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# A generic perspective on Trump's inaugural address

Felipe James Rea Rivera

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A Generic Perspective on Trump's Inaugural Address

by

Felipe James Rea Rivera

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*Certificate of Approval*

This is to certify that the accompanying thesis by Felipe James Rea Rivera has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with Honors in Rhetoric Studies.

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Heather Hayes

Whitman College  
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## **Abstract**

In the field of rhetorical study, scholars determine the elements of the inaugural speech genre by studying the body of inaugural addresses and drawing common elements from that body of work. In this way, the elements required within the inaugural genre have been constructed by the critics who study it. Each new inaugural address follows the precedents set in the inaugurals before it and adds to the understanding of the inaugural genre. Drawing from the work of Campbell and Jamieson on the genre of inaugural address, I analyze the ways that Trump subverts the inaugural genre. I argue that through these subversions, Trump creates space for future presidents to follow the new precedents he has established through his inaugural. If Trump's subversions remain throughout future inaugural addresses, a substantial risk of disunity and division could beset the American electorate.

## Chapter 1: What makes an Inaugural Address?

On January 20th 2017, Donald Trump became president of the United States of America and gave his inaugural address. Trump's inauguration occurred after a divisive election where he was one of the least popular presidential candidates in history<sup>1</sup> and won the election and became the fifth president in the history of the United States to lose the popular vote but win the electoral college.<sup>2</sup> Following these events, Trump then delivered his controversial inaugural address in which he subverted many of the elements of the inaugural genre. In order to shed light on Trump's inaugural address, I will conduct a genre analysis of Donald Trump's inaugural address. My primary artifact will be the ABC video of Donald Trump's inauguration address and will be supported by the transcript of the inaugural address provided by the White House. I am interested in not only in the text of the speech, but the performance of the inaugural address delivered by President Trump. For this reason, I have chosen to analyze the video depicting Trump's inaugural address, rather than just the transcript.

When analyzing Donald Trump's inaugural address, I am most interested in how Trump's speech relates to the inaugural genre as a whole. In particular, I am interested in how Trump subverts the inaugural genre by expanding the interpretation of the required elements of the inaugural address. The expansion of the inaugural

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<sup>1</sup> Harry Enten, "Americans' Distaste For Both Trump And Clinton Is Record-Breaking," *FiveThirtyEight*, publish date: 5/5/16, access date: 11/11/17, <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/americans-distaste-for-both-trump-and-clinton-is-record-breaking/>.

<sup>2</sup> "Presidential Election Results: Donald Trump Wins," *New York Times*, publish date: August 9, 2017, access date: 11/11/17 <https://www.nytimes.com/elections/results/president?mcubz=0>.

address allows Trump to, among other things, establish forms of unification not seen before in the inaugural genre while still technically meeting the requirements for the genre. Through my analysis, I will also discover what these subversions of the inaugural genre mean for the future of the genre, and what it could mean for the future of the United States. For this reason, genre theory and Campbell and Jamieson's work on the inaugural genre are particularly important. I am also interested in work that discusses different forms of unity and process of unification, since these are both critical elements of the inaugural genre. Therefore, I will detail the current understanding of genre, identify the characteristics of the inaugural genre, and provide an understanding of unification and forms of unity.

## **Genre**

For my thesis, I will primarily use generic analysis of Donald Trump's inaugural address. Campbell and Jamieson explain that "a genre is a complex, an amalgam, a constellation of substantive, situational, and stylistic elements."<sup>3</sup> They explain that genres are established by similarities throughout substantive and stylistic forms<sup>4</sup> and that these forms, such as refutation and repetition, often appear as "stylistic and substantive responses to perceived situational demands."<sup>5</sup> In "Form and Genre," Campbell and Jamieson gesture to the fact that inaugurals may be a distinct genre but pose several questions that complicated that assumption, finally ending the

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<sup>3</sup> Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Jamieson. "Form and Genre in Rhetorical Criticism: An Introduction." *Theoretical Perspectives*, 1978, 14.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid 14.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid 15.

conversation without definitively stating whether or not inaugurals are a genre.<sup>6</sup> In *Presidents, Creating the Presidency*, Campbell and Jamieson firmly succeed in answering their own questions and establish that inaugurals are a genre, saying “despite [inaugural addresses] apparent dissimilarities, we shall approach these addresses as a genre, illuminating their common symbolic functions and identifying the qualities that make them distinct.”<sup>7</sup> They then present five substantive elements of inaugurals:

The presidential inaugural (1) unifies the people by reconstituting its members as “the people,” who can ratify and witness the ceremony; (2) rehearses communal values drawn from the past; (3) sets forth the political principles that will guide the new administration; and (4) demonstrates through enactment that the president appreciates the requirements and limitations of executive functions.<sup>8</sup>

Campbell and Jamieson later identify that the fifth requirement of inaugurals addresses is the use of epideictic language.<sup>9</sup> By identifying these elements, Campbell and Jamieson’s work has become the baseline for understanding what inaugurals should be.

While Campbell and Jamieson have established the definitive model of an inaugural address, other scholars have made other useful contributions to the study of the inaugural genre and have identified other recurrent elements that fit within Campbell and Jamieson’s model. Some scholars produced content based analyses<sup>10</sup> while others like Elizabeth Dudash detailed specific elements inaugural addresses have

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<sup>6</sup> Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Jamieson. “Form and Genre in Rhetorical Criticism: An Introduction.” *Theoretical Perspectives*, 1978, 19.

<sup>7</sup> Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Jamieson, *Presidents, Creating the Presidency: Deeds Done in Words*. (University of Chicago Press, 2008), 29.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid 31.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid 46.

<sup>10</sup> John McDiarmid, “Presidential Inaugural Addresses-A Study in Verbal Symbols,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 1 (1937) 79-82 and Lee Sigelman, “Presidential Inaugurals: The Modernization of a Genre,” *Political Communication* 13 (1996): 81-92.

in certain situations.<sup>11</sup> David Ericson adopts the same approach as Dudash and describes eleven recurrent and prominent themes in inaugural addresses. Ericson indicates that while each element does not appear within every inaugural address<sup>12</sup> these elements are “definitive of the more permanent, cultural features of American Politics.”<sup>13</sup> He argues:

The eleven inaugural themes are: (1) civic virtue; (2) nonpartisanship; (3) national unity; (4) general policy principles; (5) cooperation with Congress; (6) popular support; (7) a providential supreme being; (8) the American mission; (9) political continuity; (10) the president's role as defender of the Constitution and union; and (11) federalism.<sup>14</sup>

As further demonstrated in the work of Tammy Vigil, these themes fit into Campbell and Jamieson's existing model and are ways that one might meet the required elements of the inaugural genre.<sup>15</sup>

Given that Trump subverts and interacts with the inaugural genre through his speech, it is important to understand scholarship that investigates ways in which the inaugural genre can change. Vigil presents the inaugural genre as being more flexible without subverting Campbell and Jamieson's model and argues for the inclusion of Ericson's work, and other works like it, into the understanding of Campbell and Jamieson's requirements. Vigil argues that President George W. Bush expanded the inaugural genre by giving three speeches at different times and events that collectively functioned as his inaugural address.<sup>16</sup> Using the precedent established by Campbell and

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<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Dudash, “International Appeal in the Presidential Inaugural: An Update on Genre and an Expansion of Argument,” *Contemporary Argumentation and Debate* Vol. 28 (2007): 47-64.

<sup>12</sup> David Ericson, “Presidential Inaugural Addresses and American Political Culture,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* Vol. 27, No. 4 (1997): 729.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid* 727.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid* 728-729.

<sup>15</sup> Tammy Vigil, “George W. Bush's First Three Inaugural Addresses: Testing the Utility of the Inaugural Genre,” *Southern Communication Journal* Vol. 78, No. 5 (2013): 429-436.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid* 427.

Jamieson, Vigil works through each established element of inaugural addresses and demonstrates how President Bush met each requirement over the course of all three speeches. She concludes by suggesting that genre be treated as a “classifying statement”<sup>17</sup> that allows room for flexibility. Vigil’s conclusion suggests that the five requirements established by Campbell and Jamieson are flexible and might not be necessary in every iteration of the inaugural address.

In my analysis of Trump’s inaugural address, I will draw on Campbell and Jamieson’s articulation of genre and I will use their work on the inaugural genre as the model for inaugural addresses. I will use Ericson’s work to determine the different ways that Trump’s inaugural address might be able to fit Campbell and Jamieson’s inaugural requirements while using Vigil’s work in order to determine the effect of Trump’s subversions of the inaugural genre.

## **Unification**

Since unity and the constitution of “the people” are such important requirements for Campbell and Jamieson, and since unity is addressed in unique ways in Trump’s inaugural address, I will engage the theories of several scholars to determine the ways in which this unity is established and the kind of unity Trump establishes.

Given Trump’s use of a narrative in his inaugural address, Maurice Charland’s theory of constitutive rhetoric is illuminating. Charland establishes that constitutive

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<sup>17</sup> Tammy Vigil, “George W. Bush’s First Three Inaugural Addresses: Testing the Utility of the Inaugural Genre,” *Southern Communication Journal* Vol. 78, No. 5 (2013): 429-436.

rhetoric calls an audience into being through narrative discourse<sup>18</sup> and uses constitutive rhetoric to show how “subject and audiences are constituted as subjects through a process of identification with a textual position,” and that “persons are subjects from the moment they acquire language and the capacity to speak and be spoken to.”<sup>19</sup> Charland identifies that one of the ideological effects of constitutive rhetoric is that it creates the illusion that a subject has freedom from their narrative.<sup>20</sup> Central to Charland’s argument is the notion of interpellation.<sup>21</sup> Interpellation is understood as “the very moment one enters into a rhetorical situation, that is as soon as an individual recognizes and acknowledges being addressed.”<sup>22</sup> Once individuals are interpellated, as the audience they are “always already” subjects of the narrative.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, constitutive rhetoric is able to create an audience that can easily interpellate themselves in the narrative told through constitutive rhetoric. Furthermore, interpellation transcends persuasion, since at the moment an audience recognizes themselves as being addressed, they are already captured by the narrative.<sup>24</sup>

While it is important to understand the ways unity can be constructed, it is equally important to understand different types of unity in order to better understand the relationship the speaker establishes with the audience. Danielle Allen describes two

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<sup>18</sup> Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: *The Case of the Peuple Quebecois*," in *The Routledge Reader in Rhetorical Criticism*, ed. by Brian Ott and Greg Dickinson (Routledge, 2013), 432-437.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid 444.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid 438-439.

<sup>21</sup> For more on interpellation see Louis Althusser, *Lenin, and Philosophy and other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press) 1971.

<sup>22</sup> Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: *The Case of the Peuple Quebecois*," in *The Routledge Reader in Rhetorical Criticism*, ed. by Brian Ott and Greg Dickinson (Routledge, 2013), 436.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid 439.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid 432-436.

different types of unity. The first type espouses the idea of “oneness”<sup>25</sup> while the second concerns “wholeness.”<sup>26</sup> While the distinctions are subtle, oneness is more focused on assimilation and a mentality where one is either in or out as a member of the community, while wholeness accepts a range of diversity and difference.

Critically important to the discussion of unification and the different forms of unity is establishing an understanding of the effects of unification and exclusion. Since Trump’s inaugural address uses conceptions of unity not traditionally found in the inaugural address, it is important to understand what might happen as a result of direct exclusion. Mary Stuckey establishes that presidents maintain unity by using their powers of exclusion and inclusion, and indicates what might happen if a president were to fail to provide unity. Stuckey argues that inclusion and exclusion are enabled through the presidential institution’s definitional power, are enacted through presidential rhetoric and “presidents enact these processes through specific rhetorical and political choices.”<sup>27</sup> Stuckey indicates that presidents don’t use direct exclusion in their speeches<sup>28</sup> because “overt exclusion is itself politically problematic”<sup>29</sup> and articulates that the nation wants to be unified by their president.<sup>30</sup> Following this argument, one can assume that if a president excludes or deliberately alienates people, the president would suffer from their failure to unify the people, and the people might stop supporting the president. Therefore, Stuckey has established tangible

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<sup>25</sup> Danielle Allen, *Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since Brown v. Board of Education* (The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 12.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid 17.

<sup>27</sup> Mary Stuckey, introduction to *Defining Americans: The Presidency and National Identity* (University Press of Kansas, 2004), 4.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid 3.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid 6.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid 1-17.

consequences, both for failing to unify the people in general, and failing to unify the people during the inaugural address.

In my analysis, I will examine the ways in which Trump unifies the people. I will use Charland's theory of constitutive rhetoric to analyze his narrative of the past and use Allen to indicate the type of national unity that Trump creates. Finally I will use Stuckey's work to determine the effect of Trump's unification strategies.

## **Chapter 2: Trump and the Inaugural Address.**

President Donald Trump's inaugural address subverts the inaugural genre by expanding the ways that U.S. presidents can meet the required elements of the inaugural. Trump's subversion of the inaugural genre establishes a looser interpretation of these required elements for presidents in the future. In this way, Trump's inaugural address is a significant addition to the inaugural genre that holds the potential to transform it. By performing genre analysis on his address, I will show how Trump meets a technical definition of the requirements for the inaugural genre and breaks the traditional understanding of the requirements.

In my analysis, I will use Campbell and Jamieson's five required elements of an inaugural address in order to perform a generic analysis. Importantly, I will not include a discussion of Campbell and Jamieson's last requirement: epideictic in the inaugural address. Whether Trump uses epideictic language is not a point of contention in Trump's inaugural address. I will therefore focus my analysis on Campbell and Jamieson's other requirements since they yield much more that can be analyzed. Through this analysis, I will show the ways in which Trump subverts the genre and uncover the effects of the subversion in each specific case. In my conclusion, I will show how Trump's subversions of the inaugural genre could end up changing the way we understand the inaugural genre, and what this might mean for the future of the genre and for United States in general.

## Constituting the People

The first and most important requirement of a presidential inaugural address, according to Campbell and Jamieson, is that it “unifies the audience by reconstituting its members as ‘the people,’ who can witness and ratify the ceremony.”<sup>31</sup> In his inaugural, Trump constructs a particular type of unity and disrupts the traditional interpretation of unity and “the people” in three ways. Through the use of pronouns, Trump creates a division between himself and the people, and more subtle divisions within the people. By establishing a narrative of devastation, Trump singles out and constructs a particular group within “the people,” while isolating the rest. Finally, Donald Trump establishes a form of unity characterized by loyalty and allegiance while disregarding traditional understandings of unity in the inaugural address.

### “We” vs. “You”

The use of pronouns in the inaugural address has functioned as one of the many ways that presidents strive to create unity with their audience. In the inaugural, most presidents use “we,” “us,” and “our” to describe the country and its citizens.<sup>32</sup> To the casual observer, Trump appears to do this throughout his speech. In the opening paragraphs of his speech, Trump exclusively uses “we” to describe the people and the historic moment by saying, “we, the citizens of America, are now joined in a great national effort to rebuild our country and to restore its promise for all of our people.

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<sup>31</sup> Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Jamieson. *Presidents, Creating the Presidency: Deeds Done in Words*. (University of Chicago Press, 2008) 31.

<sup>32</sup> Lee Sigelman. “Presidential Inaugurals: The Modernization of a Genre.” *Political Communication*, (1996): 86.

Together, we will determine the course of America and the world for years to come. We will face challenges. We will confront hardships. But we will get the job done.”<sup>33</sup>

The opening of Trump’s inaugural suggests that Trump’s inaugural address will be a by the book addition to the inaugural genre and forecasts that Donald Trump will make significant strides to reconstruct and bring together “the people” in his inaugural. However, that changes abruptly when Trump transitions to using less inclusive pronouns by saying “but we are transferring power from Washington, D.C. and giving it back to you, the American People.” In this one sentence, Trump switches from using “we” to using “you.” This creates a division between Trump and the people since, while first person plural pronouns “connote mutuality and community,” second-person, third-person, and first-person singular pronouns erect “verbal barriers.”<sup>34</sup> In the presentation of his inaugural, Trump even points at the camera when he says “you,”<sup>35</sup> making it apparent that Trump is not a part of “the people.”

Directly following Trump’s transition from using “we” to using “you,” Trump provides a narrative of the past that makes almost exclusive use of “you.” Donald Trump uses specific pronouns in this narrative in order to create further divisions between the president and “the people,” Congress and “the people,” and the president and congress. Directly after Trump’s first sentence in which he uses “you,” he continues by saying:

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

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<sup>33</sup> Donald Trump, “Trump Inauguration Speech (FULL),” *ABC News*, Publish date 1/20/2017, Access date 10/21/2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRBsJNdK1t0> (0:56)

<sup>34</sup> Lee Sigelman. “Presidential Inaugurals: The Modernization of a Genre.” *Political Communication*, (1996): 86.

<sup>35</sup> Donald Trump, “Trump Inauguration Speech (FULL),” *ABC News*, Publish date 1/20/2017, Access date 10/21/2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRBsJNdK1t0> (2:18)

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.<sup>36</sup>

Trump makes pronouns work for him in this narrative in order to create the three aforementioned divisions. First, Trump uses phrases like “a small group in our nation’s Capital” “Washington,” “politicians,” and “the establishment,” to refer almost assuredly to the members of Congress and previous presidents and administrations. Trump then places the Washington of the past in direct opposition to “the people,” constructing them as being in conflict with one another since Washington has prospered while “the people” have suffered. In this section Trump shows that Congress has harmed “the people,” and they are the ones who have suffered.

Particularly of note is Trump’s use of “the people.” Trump frames “the people” in opposition to politicians and calls his audience “you,” making it clear that “the people” does not include himself or politicians. This is the first time that Trump establishes that “the people” is not a completely inclusive term. Trump continues by saying “their victories have not been your victories.” In this sentence and in the following sentences, Trump’s narrative about an abusive Washington and a suffering people is restated with Washington as “they” and the people as “you,” deepening the divide between Congress and “the people.”

Trump also uses pronouns to excise himself from both groups. Rhetorically, Trump frames himself as neither a politician, nor a part of the people. Trump divides himself from both of them, purposefully refusing to use “we” or “us.” While Trump

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<sup>36</sup> Donald Trump, “Trump Inauguration Speech (FULL),” *ABC News*, Publish date 1/20/2017, Access date 10/21/2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRBsJNdK1t0> (2:29)

does use “our,” this inclusive pronoun is contrasted by the heavy use of “they” and “you.” Trump’s use of “they” and “you” pronouns are most enlightening, especially paired with Trump emphasizing point at the camera whenever he says “you,”<sup>37</sup> because these pronouns do not include Trump in either “the people” or in “politicians.” Despite the use of “our,” Trump has structured his speech so that he is his own entity, separate from politicians and separate from the people.

Finally, there is the possibility that when Trump says “we,” both in the earlier sections of his speech, and later on, he is never actually referring to all Americans, and is instead referring to his administration. In the middle of Trump’s narrative that divides people from politicians through pronouns, Trump says, “the establishment protected itself, but not the citizens of our country.” The use of “our” here, and every other time it is used in this manner in the block quote above, is interesting since it does not seem to be in line with the previous section that use “their” and “your.” Trump’s transition sentence is similarly interesting since he says “but we are transferring power from Washington, D.C. and giving it back to you, the American People,” switching from “we” to “you” mid-sentence.

Shifting pronouns in this way necessitates different understandings of “we” and “our.” When “we” is used in the transition sentence to transition into “you,” the inherent disconnect between those two words has to be settled. Put plainly, the “we” Trump refers to in this sentence cannot refer to the same “you” that is referenced later in the sentence. Trump therefore must be using “we” in a way that does not refer to the American People. Similarly with Trump’s use of “our,” when “you” is used in the

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<sup>37</sup> Donald Trump, “Trump Inauguration Speech (FULL),” *ABC News*, Publish date 1/20/2017, Access date 10/21/2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRBsJNdK1t0> (2:18), (3:07), (3:35)

same sentence, or when division between “our” and “you” is made in neighboring sentences, “our” must be being used in a manner that does not include the group referred to as “you.” Therefore, when Trump uses “our,” he does not include the American People.

Taking this analysis into account, there is one readily available explanation: that Trump’s usage of “we” and “our” refers to himself and to his administration. Examined in this manner, it is possible to see a rewriting of both sentences: “but *my administration* is transferring power from Washington, D.C...” and “the establishment protected itself but not the citizens of *my administration's* country.” If this is the case, each time Trump uses “we” in the beginning of his speech takes on a new light. It means that Trump never claims the victory for the people. Rhetorically, he has always claimed that the victory is his, and his alone. Even considering the section where Trump distances himself from the people with his narrative about “Washington flourishing,” the interpretation of the pronouns that I’ve detailed means that Trump never established himself as a part of “the people” from the beginning.

### *A Narrative of Division*

While I have already addressed the section of Trump’s inaugural address that establishes a division between “Washington” and “the people,” Trump’s rhetoric also benefits from being analyzed as narrative, not just simply being analyzed by its pronoun usage. As previously mentioned, Trump uses this section to create a division between himself and the people, the people and Congress (and all politicians for that matter), and a division between himself and congress. This section is a narrative Trump tells in order to constitute a specific people. Trump begins his narrative by saying “a

small group in our nation's Capital has reaped the rewards of government while the people have borne the cost." From the beginning of this section, Trump characterizes Congress as a group of greedy people constantly out for their own interests and directly profiting off of the suffering of the American people. Through the use of this specific narrative, Trump deepens the divide between the people and Congress and also manages to construct another group from "the people."

Once Trump has established the previously described narrative of conflict, he makes his point even clearer by saying "January 20th, 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."<sup>38</sup> Once again, the narrative details a conflict between the people and politicians, but these sentences also makes it clear that "the people" who will rule the nation, and "the people" Trump has been referring to, are the forgotten men and women. Through these sentences, Trump splits the people into two groups: the forgotten men and women who he primarily addresses through the inaugural whenever he says "the people," and everyone else in the United States.

By using his narrative in the ways previously described, Trump uses constitutive rhetoric in order to construct "the forgotten men and women" as a group that no longer needs to be persuaded. By the unconscious act of recognizing themselves as the "forgotten people" through Trump's efforts in his inaugural, this new people have already accepted themselves into Trump's narrative.

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<sup>38</sup> Donald Trump, "Trump Inauguration Speech (FULL)," *ABC News*, Publish date 1/20/2017, Access date 10/21/2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRBsJNdK1t0> (4:22)

## *Loyalty vs. Unity*

Finally, the vision of unity that Trump advances is especially important. Instead of walking in the path that other presidents have set and offering a conception of unity that bands all people together as citizens of the nation, the vision of unity that Trump constructs is characterized by loyalty and allegiance. Trump introduces the idea of allegiance and loyalty first when he says “the oath of office I take today is an oath of allegiance to all Americans.”<sup>39</sup> Later, this concept is reintroduced when Trump says, “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.”<sup>40</sup> This conceptualization of unity is radically different from the unity that Campbell and Jamieson detail in their work. These above sentences shift the focus of Trump’s inaugural from unifying “the people” to demanding loyalty throughout “the people.” While there are some sections where Trump provides unifying language, such as when he says that children from Detroit and Nebraska are equal under God,<sup>41</sup> this language is overshadowed by his messages of loyalty.

Unity and loyalty embody two fundamentally different dynamics. Though loyalty is a form of unity, loyalty is more focused on dependence on a leader and is generally associated with the military. Demanding loyalty necessitates that there are consequences for disloyalty, as well as consequences for not pledging your loyalty in the first place. By contrast, asking for unity does not necessarily imply a consequence

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<sup>39</sup> Donald Trump, “Trump Inauguration Speech (FULL),” *ABC News*, Publish date 1/20/2017, Access date 10/21/2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRBsJNdK1t0> (6:52)

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid* (11:56)

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid* (15:24)

if one fails to unify. For this reason, it is particularly significant that Trump demands loyalty instead of asking for unity. This shows that Trump's vision of "the people" entails consequences for those who do not fall in line.

The connection between loyalty and the military is even made explicit when Trump says: "It is 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."<sup>42</sup> By urging Americans to adopt the ideologies of the military, Trump solidifies the connection between loyalty and the military and constituting "the people" as his soldiers. This logic becomes even more prevalent because patriotism is invoked in both of the above phrases that mention loyalty. Through these two passages, Trump rhetorically transforms the American people into patriots and soldiers, bound by allegiance to the country, and an oath of loyalty as Americans. In particular, "we all bleed the same red blood of patriots," is an especially vivid and violent image. By invoking this image, Trump implies that Americans are bound to the American mission until death.

The conception of unity based on loyalty recalls the concept of "oneness" that Allen details in *Talking to Strangers*. Like loyalty, "oneness" has ties with assimilation, and in this model people focus on becoming "the people" instead of unifying because of their differences.<sup>43</sup> By contrast, "wholeness" is the concept that people form a collective because of their differences and find strength and unity in the way they are

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<sup>42</sup> Donald Trump, "Trump Inauguration Speech (FULL)," *ABC News*, Publish date 1/20/2017, Access date 10/21/2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRBsJNdK1t0> (14:50)

<sup>43</sup> Danielle Allen, *Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since Brown v. Board of Education* (The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 17.

different<sup>44</sup> and is much more in line with the way that Campbell and Jamieson detail unity in the inaugural address. Trump's inaugural address reconstructs the idea of oneness in "the people." For Trump, citizens of the United States must fall in line and assimilate to his ideals and become Americans. In Trump's vision of the United States, there is no room for difference.

## **Communal Values**

Campbell and Jamieson also specify that the second requirement for the inaugural address is that it "rehearses communal values drawn from the past."<sup>45</sup> According to Campbell and Jamieson "in order to be invested, presidents must demonstrate their qualifications for office by venerating the past and showing that the traditions of the presidency will continue unbroken with them."<sup>46</sup> Therefore, in order to meet Campbell and Jamison's second requirement the president's inaugural address must (1) venerate the past and (2) must show adherence to national values. For this reason, it is particularly important to evaluate the way Trump addresses both requirements.

While rehearsing communal values is its own distinct requirement, it is also important to consider that establishing these national values can function as one way to constitute "the people." However, instead of doing this Donald Trump rehearses communal values that appeal to a certain group of people, thus rendering plain the fact

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<sup>44</sup> Danielle Allen, *Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since Brown v. Board of Education* (The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 17.

<sup>45</sup> Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Jamieson. *Presidents, Creating the Presidency: Deeds Done in Words*. (University of Chicago Press, 2008) 31.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid* 37.

that he splits “the people” in separate groups and primarily appeals to “the forgotten men and women.”

*What’s Past is Prologue*

In a clear rejection of Campbell and Jamieson’s requirement that presidents venerate the past, Donald Trump does not praise the actions of past presidents. It is not simply that Trump fails to venerate the past. Rather, there is no effort made by Trump to praise the actions of any individual president or administration. Trump does not even quote past presidents or use their words to speak about national values, a strategy that is often used by presidents to meet this requirement.<sup>47</sup> Instead, Trump uses the narrative about “Washington flourishing” to degrade the past by condemning the actions of previous administrations, as well as the members of congress, by portraying them as reaping the fruit of “the people’s” suffering. Through this narrative, Trump describes a system of oppression by politicians of the past that has devastated the people and created the “American Carnage” that devastates the land today.

By expanding the narrative in which “Washington flourished,” Trump lays the groundwork to set himself up as a savior and begins the work of showing that venerating the past is a disingenuous act. In his description of the present, Trump constructs an imaginary where the United States is devastated, laid low by the selfish actions of politicians from the recent past. Trump says:

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 knowledge; and the crime and gangs and drugs

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<sup>47</sup> Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Jamieson. *Presidents, Creating the Presidency: Deeds Done in Words*. (University of Chicago Press, 2008) 38-39.

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.<sup>48</sup>

This is startling rhetoric to hear from the president in the inaugural address. No president has ever before used the words “tombstones,” “trapped,” “robbed,” or “carnage” in an inaugural address,<sup>49</sup> making these phrases even more significant. By describing the current American landscape in such a bleak way, Trump inaugural constructs an imaginary where the United States is a war-torn land devastated by the actions of the leaders of the recent past (including, but not limited to Barack Obama).

In order to create a savior narrative, Trump’s places all of the blame for the current situation on past administrations while promising that he will secure a safe future. By describing the United States as a place where tombstones dot the landscape, the people are trapped and robbed, and where “the wealth of our middle class has been ripped from their homes,” Donald Trump presents a problem that urgently needs a solution. Trump then immediately provides a solution by offering himself up as a savior by promising “our country will thrive and prosper again”<sup>50</sup> and “a new national pride will stir our souls, lift our sights, and heal our divisions.”<sup>51</sup> In this way, Trump constructs himself as the savior of the United States, a man who “will fight for you with every breath in my body – and I will never, ever let you down.”<sup>52</sup> In doing so,

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<sup>48</sup> Donald Trump, “Trump Inauguration Speech (FULL),” *ABC News*, Publish date 1/20/2017, Access date 10/21/2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRBsJNdK1t0> (5:37-6:25)

<sup>49</sup> Phillip Bump, “Trump’s inaugural address was demonstrably bleak.” *Washington Post*. Publish date 1/20/2017. Access date 10/21/2017. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2017/01/20/trumps-inaugural-address-was-demonstrably-bleak/?utm\\_term=.b95be484da98](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2017/01/20/trumps-inaugural-address-was-demonstrably-bleak/?utm_term=.b95be484da98)

<sup>50</sup> Donald Trump, “Trump Inauguration Speech (FULL),” *ABC News*, Publish date 1/20/2017, Access date 10/21/2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRBsJNdK1t0> (14:20)

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid* (14:43)

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid* (9:47)

Trump trades an opportunity to venerate the past and constitute “the people” in order to position himself as a savior deserving of the loyalty of all Americans.

Donald Trump also uses his “American Carnage” narrative in order to portray “venerating the past” as disingenuous. After describing the past and present and offering himself as the savior, Trump says, “...that is the past. And now we are looking only to the future.”<sup>53</sup> This insistence that “we are looking only to the future” signals that the United States is moving beyond the devastation that the actions of past administrations wrought. The implication in this statement and in Trump’s extension of the “American Carnage” narrative is that the past cannot and, arguably more importantly, should not be venerated. Given how terrible Trump claims that past administrations left the people, Trump’s argument is that it would be disingenuous to the forgotten men and women to praise the past. Instead, the United States should only look toward securing a future. In this way, Trump portrays “venerating the past” as a value that is far from being a communal value and introduces the concept that venerating the past may no longer be necessary, and indeed, may no longer be possible.

### *Strength, Wealth, Pride, Safety and Greatness*

After considering why Trump does not venerate the past, it is important to understand what communal values Trump actually advances in his inaugural and the ways in which he advances them. The values that Trump is most concerned with advancing are listed plainly at the end of Trump’s speech when Trump says “together, We Will Make America Strong Again. We Will Make America Wealthy Again. We

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<sup>53</sup> Donald Trump, “Trump Inauguration Speech (FULL),” *ABC News*, Publish date 1/20/2017, Access date 10/21/2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRBsJNdK1t0> (8:23)

Will Make America Proud Again. We Will Make America Safe Again. And, Yes, Together, We Will Make America Great Again.”<sup>54</sup> Each instance of “Make America *Something* Again,” is a value Trump advances in his speech. Therefore, Trump promotes strength, wealth, pride, and safety as communal American values, with Greatness situated as the result of achieving the other four values.

Trump maps his four values onto enduring themes in presidential inaugurals and positions them as being communal values, despite these values actually being more important to Trump and “the forgotten people.” Specifically, Trump uses the themes of a providential supreme being and the American mission in order to promote his own values. This is particularly effective because both themes are recognizable as communal values to “the people,” but are used to promote the values that Trump views as American. Therefore, Trump maps strength, wealth, pride, and safety onto these recognizable communal values in order to construct them as communal values.

In order to rehearse shared communal values and introduce notions of protectionism while advancing his own value of safety, Trump invokes God. The invocation of a supreme being is one of the eleven themes that Ericson identifies as enduring in American Politics.<sup>55</sup> These themes are important since they “show how the ends outlined by Campbell and Jamieson are actually met.”<sup>56</sup> Aside from his blessing at the very end of his address, these are the only two times that Trump specifically invokes God. Trump first invokes of God by saying “The Bible tells us, ‘how good and

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<sup>54</sup> Donald Trump, “Trump Inauguration Speech (FULL),” *ABC News*, Publish date 1/20/2017, Access date 10/21/2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRBsJNdK1t0> (16:25). Capitalization taken from the White House Transcript.

<sup>55</sup> David Ericson. “Presidential Inaugural Addresses and American Political Culture.” *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (1997): 727.

<sup>56</sup> Vigil, Tammy. “George W. Bush’s First Three Inaugural Addresses: Testing the Utility of the Inaugural Genre.” *Southern Communication Journal*, Vol. 78, No. 5 (2013): 429.

pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity,”<sup>57</sup> therefore establishing that Americans are God’s People. This is contrasted to when Trump says shortly beforehand that, “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.”<sup>58</sup> By positioning Americans as God’s People, a people that has been understood as necessarily opposed to and threatened by “radical Islamic terrorism,” Trump justifies his call for the United States to eradicate “radical Islamic terrorism” as a way to keep the United States safe. The concept of safety is brought up once more when Trump says “we will be protected by God.”<sup>59</sup> Through these invocations of a supreme being, Trump justifies his calls for protectionism and imbeds safety within the communal value of religion.

Trump also uses the American mission in order to advance his values of strength and pride. Post World War II, the American mission has been understood as “positively promoting democracy around the world.”<sup>60</sup> Trump therefore promotes the American mission by arguing for the expansion of democracy through his promise that “we will seek friendship and goodwill with the nations of the world,” proposing that Americans “let [our way of life] shine as an example for everyone to follow,”<sup>61</sup> and further promising to “unite the civilized world against radical Islamic Terrorism, which

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<sup>57</sup> Donald Trump, “Trump Inauguration Speech (FULL),” *ABC News*, Publish date 1/20/2017, Access date 10/21/2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRBsJNdK1t0> (12:25)

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid* (11:36)

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid* (13:14)

<sup>60</sup> David Ericson. “Presidential Inaugural Addresses and American Political Culture.” *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (1997): 737.

<sup>61</sup> Donald Trump, “Trump Inauguration Speech (FULL),” *ABC News*, Publish date 1/20/2017, Access date 10/21/2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRBsJNdK1t0> (11:25)

we will eradicate completely from the face of the Earth.”<sup>62</sup> Trump’s construction of all American’s as “God’s people,” is particularly significant because Vigil identifies that “the appeal to a higher being evokes... a sense of righteousness in the American mission.”<sup>63</sup>

Interlaced through Donald Trump’s construction of the American mission are his values of strength and pride. The call to completely eradicate “radical Islamic terrorism” contains sentiments of keeping the United States safe, as previously mentioned, but with this new call to arms, Trump also emphasizes the United States’ strength. It is impossible not to recognize calling for the eradication of an entire group of people as anything other than a show of strength. Furthermore, the articulation of the new American mission as being “America First,” is a conception that implies that the United States also necessarily be the strongest nation. Trump uses these strategies to inextricably link his new vision of the United States to the concept of strength.

Trump also interlaces pride with his conception of the American mission. Trump proposes that as a part of the American mission, the United States should “shine as an example for everyone to follow.” Trump therefore portrays the United States as a nation that is worth being part of. This same logic is contained within “America First,” meaning that Trump’s new vision of the United States that is linked with strength is also linked with maintaining national pride.

Lastly, Trump’s value of wealth is advanced through his efforts to establish “providing for the economy” as a communal value. While the providing for the

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<sup>62</sup> Donald Trump, “Trump Inauguration Speech (FULL),” *ABC News*, Publish date 1/20/2017, Access date 10/21/2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRBsJNdK1t0> (11:40)

<sup>63</sup> Vigil, Tammy. “George W. Bush’s First Three Inaugural Addresses: Testing the Utility of the Inaugural Genre.” *Southern Communication Journal*, Vol. 78, No. 5 (2013): 431.

economy is not included as one of Ericson’s eleven themes and is not specifically referenced by Campbell and Jamieson, it is an important theme that Trump poses as a communal value. Trump does a lot of work to emphasize the importance of the economy and of wealth. Through statements like “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”<sup>64</sup> and “every decision on trade, on taxes, on immigration, on foreign affairs, will be made to benefit American workers and American families,”<sup>65</sup> Trump emphasizes how important the economy is. The economy is also an important part of his narrative about the “forgotten men and women,” since he argues their situation is only so bad because the United States has “made other countries rich while the wealth, strength, and confidence of our country has disappeared over the horizon”<sup>66</sup> and “the wealth of our middle class has been ripped from their homes and then redistributed across the entire world.”<sup>67</sup>

By portraying the economy as a problem that needs to be addressed and an issue that the forgotten people have already recognized as essential for their continuation, Trump succeeds in framing wealth as a communal value. By talking about the economy, Trump is able to advance his value of wealth by saying, “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.”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Donald Trump, “Trump Inauguration Speech (FULL),” *ABC News*, Publish date 1/20/2017, Access date 10/21/2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRBsJNdK1t0> (10:41)

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid* (9:12)

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid* (7:44)

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid* (8:11)

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid* (10:02)

## Administrative Philosophy

The third requirement that Campbell and Jamieson identify in the inaugural genre is that a presidential inaugural address “sets forth the political principles that will guide the new administration.”<sup>69</sup> Trump adheres to the original interpretation pretty heavily, with only one oddity that speaks more towards Trump’s understanding of his own limits rather than his administrative philosophy. When explaining what he will do as president, Donald Trump follows in the tradition of past inaugurals by being “so vague that is difficult to determine not only what they are proposing to do, but if they are even proposing to do anything.”<sup>70</sup> Trump makes a litany of promises in this vein when he says:

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.<sup>71</sup>

Here, while Trump does propose some clear goals for his administration, he proposes no mechanism for many of these goals and leaves others open ended and vague. For instance, while Trump promises to build new infrastructure, he does not explain what specific parts of airports, bridges, and tunnels will be updated and also declines to detail a mechanism for how this change will be enacted. Similarly, while bringing back jobs, bringing back borders, and building infrastructure are specific goals with which there are specific ways to accomplish, “bringing back our dreams,” and

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<sup>69</sup> Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Jamieson. *Presidents, Creating the Presidency: Deeds Done in Words*. (University of Chicago Press, 2008) 31.

<sup>70</sup> David Ericson. “Presidential Inaugural Addresses and American Political Culture.” *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (1997): 732.

<sup>71</sup> Donald Trump, “Trump Inauguration Speech (FULL),” *ABC News*, Publish date 1/20/2017, Access date 10/21/2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRBsJNdK1t0> (10:11)

“bringing back our wealth” are incredibly vague, with almost an unlimited number of possible interpretations for “bringing back our dreams.”

In the context of the inaugural, this vagueness is not necessarily detrimental due to the fact that Campbell and Jamieson note that “specific policies are proposed for contemplation, not for action...”<sup>72</sup> and therefore acknowledge this vagueness is not uncommon and indeed, detailed statements of political views and administrative principles are rare. When Trump calls for protectionism and isolation in his inaugural by saying “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,”<sup>73</sup> his proposals are similarly devoid of a specified method to enact them. The only section that is unusual for establishing administrative policy is when Trump says “we will follow two simple rules: Buy American and Hire American.”<sup>74</sup>

The reason “Buy American and Hire American” is odd in the context of Trump’s inaugural is because it is not a governmental policy, it is a business policy. While Trump can implement tax and trade policies that affect the job market, he cannot directly control the actions of consumers or of businesses. He cannot stop citizens from buying Chinese-made products or from buying German-made vehicles and force them to buy American-made products. Trump also cannot stop businesses from hiring people who are not American. Therefore, the reason this policy is odd is because in his

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<sup>72</sup> Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Jamieson. *Presidents, Creating the Presidency: Deeds Done in Words*. (University of Chicago Press, 2008), 40.

<sup>73</sup> Donald Trump, “Trump Inauguration Speech (FULL),” *ABC News*, Publish date 1/20/2017, Access date 10/21/2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRBsJNdK1t0> (9:25)

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid* (10:56)

inaugural, Trump seems to imply that he *can* control these individual actions. “Buy American and Hire American” calls back to Trump’s campaign when he framed himself as businessman who could revitalize businesses. This reference to his earlier rhetoric makes these “two simple rules” more than just a reference to policy measures Trump can implement to help the economy, but a claim that Trump can personally control businesses. For these reasons, “Buy American and Hire American” is best understood not as a subversion of the administrative philosophy requirement, but as one way that Trump does not demonstrate an understanding of the limits of the presidency.

### **Understanding Limitations**

The fourth requirement that Campbell and Jamieson specify for a presidential inaugural address is that it “demonstrates through enactment that the president appreciates the requirements and limitations of executive functions.”<sup>75</sup> Vigil identifies that this requirement can be met by using the three themes that Ericson labels under “presidential humility.” These three themes are: cooperating with Congress, seeking popular support, and invoking a supreme being.<sup>76</sup> Through his inaugural, Trump dismantles the first two themes while only enacting the third. In this way, Trump positions himself as only being limited by God.

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<sup>75</sup> Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Jamieson. *Presidents, Creating the Presidency: Deeds Done in Words*. (University of Chicago Press, 2008), 31.

<sup>76</sup> Tammy Vigil, “George W. Bush’s First Three Inaugural Addresses: Testing the Utility of the Inaugural Genre,” *Southern Communication Journal* Vol. 78, No. 5 (2013): 433-434

### *Cooperation with Congress*

Throughout Trump's inaugural, he continually limits the power Congress has while simultaneously portraying himself as stronger than congress. Trump accomplishes this by limiting congress's moral standing through the aforementioned narratives that portray Congress and politicians as profiting from the suffering of "the forgotten men and women." Trump describes these politicians as traitors so that the "forgotten people" will be opposed to them since they represent the abuses of the past while being supportive of Trump since he promises to lead them into the future. In doing so, Trump limits the rhetorical power of Congress while increasing his own. Trump also portrays Congress as weak and ineffective by saying "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."<sup>77</sup> By describing Congress as "complainers," Trump rejects any cooperation with congress, demonstrating that he does not need the help of complainers who are "all talk and no action."

### *Popular Support*

In contrast to his attitude toward Congress, Donald Trump addresses the support he received, but does not address the specific exigencies surrounding his presidency. In particular, Trump's acknowledges that he would not have obtained the presidency without the people who supported him by saying, "you came by the tens of millions to become part of a historic movement the likes of which the world has never

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<sup>77</sup> Donald Trump, "Trump Inauguration Speech (FULL)," *ABC News*, Publish date 1/20/2017, Access date 10/21/2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRBsJNdK1t0> (13:37)

seen before.”<sup>78</sup> However, despite appearing thankful to all Americans, in the context of this statement “you” refers to “the forgotten men and women” since it directly follows Trump saying “the forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer. Everyone is listening to you now.”<sup>79</sup> This means that Trump is only acknowledging his political base, not the rest of the nation. This is particularly important considering that Trump did not win the popular vote. By only acknowledging his most ardent supporters, Trump ignores an important exigency and does nothing to reassure the people who did not vote for him. By implying that he only needs his base, Trump refuses to acknowledge his own limits.

### *Supreme Being*

Perhaps the only limit that Trump puts on his presidency is through his invocation of God. As many presidents before him have done,<sup>80</sup> Trump invokes God. As previously mentioned, Trump uses God as one of his communal values in his inaugural address, and makes a point to say that Americans are God’s People. However, Trump’s methods here are somewhat different than before. In order to establish his own limitations, Trump says “we will be protected by the great men and women of our military and law enforcement and, most importantly, we are protected by God.”<sup>81</sup> In this statement, Trump acknowledges that the power of God is more powerful than the military Trump commands, and therefore more powerful than

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<sup>78</sup> Donald Trump, “Trump Inauguration Speech (FULL),” *ABC News*, Publish date 1/20/2017, Access date 10/21/2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRBsJNdK1t0> (4:52)

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid* (4:39)

<sup>80</sup> Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Jamieson. *Presidents, Creating the Presidency: Deeds Done in Words*. (University of Chicago Press, 2008), 45.

<sup>81</sup> Donald Trump, “Trump Inauguration Speech (FULL),” *ABC News*, Publish date 1/20/2017, Access date 10/21/2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRBsJNdK1t0> (13:03)

Trump. Trump even ends his inaugural address with the customary: “thank you, God Bless You, and God Bless America.”<sup>82</sup>

There are only two moments when Trump’s “subordination to a higher power”<sup>83</sup> becomes complicated, though his specific invocations are enough to establish his continued subordination to God. Following Trump invoking God’s protection, Trump says “finally, we must think big and dream even bigger.”<sup>84</sup> While this could be read Trump saying that we can dream bigger than God, meaning that he has not subordinated himself to God at all, Trump’s actual performance of the inaugural disproves this. In Trump’s inaugural, he deliberately pauses between the two sentences,<sup>85</sup> marking a separation between the two sentences. This means that Trump is likely not suggesting that Americans dream bigger than God, since the two sentences are separate ideas and thoughts. The second moment Trump’s rhetoric might also suggest he is aiming higher than God is when he says “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.”<sup>86</sup> This makes it seem like Trump is aiming to accomplish tasks on a divine scale, but considering Trump’s promise to look only to the future, this does not appear to be Trump situating himself as higher than God. In addition, this seems to be another

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<sup>82</sup> Donald Trump, “Trump Inauguration Speech (FULL),” *ABC News*, Publish date 1/20/2017, Access date 10/21/2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRBsJNdK1t0> (16:47)

<sup>83</sup> Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Jamieson. *Presidents, Creating the Presidency: Deeds Done in Words*. (University of Chicago Press, 2008), 45.

<sup>84</sup> Donald Trump, “Trump Inauguration Speech (FULL),” *ABC News*, Publish date 1/20/2017, Access date 10/21/2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRBsJNdK1t0> (13:25)

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid* (13:18)

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid* (14:25)

vague administrative policy that Campbell and Jamieson identify can be expected from inaugural addresses.

## Chapter 3: The Future of the Inaugural Genre

President Donald Trump's subversion of the inaugural genre is critically important for the future of the inaugural genre and the future of the United States. At the heart of my claim is one important idea: that the inaugural genre can change if speeches that are given in the genre challenge the requirements of the genre. Campbell and Jamieson established that genres are constructed in two different ways. Genres are either inductive or deductive. Deductive genres are established from "a model or touchstone"<sup>87</sup> and have substantive, stylistic, and situational elements prescribed that any speech in the genre must meet. By contrast, inductive genres are established by looking at the various discourses over time, given in response to certain situations and determining their essential similarities. This means because inductive genres are a sum of their parts, any content that is added to an inductive genre has the potential to change the substantive, stylistic, and situational requirements of the genre.<sup>88</sup> Campbell and Jamieson say "despite [inaugural addresses] apparent dissimilarities, we shall approach these addresses as a genre, illuminating their common symbolic functions and identifying the qualities that make them distinct."<sup>89</sup> Here, Campbell and Jamieson's articulation that they are illuminating the common symbolic functions of things that appear dissimilar clearly indicates that the inaugural genre is inductively constructed.

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<sup>87</sup> Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Jamieson. "Form and Genre in Rhetorical Criticism: An Introduction." *Theoretical Perspectives*, (1978,) 18.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid 18-19

<sup>89</sup> Ibid 29

Vigil blatantly states that the inaugural genre is able to change. Vigil shows that there are two perspectives on genre, one in which genre is flexible, and the other in which genre is rigid.<sup>90</sup> Through her work, Vigil identifies that the inaugural genre had been understood as being more rigid, but challenges this rigidity by analyzing three of President George W. Bush's speeches that collectively meet Campbell and Jamieson's requirements for the inaugural genre. Vigil argues "just as the study of genres continues to evolve the genres themselves must likewise be continually tested, expanded and explored..."<sup>91</sup>

Both Campbell and Jamieson's work on genre and Vigil's work on George W. Bush and inaugural genre indicate that genres are able to change. Understanding the inaugural genre in this way gets at the real reason that Trump's subversion of many of the required elements of the inaugural genre is so important: if the subversions Trump makes in his inaugural become repeated by future presidents, these subversions might become an accepted part of the inaugural genre. Therefore, Trump has set the precedent for future presidents to unify "the people" under an oath of loyalty to the president, divide "the people" into different groups and preference only the groups that elected them, and publicly declare and demonstrate that the only limit to their power is God. If this becomes accepted as an element of the inaugural genre by a slow process of future presidents gradually adopting the subversions Trump used in his speech, the American electorate might change to become beset by disunity. Even if an inaugural address only used a few of the subversions utilized in Trump's address, and even if the

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<sup>90</sup> Tammy Vigil, "George W. Bush's First Three Inaugural Addresses: Testing the Utility of the Inaugural Genre," *Southern Communication Journal* Vol. 78, No. 5 (2013): 441.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid* 441

repetition of these subversions comes years or even decades down the line, enough repetitions of these subversions can cause them to be accepted as part of the inaugural genre by the American electorate.

While I have already indicated the overall impact of Trump's subversion on the inaugural genre as a whole, the impact of Trump's specific subversions of the genre are equally important. Trump's subversions of Campbell and Jamieson's requirements of "constituting the people" and "rehearsing communal values" all make up one larger subversion of the way unification occurs within the inaugural address. Stuckey provides us with a way to understand the impacts of these subversions and the use of division. Stuckey indicates that people want to be unified by the president and "overt exclusion itself is politically problematic."<sup>92</sup> Trump's articulation of Americans needing to be loyal is predicated on "oneness" and assimilation, and necessitates that one either be in or out of the community. This conception of unity is inherently exclusionary and the directly exclusionary use of pronouns in Trump's inaugural address only adds to the exclusionary function. However, Stuckey provides us with an impact for directly exclusionary language on the part of the president by saying "[exclusion] enabled the topoi of successful resistance within the broad structures of national governance."<sup>93</sup> Put simply, direct exclusion enables successful resistance within national governance. Stuckey's argument is especially intriguing considering that, despite the House of Representatives and the Senate being controlled by Donald

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<sup>92</sup> Mary Stuckey, introduction to *Defining Americans: The Presidency and National Identity* (University Press of Kansas, 2004), 6

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid* 2

Trump's party, five months after his election, no major legislation was passed.<sup>94</sup> It might be fair to say Trump's inability to pass major legislation, especially when the party he ran on controls the house and the senate, is indicative of a response to the divisive rhetoric of the president.

Trump's inaugural address is a new addition to an old genre, but it is an important addition that may end up changing the inaugural address. While not it is not certain that every subversion detailed here will be inducted into the inaugural genre in the future, it will be intriguing to see how the inaugural genre, and the American electorate itself, changes due to the subversions that Trump has made.

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<sup>94</sup> Tamara Keith, "Despite Claims To Contrary, Trump Has Signed No Major Laws 5 Months In," *NPR*, publish date: 6/23/17, access date: 11/11/17, <https://www.npr.org/2017/06/23/533840991/despite-claims-to-contrary-trump-has-signed-no-major-laws-5-months-in>

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