencing the target which is abstract (e.g., time) in terms of the source which is concrete (e.g., money) as in the following conceptual metaphor: TIME IS MONEY (Note 1). Ana (1999) argued that metaphor is used in political speeches to frame issues by bringing particular qualities to the foreground while others are blinded out in the background. Charteris-Black (2011) reiterates that framing political issues by bringing into focus certain views while ignoring others is the main function of metaphor in political speeches.

The paper utilizes a source-based approach to metaphor analysis. This approach firstly considers the literal meanings of words and phrases as they are used metaphorically to create metaphor categories. Categorizing metaphors based on their source is preferred because it defers contention about what the metaphor refers to since target domains are open to multiple interpretations (Charteris-Black, 2011). Biden's speech is analyzed firstly then Washington's secondly. This decision gives the reader a sense of gradually moving from the closely simple and familiar text and style to the remotely unfamiliar and complex one. It is important to note that, due to limited space and the inability to exhaustively analyze all of the metaphors in both speeches, only repeated purposeful metaphors that contribute to the understanding of how metaphor can be used for persuasion are fully analyzed and discussed. The metaphor analysis adopted in this paper follows the following stages:

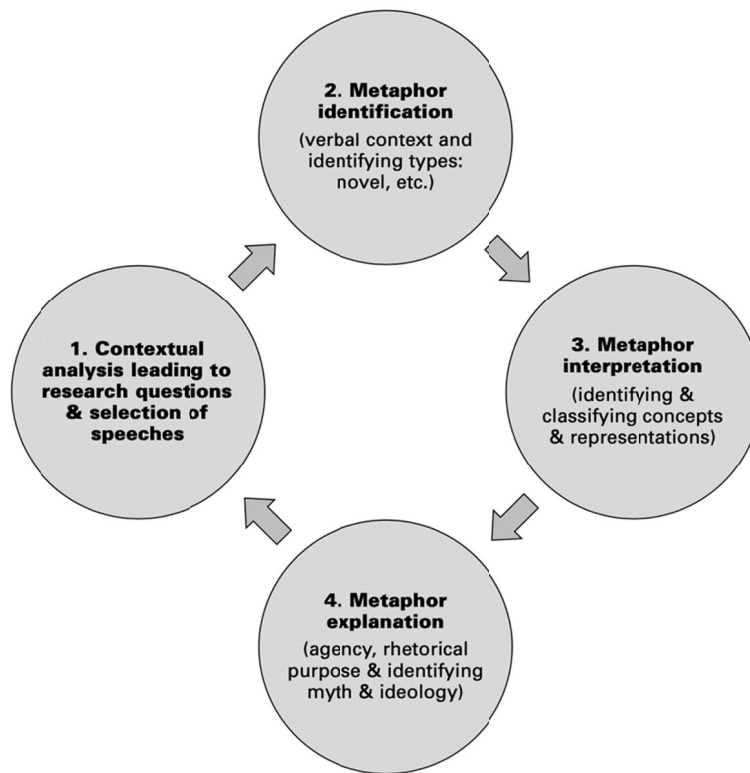


Figure 1. Stages of metaphor analysis

Note. This figure is from Charteris-Black, 2011.

In this study, it is very important to provide a brief historical context to explain when the speeches were given.

2.1 Historical Context of Joseph R. Biden, Jr.'s Speech

The first speech which was analyzed for conceptual metaphors is the Inaugural Address by the 46th president of USA, Joseph R. Biden, Jr which was delivered on the 20th of January 2021 at the United States Capitol. From his speech, Biden emphasized on unity and truth; alluding to the fact that the speeches and policies of the former president, Donald Trump, did not try to attain any, but rather promote disunity and lies. Unlike Trump, Biden is versed in politics and government affairs. He served as a senate for 36 years and played important roles in America's foreign affairs (Osno, 2020) before becoming the 47th president of USA in 2021.

2.2 Historical Context of George Washington's Speech

The second speech which was analyzed for metaphors is George Washington's Inaugural Speech that took place at the Federal Hall in New York City on the 30th of April 1789. Washington felt very anxious not only because of the fact that he is the first president of USA to ever deliver an inaugural address, but also because of his perceived inexperience in civil administration (Coe, 2020). Before becoming the first president in 1789, the 'Father of His Country' as he is usually referred to, Washington served as the commander-in-chief during the American Revolution (1765–1791) against the British and became president of the convention that crafted the constitution (Coe, 2020).

The American colonies were established in North America after many have escaped religious persecutions in Europe seeking freedom and opportunity in the New World and, afterwards, seeking independence from the British Empire to create the United States of America (Coe, 2020). Washington delivered two inaugural addresses. The first is chosen because the second speech is very short. It is considered the shortest inaugural address in US history at 135 words. Such a speech could not provide sufficient data for metaphor analysis.

These two speeches were chosen for their powerful appeal to persuade the citizens and orient the country towards certain interests. They were also selected to reveal diachronic differences in how metaphors were used in political speeches in the context of American politics. To achieve this, two primary data samples which are temporally distant were needed; therefore, choosing Biden's and Washington's inaugural speeches. Washington's

entire speech has been selected for analysis because it is short, and metaphors are, to a large extent, distributed equally all over the speech while only the first half of Biden's speech has been chosen for analysis. This is because Biden's speech is much longer and only the first half of the speech contains substantial metaphor data.

3. Results

3.1 Joe Biden's Inaugural Address

During his inaugural address, Biden emphasized on democracy and unity to overcome the public health and economic crises that America faces. The majority of the conceptual metaphors were found in the first part of Biden's speech. Metaphor increases when Biden talks about America's democracy, unity and history and decreases when the speech is shifted to topics such as historic events and citizens' responsibilities wherein the language used is simply plain and allusive. Biden's speech is characterized by the use of a variety of conceptual metaphors that spring from different source domains. The analysis has revealed the following 10 main conceptual metaphors and 16 minor ones which, as can be seen in Figure 2, are grouped under 'OTHERS' (further information is available in the Appendix A):

- LIFE IS A JOURNEY (14%).
- UNITY IS A TOOL (13%).
- POLITICS IS WAR (10%).
- HISTORY IS WAR (10%).
- AMERICA IS A PERSON (8%).
- BIDEN IS A REPAIRER AND A HEALER (6%).
- DEMOCRACY IS A PRECIOUS OBJECT (5%).
- UNITY IS A PATH (3%).
- CRISES ARE FOES (3%).
- AMERICA IS A LEADING FORCE FOR GOODNESS (3%).

The conceptual metaphors above were used in Biden's speech several times. The main bulk of metaphors in his political speech are conventional and entrenched. The frequency and invisibility of these metaphors can assist in promoting ideologies by framing political issues in a particular way (Charteris-Black, 2014). On the other hand, the conceptual metaphors below are minor in the sense that they were used in the speech only once. These metaphors are also essential to the analysis because, contrary to the conventional and entrenched metaphors which are repeated several times and thus referred to as main metaphors in this paper, some of these metaphors are purposeful in the speech and have the purpose of "influencing the audience's attitudes and beliefs, establishing rapport with the public, criticizing an opponent, creating an image of a certain type of political persona" (Pilyarchuk & Onysko, 2018, p. 103). These metaphors account for 25% of the overall metaphor in Biden's speech:

CITIZENS ARE NEIGHBORS

FATE IS A DEALER

PLANET IS A PERSON

JUSTICE IS A COMMODITY

SOULS ARE CONTAINERS

HISTORY IS A CONTAINER

SOUL IS AN OBJECT:

FAITH IS AN OBJECT:

FACTS ARE COMMODITY

COUNTRY IS A BUILDING

AMERICA IS A CRUCIBLE

ANGER IS HEAT

UNEMPLOYMENT AND INSECURITY ARE VIRUSES:

DEATH IS ETERNAL PEACE

JUSTICE IS A MATERIALIZBLE DREAM

HISTORY IS A STORY

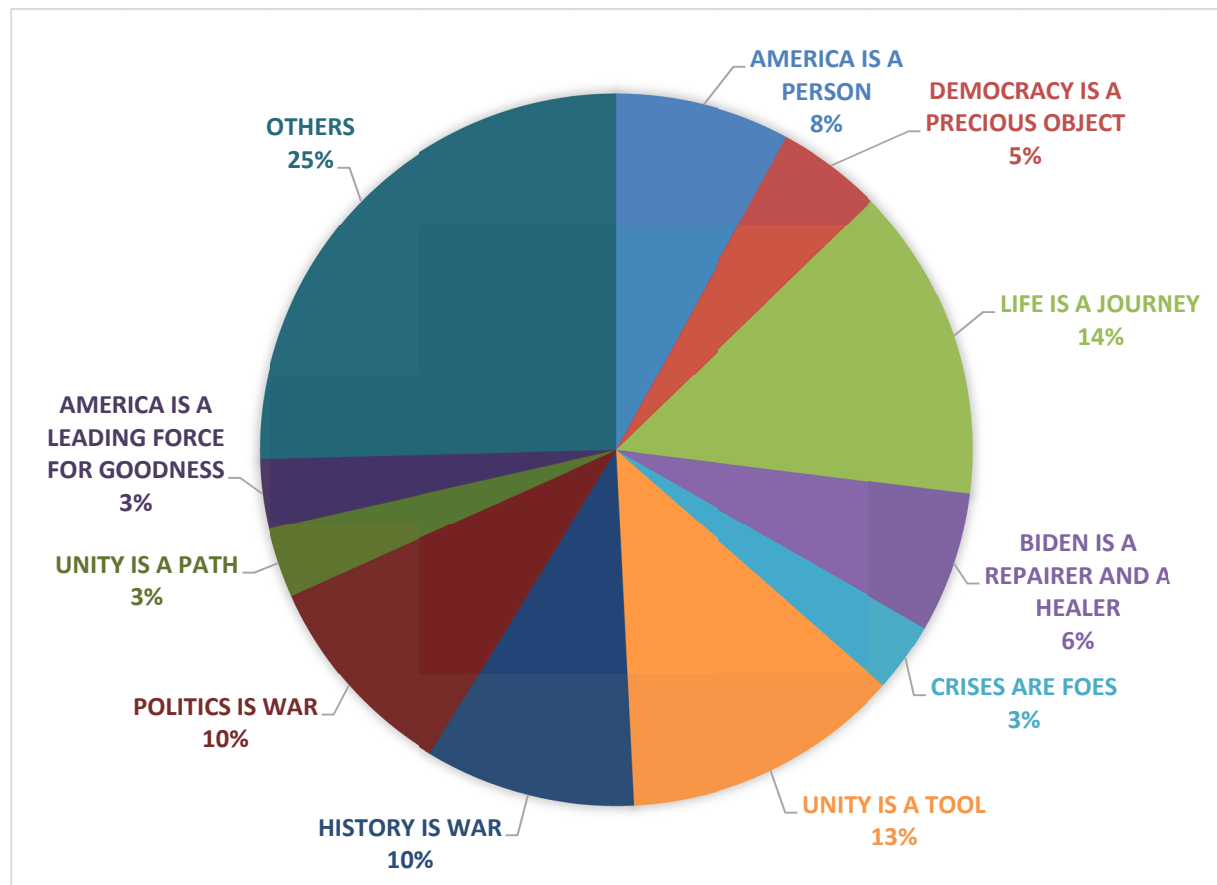


Figure 2. Percentage of Biden's conceptual metaphors

As Figure 2 indicates, LIFE IS A JOURNEY is the major conceptual metaphor in Biden's speech at 14% of the overall pool of metaphors. Biden used this metaphor when he talked about the country's goals "We look ahead in our uniquely American way" (Biden, 2021) emphasizing the uniquely American path to greatness. The metaphor is also used to portray the nature of political struggles in America: "Over the centuries through storm and strife, in peace and in war, we have come so far. But we still have far to go" and to communicate the urgent need to speedily restart the new political journey with Biden: "We will press forward with speed and urgency" "let us start afresh" (Biden, 2021). The journey metaphor is "highly pervasive in English, and movement forwards tend to correspond to positive change, development and success" (Semino, 2008, p. 81).

The second most frequent metaphor is UNITY IS A TOOL at 13%. This metaphor was first mentioned after the president talked about the crises the country is facing suggesting that unity is the sole tool with which to solve the problems "With unity we can do great things. Important things. We can right wrongs. We can put people to work in good jobs" (Biden, 2021). HISTORY IS WAR and POLITICS IS WAR are the next main conceptual metaphors each at 10%. War is a common source domain in political speeches. It is used to highlight the similarities between verbal arguments and physical battles (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980); thus, urging for victory and evading defeat.

AMERICA IS A PERSON accounts for 8% of the findings. This metaphor was first used at the beginning of Biden's speech "This is America's day" "America has risen to the challenge" (Biden, 2021). Constructing metaphors in terms of a person is a way so that people can understand the nation in the eyes of politicians' own motivations (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). BIDEN IS A REPAIRER AND A HEALER (6%) is a metaphor that was first used when the president talked about the struggles and crises the nation is facing "Much to repair. Much to

restore. Much to heal. Much to build” (Biden, 2021).

Another main metaphor that was mentioned secondly at the beginning of Biden’s speech is DEMOCRACY IS A PRECIOUS OBJECT constituting 5% of the total metaphor data. Here democracy is objectified as a valuable and fragile item “democracy is precious” “Democracy is fragile” (Biden, 2021). Last but not least, CRISES ARE FOES and UNITY IS A PATH are two metaphors that were repeated the least in the speech each at 3%. The source domain “FOES” is mapped onto the target domain “CRISES” when Biden raised the issues of supremacy and terrorism that the country is facing as well as “Anger, resentment, hatred. Extremism, lawlessness, violence. Disease, joblessness, hopelessness” (Biden, 2021) that every citizen is facing. Coming to “UNITY”, which was first described in terms of a “TOOL”, it is framed on the basis of a “PATH” bringing attention to the point that unity is not just a tool to solve issues with, but also a path towards the solution “the way of unity” “unity is the path forward” (Biden, 2021).

3.2 *George Washington’s Inaugural Address*

In his speech, Washington emphasized the need for a resilient constitution and Bill of Rights. In most parts of his speech, the president also expressed a regard for the public good. The conceptual metaphors were distributed almost equally throughout his speech except for when the president entrusted the responsibility for the nation in the hands of the American people. Washington’s speech is marked by the use of few dominant conceptual metaphors to frame the political issues in his speech. As evident from Figure 3, three main conceptual metaphors dominate the overall metaphor findings (further information is available in the Appendix A):

GOD IS A POWERFUL CONDUCTOR OF AFFAIRS (28%).

AMERICA IS A PERSON (14%).

BODY IS A MACHINE (6%).

Besides the conceptual metaphors above, the following 16 minor conceptual metaphors were used in Washington’s speech of which are grouped under ‘OTHERS’ as can be seen in Figure 3:

THINKING IS A PERSON

SENTIMENTS ARE SLEEPING FORCES

EMOTIONS ARE CONFLICTING FORCES

GOD IS A TRANSCENDENT FORCE

REFLECTIONS ARE FORCES

VICES ARE MISDIRECTING FORCES

CONFIDENCE IS A MOVING OBJECT

FREEMEN RIGHTS ARE FORTIFIED CASTLES

FEELINGS ARE PHYSICAL OBJECTS

AGE IS A DECLINING MATERIAL

LIBERTY IS A SACRED OBJECT

OPPORTUNITIES ARE BEACONS

SENTIMENTS ARE MOVEABLE COMMODITIES

VIRTUES ARE ADORNMENTS

TRUST IS A MISSION

SEEING IS PROMISING

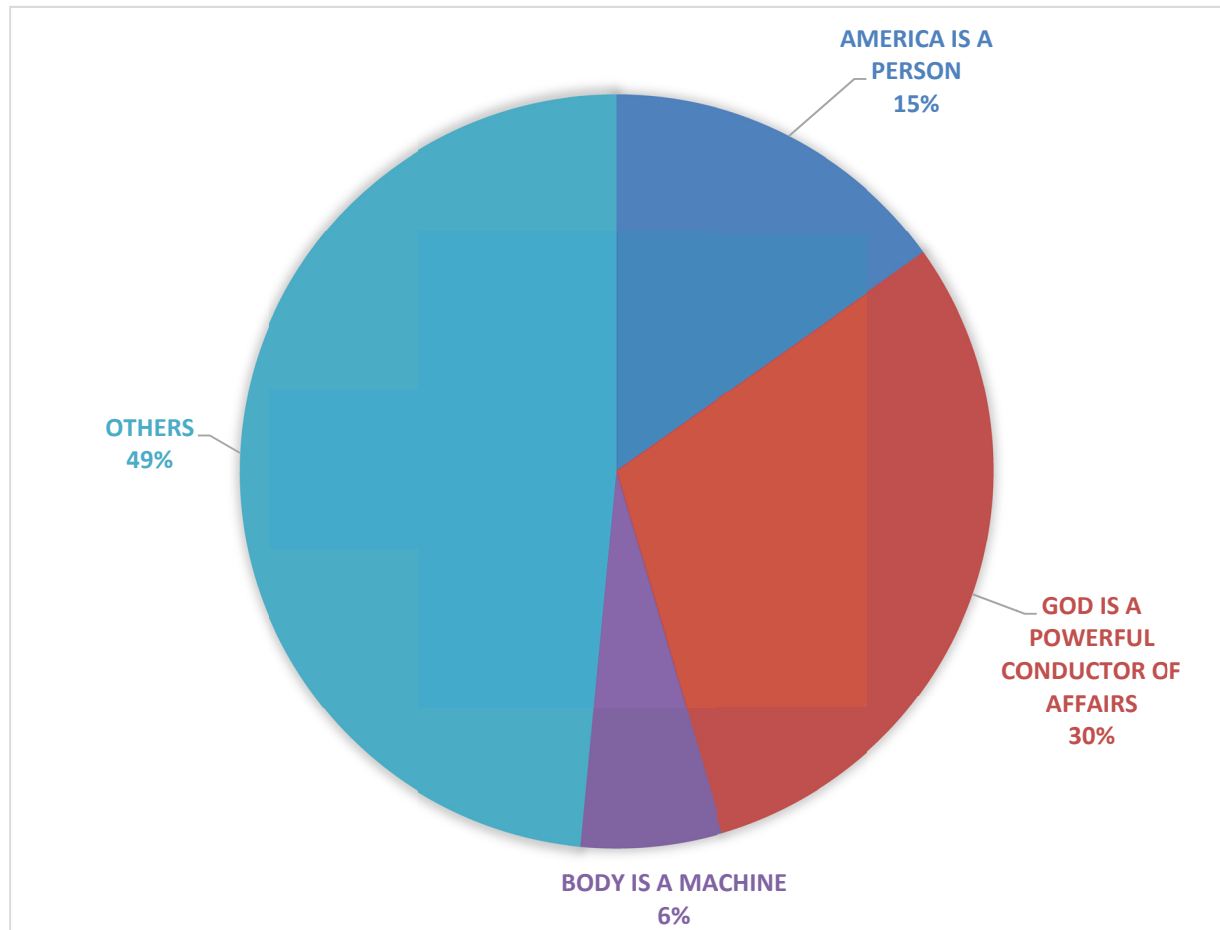


Figure 3. Percentage of Washington's conceptual metaphors

Looking at Washington's speech, the most significant metaphor is GOD IS A POWERFUL CONDUCTOR OF AFFAIRS which accounts for 30% of the total metaphor findings. This metaphor was used throughout the speech recognizing Providence as the conductor and guider of the nation's affairs "No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the Invisible Hand which conducts the affairs of men more than those of the United States" (Washington, 1789). Perceiving of god as a powerful conductor of affairs is based on the Great Chain of Being that Lakoff and Turner (1989) adopted from Aristotle and Plato. This chain, which comprises: God-humans-animals-plants-inorganic matter, is utilized to explain the basis of metaphorical mappings. God begins the chain and humans second it suggesting the superiority of God, who is immaterial and unchangeable, and the inferiority of humans, who are made of matter and die. This hierarchical structure of matter and life is apparent when Washington (1789) says, "providential aids can supply every human defect" implying the supremacy of god who can aid humans in all their imperfections.

The second most significant metaphor is AMERICA IS A PERSON at 15%. This metaphor was first used when the president said, "I was summoned by my Country" and was subsequently used in the same paragraph when Washington said, "my Country called me" and "be judged by my Country" (Washington, 1789). This is a conventional metaphor which is most commonly utilized in political discourses, especially in foreign policy, so that people can mentally grasp the mechanism of a country "on the basis of our own motivations, goals, actions, and characteristics" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 34).

BODY IS A MACHINE which stands at 6% of the total metaphor data is used when Washington speaks about his health condition "interruptions in my health" "congenial with the feelings which actuate me" (Washington, 1789). The use of this metaphor touches upon the Cartesian view of the human body as a machine. Descartes saw the human body as a machine with various functions such as blood circulation, digestion, respiratory system and so on (Des Chene, 2001). Using the words "interruptions" and "actuate" in his metaphors, Washington refers to his medical issues which could deter him to act as a competent president.

4. Discussion

Semino (2008, p. 85) stated that “metaphor is a particularly important linguistic and conceptual tool for the achievement of persuasion.” This section explains the links between Washington’s and Biden’s metaphors and how they were used as a persuasive technique in their political speeches.

4.1 *Conceptual Metaphors in Joe Biden’s Speech*

4.1.1 LIFE IS A JOURNEY

Journey metaphors are very common in political speeches. They are used to describe ‘life’ as a journey that inspires movement towards a destination. Lakoff (1992, p. 19) stated that:

In our culture, life is assumed to be purposeful, that is, we are expected to have goals in life.... purposes are destinations and purposeful action is self-propelled motion toward a destination. A purposeful life is a longterm, purposeful activity, and hence a journey. Goals in life are destinations on the journey.

By using this metaphor, Biden regards the unity and prosperity of America as the desired destination that his journey is heading to with citizens as travelers who are all on the same road. This destination, wilily, mingles positive actions which are associated with journey with Biden’s politics. To welcome this journey towards prosperity is to accept Biden’s political policies. Journey metaphors are also successful because they blend in the myth element that follow the hero’s journey such as Odysseus and Arthur (Charteris-Black, 2011). Politicians use cultural schemas which are deep-rooted in myths to “present their beliefs and their policies as heroic tasks and themselves as epic heroes.” (Charteris-Black, 2011, pp. 324–325).

Biden’s metaphor affects the audience’s pathos also by alluding to the novel *Winter of Peril: The Newfoundland Diary of Sophie Loveridge* by Jan Andrews when he says, “for we have much to do in this winter of peril and possibility.” The journey that Sophie’s family took from England to the New World put them in rough winter conditions. This journey story further affects the audience’s emotions since it hints at the journey of the Pilgrim Fathers who were in dire conditions for the sake of a better life opportunity.

4.1.2 UNITY IS A TOOL

This metaphor is of paramount importance in Biden’s speech. The president’ appeal to unity portrays him as a selfless victor who can solve all of the country’s problems. Utilizing this conceptual metaphor lends Biden the aura of being a visioner who has tools to resolve the country’s unity crisis. This brings into spotlight the contrastive qualities of Trump and Biden; the former being a disunity inciter, especially after the Capitol riot, and the latter being a unity promoter. Carefully constructed metaphors can assist politicians in influencing people’s views by having them focus on certain qualities which serve their interests and disfavor their opponents (Bougher, 2012).

4.1.3 POLITICS IS WAR

This is a frequent metaphor in political speeches. The concept of war is often mapped onto politics due to the very similarities these two domains share. Deploying this metaphor inspires the image of citizens as soldiers who, thusly, could act militantly and uniformly towards a goal. The source domain “war” kindles the sense of urgency and emergency in citizens who could be subject to enemy attack. In his speech, Biden also evokes the unpleasant images of the American history when he says, “we must end this uncivil war.” This leads people to perceive of Biden as a president who urges his people to act civilly and cling to unity in times of crises as opposed to Trump who is bringing in fraction and war.

4.1.4 HISTORY IS WAR

History as war in Biden’s inaugural speech alludes to Martin Luther’s use of the conceptual metaphor *THE HISTORIC STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM IS A JOURNEY* (Charteris-Black, 2014) to foreground the change America is undergoing in its demographic trends. This is firstly marked by the swearing-in of Kamala Harris as the first black Asian-American woman with presidential power. Gibbs (2015) stated that people identify the general symbolic force of a speech, rather than necessarily detecting all metaphors in a speech. The use of *HISTORY IS WAR* metaphor and the allusion to Luther and other historic events such as the women’s suffrage movement is an effective technique which gives a deeper meaning to Biden’s speech and, therefore, exert influence on people’s emotions.

4.1.5 AMERICA IS A PERSON

The country is depicted in Biden’s speech as a strong and resolute person who can withstand any challenge. A person who must be healthy, resilient, and strong economically and militarily. The conceptualization of America

as a person makes the public understand the country's policies and affairs in terms of the president's actions and goals (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In addition, this metaphor is effective especially when Biden applied the experienced and familiar aspects of the COVID virus on the target domain: "A once-in-a-century virus silently stalks the country." The application of what is familiar on new matters is a persuasive way to appeal to people's feelings by portraying the president as a person who thinks rationally (Charteris-Black, 2011).

During his speech, Biden also alludes to the poem "A Nation's Strength" by Ralph Waldo Emerson when he said, "You know the resilience of our Constitution and the strength of our nation" "Uniting to fight the common foes we face" (Biden, 2021). According to the poem, it is brave men who work hard, rather than the riches, that make a country strong and great. An allusion is effective when the audience, or part of it, understands it (Irwin, 2001). Alluding to this poem creates positive associations in the people's minds and lends to Biden's speech a credibility quality. The power of poetry can be seen in how it could be used to affect the public's pathos and frame how people view the country in the times of crises.

4.1.6 BIDEN IS A REPAIRER AND A HEALER

Deploying this metaphor, the country is perceived of as an entity that needs repair and remedy. Biden depicts himself as the person who can bring in hope by building and healing it. This metaphor does not offer any tangible solutions, but rather it unconsciously invokes in the public the urgent need for a more developed and robust country. De Landtsheer et al. (2008) asserted that people vote with their hearts rather than with their minds. Conceptualizing America as a body that needs a repairer and a healer appeals to emotions as people cherish health as a vital key to happiness.

4.1.7 DEMOCRACY IS A PRECIOUS OBJECT

In his speech, democracy is framed in terms of a precious object. An object which is fragile and valuable. This create, in people's minds, the need to keep it safe from harm. Biden uses this metaphor to indicate that democracy is back and needs to be cherished and protected. Biden declares that democracy, which has been tottering during Trump's tenure, has triumphed over threats. Using this metaphor is successful in connecting the logos with the pathos, which is one of the goals of using metaphors in political speeches (Mio, 1997).

4.1.8 UNITY IS A PATH

Biden pledges himself to unify the country, rather than divide it; referring to Trump's creation of a divided America. To convey this idea to the audience's mind, Biden uses UNITY IS A PATH metaphor to, firstly, reiterate that unity is a solution and, secondly, that to secure this solution, people have to follow the path, unity's path; which is Biden's path. This conceptual metaphor is persuasive because it can facilitate the understanding of abstract and complex ideas through the use of concrete objects that we can physically experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

4.1.9 CRISES ARE FOES

When the president says, "uniting to fight the common foes," he is conceptualizing the crises that Americans face as foes. This metaphor triggers a sense of urgency in people to unify and fight the foes which harm the country. Embedding this metaphor in his political speech assists Biden in framing how the public perceives the issues America is confronting as well as the course of actions and solutions the president is advocating.

4.1.10 AMERICA IS A LEADING FORCE FOR GOODNESS

Regardless of the humanitarian assistance worldwide, America is still seen by millions of people as a dishonest country, especially after the involvement of the US in the Middle East. Noam Chomsky (2000) has labelled the United States a Rogue State arguing that the US's main interest in its international interventions is not humanitarian per se, but rather this rogue country is seeking self-interest and domination which has ignited conflict and created disunity in other countries and regions.

As an effort to depict America as an honest and friendly country, Biden uses the metaphor AMERICA IS A LEADING FORCE FOR GOODNESS. This comes about when the president says, "We can make America, once again, the leading force for good in the world" "our better angels" (Biden, 2021). This metaphor creates the mental image that America is a hero and savior country while other countries, with whom America is not friends, are villains. The use of this entrenched metaphor can reveal how certain issues are framed in order to advocate certain ideologies (Charteris-Black, 2011). This metaphor appeals not only to emotions of Americans, but also to the emotions of other countries' peoples to persuade them that America was, still is, and will always be a country of goodness.

4.2 Conceptual Metaphors in George Washington's Speech

4.2.1 GOD IS A POWERFUL CONDUCTOR OF AFFAIRS

This is the most dominant metaphor in Washington's inaugural address. The president described Providence in terms of a person who is helpful, generous and versed in government affairs. This providential agency had a hand in the successful independence of the United States as well as in the formation of a unified government with a resilient constitution. George Washington utilized GOD IS A POWERFUL CONDUCTOR OF AFFAIRS for the purpose of not only venerating the Founding Fathers but also the Pilgrim Fathers who have come to the New World escaping religious persecution and seeking freedom of faith. Politicians try to back up and vouch for their ideas by connecting and associating them with those of the statesmen who founded America.

Moreover, Washington uses this metaphor in order to gain support and acceptance from the American society which is mainly religious. Integrating religious ideas into his political speech validates him as a fitting president. Washington always speaks of Providence rather than God or Christ or Jesus. This neutrality serves him to be perceived in America, which is religiously diverse, as an advocate of religious freedom. The use of the word "Providence" rather than "god", "Christ" or "Jesus" lends Washington an aura of being secretive and private about his religious ideas (Coe, 2020); a strategy which would keep his religious ideas secretive for the purpose of gaining him support and keep him in his powerful position.

4.2.2 AMERICA IS A PERSON

NATION IS A PERSON is a pervasive metaphor in political speeches. According to Lakoff (2003), NATION IS A PERSON metaphor is used mainly in political speeches to justify war as just war. However, Washington did not use this metaphor to justify for any war, rather, it was used to justify that all that he has acted upon is due to the claimed fact that it is the country that has ordained so. Describing the country as a person who can summon, call, judge, and feel is rhetorically successful because it can validate the president's actions as justifiable. This conceptual metaphor is persuasive due to its ability to make people perceive of the country on the basis of the politician's motivations and actions (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

4.2.3 BODY IS A MACHINE

In his address, the president Washington deployed BODY IS A MACHINE metaphor for the purpose of letting his health conditions be known. Utilizing this metaphor to talk about the president's "deficiencies" lends him the quality of being humble. The use of this metaphor has a powerful influence on people since it enables them to understand complex concepts such as health in terms of an easily explainable object such as a machine. The following section will shed light on the similarities and differences that characterize the two inaugural speeches.

4.3 Conceptual Metaphors in Biden's and Washington's Speeches: A Diachronic Comparison

The two inaugural addresses analyzed in this study show differences and similarities that hint to the fact that there is an increase in the number of metaphors and how they are used in American political speeches. As the bar chart shows below, 85 metaphors were used in Biden's inaugural speech including 57 metaphors of which are main and 28 of which are minor ones. As for Washington's speech, on the other hand, 17 metaphors in total were used in his inaugural address including 9 main metaphors and 8 minor metaphors. It is evident that the use of metaphors in Biden's speech surpasses that of Washington on the level of both main and minor metaphors.

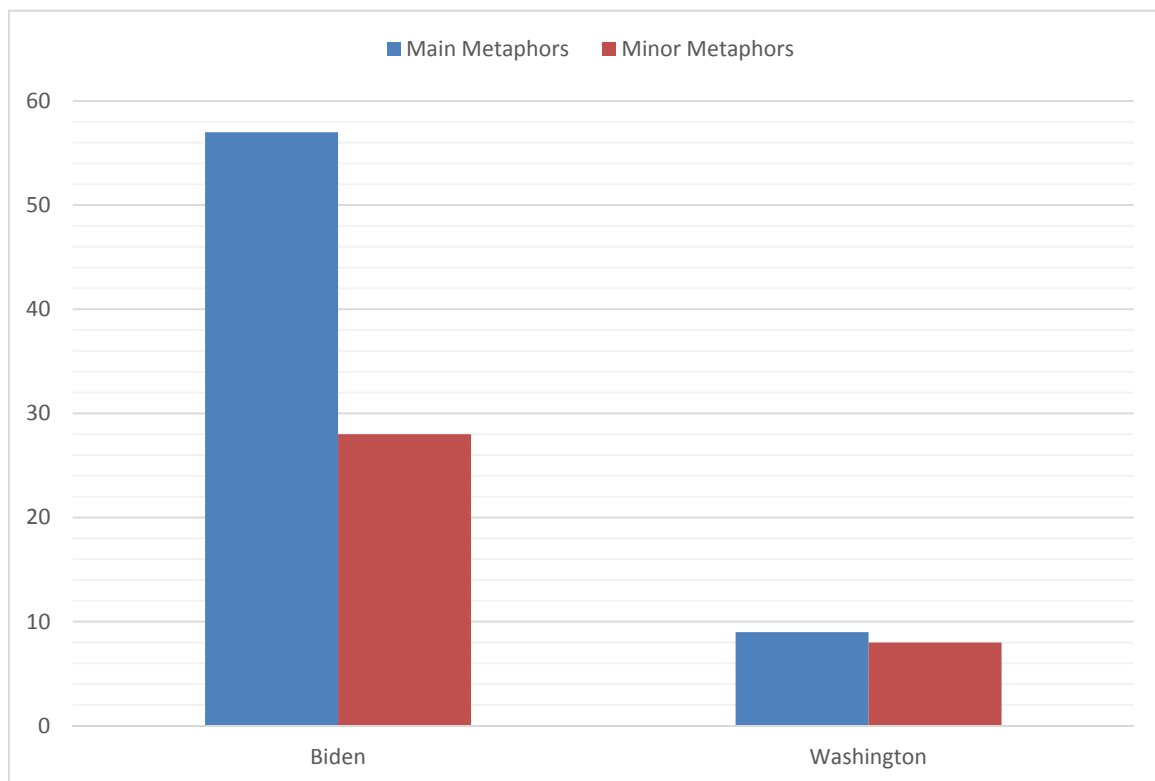


Figure 4. The number of main and minor conceptual metaphors in Biden's and Washington's speeches

On a more specific level, Biden used multiple main metaphors to frame issues in his speech, while Washington used only three main metaphors to do so. The most dominant metaphor which was used in Biden's speech is LIFE IS A JOURNEY, while in Washington's speech it is GOD IS A POWERFUL CONDUCTOR OF AFFAIRS. This difference throws light on how each president attaches importance to certain conceptual metaphors of which they consider very vital in constructing their political speeches, framing issues and, thusly, persuade their people. Washington depended mainly on the use of GOD IS A POWERFUL CONDUCTOR OF AFFAIRS metaphor due to its strong influential power it has on the religious mentality of the American people in the 18th century. Diman (1876) stated that religious ideas are intimately interconnected with politics in the 17th and 18th century American society. The constitution does not set any religious requirements for presidents, yet any alternations in the president's religious views would definitely exert an influence on the people's political opinions. A president who is religious is also seen as someone who is honest and venerates his pilgrim fathers and founding fathers. This religious metaphor is rarely used for rhetoric purposes in today's politics since it does not have a strong persuasive effect in an age of advanced science and technology. Biden, on the other hand, uses neutral metaphors such as LIFE IS A JOURNEY, DEMOCRACY IS A PRECIOUS OBJECT, and UNITY IS A TOOL that appeal to all people's emotions regardless of their religion. This renders his speech to be all-embracing; a quality which would gain him more support from all sides of society.

The conceptual metaphor that was used both in Biden's and Washington's speeches is AMERICA IS A PERSON. However, this metaphor was used somehow differently. Biden conceptualized America as a strong and resolved person who can overcome any challenge. He sees the nation from a distant viewing; a feature which lends neutrality to Biden's speech. Washington, on the other hand, views America from a close and private perspective. He perceives of the nation as a person who can call, judge, and summon him. The country is a person whom Washington venerates and loves and with whom the president has close interactions.

The variation in the two inaugural addresses embodied metaphor evolution. Metaphorical expressions as well as their metaphorical domains change over time bespeaking changes in society (Anderson, 2017). Sweetser (1990) argued that conceptual metaphors trigger language change. This works when metaphorical pathways are created, and subsequently new metaphors are generated following the same path (Kay, 2000). The results of the analysis reveal differences which are mostly due to ideological and societal changes. Simply put, it seems that as our lives get complex, the need for persuasion techniques increases.

5. Conclusion

This paper has analyzed two political speeches by Joe Biden and George Washington. The findings indicate that Biden used more conceptual metaphors. Biden utilized more main and minor metaphors than Washington. This indicates a need for a persuasive rhetoric which the use of metaphor successfully provides. The use of conceptual metaphors has proved to persuade audiences and appeal to their emotions by framing political topics whose favorable qualities are foregrounded while the unfavorable ones are backgrounded. This difference in the use of conceptual metaphors is mainly attributed to the differences in ideologies and zeitgeist of the two eras in which the two presidents lived. Overall, it may be said that the use of conceptual metaphors increases as our society gets more complex and our need for persuasion grows.

The current study does not comprehensively detect and analyze all the metaphors in the two speeches. In addition, the identification of metaphors differs from one person to another. What may be experienced and counted as metaphor may not be experienced and counted as such by another person, and vice versa. Charteris-Black (2014) stated that people differ in how they process metaphors and that being aware of resemblances and historical senses of the words plays a critical role in how these words are understood as metaphors. In addition to how people process and experience metaphor, the difference that exists in how metaphors are used and perceived in different cultures should also be heeded to when analyzing metaphor. According to Kövecses (2010), metaphor variation exists among cultures and is attributed to two factors of which the first is the broad context of a culture and second is the physical and natural environment of the culture.

This study also examined the differences and similarities between the metaphors used in Biden's and Washington's speeches from a diachronic view. Although it gives a general understanding of the development of metaphor use, selecting two temporally distant speeches is not enough to produce a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of metaphoric use in political speeches in the American context. Further studies are encouraged to tackle this gap in diachronic studies of metaphor variation.

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Notes

Note 1. It is customary in linguistics to write conceptual metaphors in capitals to differentiate them from their linguistic examples.

Note 2. Conceptual metaphors that share the same source domains are counted together.

Appendix A

Primary data

Washington, G. (1789, April 30). *Inaugural Address*. National Archives and Records Administration. Retrieved from https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/american_originals/inaugtxt.html

Biden, J. (2021, January 20). *Inaugural Address*. White House. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/01/20/inaugural-address-by-president-joseph-r-biden-jr/>

Metaphor frequency: Total number: 101

Table 1. Metaphor frequency in Biden's and Washington's speeches

Speech	Number of metaphors	Number of words	Metaphor frequency in speech
Biden's speech (first half)	65	1566	1 metaphor per 24.09 words (4.15%)
Washington's speech	36	1430	1 metaphor per (2.51%)

Basic frequency findings (Note 2):

Table 2. The source domains and the basic frequency in Biden's speech

Source domain	Total
WAR	12
JOURNEY	9
PERSON	9
TOOL	8
OBJECT	5
REPAIRER/ HEALER	4
FOES	2
PATH	2
FORCE FOR GOODNESS	2
COMMODITY	2
CONTAINER	2
NEIGHBORS	1
DEALER	1
BUILDING	1
CRUCIBLE	1
HEAT	1
VIRUSES	1
PEACE	1
DREAM	1
STORY	1

Table 3. The source domains and the basic frequency in Washington's speech

Source domain	Total
CONDUCTOR OF AFFAIRS	10
PERSON	6
FORCE	7
OBJECT	3
MACHINE	2
CASTLE	1
DECLINING MATERAIL	1
BEACON	1
COMMODITY	1
ADORNMENTS	1
THOUGHTFULNESS	1
MISSION	1
PROMISING	1

Excerpt of Biden's inaugural speech:

Chief Justice Roberts, Vice President Harris, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Vice President Pence, 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 will of the people has been heard and the will of the people has been heeded. We have 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 days ago violence sought to shake this 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. 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. I thank them from the bottom of my heart. You know the resilience of our Constitution and the strength of our nation. As does President Carter, who I spoke to last night but 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 took—an 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 and we are a good people. Over the centuries through storm and strife, in peace and in war, we have come so far. But we still have far to go. We will press forward with speed and urgency, for we have much to do in this winter of peril and possibility. Much to repair. Much to restore. Much to heal. Much to build. And much to gain. Few periods in our nation’s history have been more challenging or difficult than the one we’re in now. A once-in-a-century virus silently stalks the country. It’s 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 in political extremism, white supremacy, domestic terrorism that we must confront and we will defeat. To overcome these challenges – to restore the soul and to secure the future of America – requires more than words. It requires that most elusive of things in a democracy:

Unity. Unity. In another January in Washington, on New Year’s Day 1863, Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. When he put pen to paper, the President said, “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. And uniting our nation. I ask every American to join me in this cause. Uniting to fight the common foes we face: Anger, resentment, hatred. Extremism, lawlessness, violence. Disease, joblessness, 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 this deadly virus.

We can reward work, rebuild the middle class, and make health care secure for all. We can deliver racial justice. 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. 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 are all created equal and the harsh, ugly reality that racism, nativism, fear, and demonization have long torn us apart. The battle is perennial. 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 came together to carry all of us forward. And, we can do so 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 failed in America when we have acted together. And so today, at this time and in this place, let us start afresh. All of us. Let us listen to one another. Hear one another. See one another. Show respect to one another. Politics need not 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 a 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 better than this. Just look around. Here we stand, in the shadow of a Capitol dome that was completed amid the Civil War, when the Union itself hung in the balance. Yet we endured and we prevailed. Here we stand looking out to the great Mall where Dr. King spoke of his dream. Here we stand, where 108 years ago at another inaugural, thousands of protestors tried to block brave women from marching for the right to vote. 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 National 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, and to drive us from this sacred ground. That did not happen. It will never happen. Not today. Not tomorrow. Not ever. To all those who supported our campaign I am humbled by the faith you have 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 our 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. 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. What are the common objects we love that define us as Americans? I think I 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 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 to defeat the lies. I understand that many Americans view the future with some fear and trepidation. I understand they worry about their jobs, about taking care of their families, about what comes next. I get it. But the answer is not to turn inward, to retreat into competing factions, distrusting those who don't look like you do, 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. If we're willing to stand in the other person's shoes just for a moment. Because here is the thing about life: There is no accounting for what fate will deal you. There are some days when we need a hand.

Washington's Inaugural speech:

Fellow Citizens of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Among the vicissitudes incident to life, no event could have filled me with greater anxieties than that of which the notification was transmitted by your order, and received on the fourteenth day of the present month. On the one hand, I was summoned by my Country, whose voice I can never hear but with veneration and love, from a retreat which I had chosen with the fondest predilection, and, in my flattering hopes, with an immutable decision, as the asylum of my declining years: a retreat which was rendered every day more necessary as well as more dear to me, by the addition of habit to inclination, and of frequent interruptions in my health to the gradual waste committed on it by time. On the other hand, the magnitude and difficulty of the trust to which the voice of my Country called me, being sufficient to awaken in the wisest and most experienced of her citizens, a distrustful scrutiny into his qualifications, could not but overwhelm with dispondence, one, who, inheriting inferior endowments from nature and unpractised in the duties of civil administration, ought to be peculiarly conscious of his own deficiencies. In this conflict of emotions, all I dare aver, is, that it has been my faithful study to collect my duty from a just appreciation of every circumstance, by which it might be affected. All I dare hope, is, that, if in executing this task I have been too much swayed by a grateful remembrance of former instances, or by an affectionate sensibility to this transcendent proof, of the confidence of my fellow-citizens; and have thence too little consulted my incapacity as well as disinclination for the weighty and untried cares before me; my error will be palliated by the motives which misled me, and its consequences be judged by my Country, with some share of the partiality in which they originated.

Such being the impressions under which I have, in obedience to the public summons, repaired to the present station; it would be peculiarly improper to omit in this first official Act, my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the Universe, who presides in the Councils of Nations, and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that his benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the People of the United States, a Government instituted by themselves for these essential purposes: and may enable every instrument employed in its administration to execute with success, the functions allotted to his charge. In tendering this homage to the Great Author of every public and private good I assure myself that it expresses your sentiments not less than my own; nor those of my fellow-citizens at large, less than either. No People can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand, which conducts the Affairs of men more than the People of the United States. Every step, by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation, seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency. And in the important revolution just accomplished in the system of their United Government, the tranquil deliberations and voluntary consent of so many distinct communities, from which the event has resulted, cannot be compared with the means by which most Governments have been established, without some return of pious gratitude along with an humble anticipation of the future blessings which the past seem to presage. These reflections, arising out of the present crisis, have forced themselves too strongly on my mind to be suppressed. You will join with me I trust in thinking, that there are none under the influence of which, the proceedings of a new and free Government can

more auspiciously commence.

By the article establishing the Executive Department, it is made the duty of the President “to recommend to your consideration, such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient.” The circumstances under which I now meet you, will acquit me from entering into that subject, farther than to refer to the Great Constitutional Charter under which you are assembled; and which, in defining your powers, designates the objects to which your attention is to be given. It will be more consistent with those circumstances, and far more congenial with the feelings which actuate me, to substitute, in place of a recommendation of particular measures, the tribute that is due to the talents, the rectitude, and the patriotism which adorn the characters selected to devise and adopt them. In these honorable qualifications, I behold the surest pledges, that as on one side, no local prejudices, or attachments; no separate views, nor party animosities, will misdirect the comprehensive and equal eye which ought to watch over this great assemblage of communities and interests: so, on another, that the foundations of our National policy will be laid in the pure and immutable principles of private morality; and the pre-eminence of a free Government, be exemplified by all the attributes which can win the affections of its Citizens, and command the respect of the world.

I dwell on this prospect with every satisfaction which an ardent love for my Country can inspire: since there is no truth more thoroughly established, than that there exists in the economy and course of nature, an indissoluble union between virtue and happiness, between duty and advantage, between the genuine maxims of an honest and magnanimous policy, and the solid rewards of public prosperity and felicity: Since we ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smiles of Heaven, can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right, which Heaven itself has ordained: And since the preservation of the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the Republican model of Government, are justly considered as deeply, perhaps as finally staked, on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people.

Besides the ordinary objects submitted to your care, it will remain with your judgment to decide, how far an exercise of the occasional power delegated by the Fifth article of the Constitution is rendered expedient at the present juncture by the nature of objections which have been urged against the System, or by the degree of inquietude which has given birth to them. Instead of undertaking particular recommendations on this subject, in which I could be guided by no lights derived from official opportunities, I shall again give way to my entire confidence in your discernment and pursuit of the public good: For I assure myself that whilst you carefully avoid every alteration which might endanger the benefits of an United and effective Government, or which ought to await the future lessons of experience; a reverence for the characteristic rights of freemen, and a regard for the public harmony, will sufficiently influence your deliberations on the question how far the former can be more impregably fortified, or the latter be safely and advantageously promoted.

To the proceeding observations I have one to add, which will be most properly addressed to the House of Representatives. It concerns myself, and will therefore be as brief as possible. When I was first honoured with a call into the Service of my Country, then on the eve of an arduous struggle for its liberties, the light in which I contemplated my duty required that I should renounce every pecuniary compensation. From this resolution I have in no instance departed. And being still under the impressions which produced it, I must decline as inapplicable to myself, any share in the personal emoluments, which may be indispensably included in a permanent provision for the Executive Department; and must accordingly pray that the pecuniary estimates for the Station in which I am placed, may, during my continuance in it, be limited to such actual expenditures as the public good may be thought to require.

Having thus imparted to you my sentiments, as they have been awakened by the occasion which brings us together, I shall take my present leave; but not without resorting once more to the benign parent of the human race, in humble supplication that since he has been pleased to favour the American people, with opportunities for deliberating in perfect tranquility, and dispositions for deciding with unparelled unanimity on a form of Government, for the security of their Union, and the advancement of their happiness; so his divine blessing may be equally *conspicuous* in the enlarged views, the temperate consultations, and the wise measures on which the success of this Government must depend.

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