

RHETORICAL VISIONS PRESENTED IN DONALD J.  
TRUMP'S POLITICAL SPEECHES AND THEIR  
INFLUENCE ON THE SOCIAL  
REALITIES OF THE PARTICIPANTS  
IN THE JANUARY 6<sup>TH</sup>, 2021  
CAPITOL RIOT

---

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate School at the University  
of Missouri

---

In Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

---

by

DONALD L. HUGHES II

Dr. Margaret Duffy, Thesis Supervisor

DECEMBER 2022

© Copyright by Donald Lee Hughes II 2022

All Rights Reserved

The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the  
thesis entitled

RHETORICAL VISIONS PRESENTED IN DONALD J. TRUMP'S POLITICAL  
SPEECHES AND  
THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE SOCIAL REALITIES OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN  
THE  
JANUARY 6<sup>TH</sup>, 2021 CAPITOL RIOT

presented by Donald L. Hughes II,  
a candidate for the degree of Master of Arts,  
and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

---

Dr. Margaret Duffy

---

Dr. Amanda Hinnant

---

Dr. Ryan Thomas

## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to my wife, Patricia, and our three children: Aiden, Aika, and Colin. They supported me throughout this process and never complained about my incessant ramblings. They are the moorings that keep me steady despite my own restlessness.

This thesis is also dedicated to Barbara, Debbie, Cindy, and Stephen. They continuously question the world around them to learn about other people, places, and politics. We have our disagreements, but our conversations are lively, interesting, and challenging.

Thank you, everyone, for your support!

## Acknowledgements

Writing a master's thesis is a daunting and sometimes lonely task. Completing the thesis as a distance-learner makes the endeavor much more difficult because of limited access to the tools that in-person students may find readily available. Throw in a pandemic and the challenges increase tenfold.

This thesis was possible because of many people. My academic advisors provided their expertise, guidance, and support. My family and friends supported me along the way as well. Thank you everyone!

Alas, more than anything, however, this journey was a solitary one. A journey of perseverance. A marathon. An affirmation in the inextinguishable belief in self.

Because this work is mine and mine alone, I assume full responsibility for any mistakes or defects with this research.

## Table of Contents

Dedication.....	i
Acknowledgements .....	ii
Abstract.....	1
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	2
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	8
Construction of Social Reality and the Persuasive Campaign .....	14
Symbolic Convergence Theory and Fantasy Theme Analysis Remain Relevant Today .....	18
An Examination of Recent Work Utilizing SCT and FTA Reveals Broad Application for Critiquing Media.....	20
How Television Tells a Story and Creates Social Reality.....	22
Ronald Reagan Inauguration and Release of Iranian Hostages.....	24
Campaign as a Dramatized Event and the Eagleton Affair .....	25
Symbolic Justification and the Race for Small Modular Reactors .....	27
Chapter: 3 Methodology.....	30
Research Questions.....	32
Chapter 4: Fantasy Theme Analysis of Trump’s Speeches (RQ1).....	33
The June 16, 2015, Presidential Candidacy Announcement Speech.....	33
Setting Themes .....	33

Character Themes.....	34
Action Themes.....	38
The November 9, 2016, Presidential Acceptance and Victory Speech.....	40
Setting Themes.....	41
Character Themes.....	42
Action Themes.....	44
The 45 <sup>th</sup> Presidential Inauguration Speech.....	45
Setting Themes.....	45
Character Themes.....	47
Action Themes.....	51
The January 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2021, Ellipse Speech.....	53
Setting Themes.....	54
Character Themes.....	55
Action Themes.....	60
Chapter 5: Sanctioning Agents (RQ2).....	63
Chapter 6: Rhetorical Visions (RQ3).....	67
Chapter 7: Discussion of Master Analogy (RQ4):.....	70
Make America Great Again.....	70
Chapter 8: Manifestations of Social Realities Presented on January 6th, 2021, for Rhetorical Visions 1-5 and Discussion (RQ5).....	72

Manifestations of Symbolic Realities, Fantasy Themes and Rhetorical Visions with Examples of Symbolic Convergence and Chaining Throughout Trump’s Rhetorical Community .....	73
Rhetorical Vision #1: The American Dream is Dead.....	73
Rhetorical Vision #2: Washington, D.C. is Broken and Washington Politicians are Crooked .....	75
Rhetorical Vision #3: Donald J. Trump is the Father of the Revolution and the Only Person That Can be Trusted.....	76
Rhetorical Vision #4: The American Patriot Must Protect Democracy and the Constitution .....	77
Rhetorical Vision #5: Radical Left Democrats, Foreign Governments, and Globalists Are Undermining Democracy and the Constitution .....	79
Rhetorical Vision #6: The USA, the American Patriot and the Movement are Protected by God .....	82
Master Analogy: Make America Great Again.....	84
Chapter 9: Conclusion .....	86
Limitations of Research.....	91
Future Research .....	93
References .....	96
Appendix .....	102

## **Abstract**

The January 6, 2021, attempted take-over of the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. is unprecedented in recent history. This was widely covered by media outlets in the United States and the world. Applying Symbolic Convergence Theory research identifies fantasy themes and rhetorical visions presented in four of former U.S. President Donald J. Trump's speeches that were ultimately shared by his supporters who stormed the Capitol Building. The four speeches were broadcast and streamed live via television and Internet platforms. Established media providers archived Trump's speeches and were subsequently used as source material. This thesis reveals how fantasy themes and rhetorical visions chained out from the symbolic realities found in Trump's speeches to rioters and protestors.

*Keywords:* Donald J. Trump, symbolic convergence theory, fantasy theme analysis, Earnest Bormann, January 6, 2021, Capitol riot.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

On January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the U.S. Congress met in the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. to confirm the 2020 presidential election results between Republican Donald J. Trump and Democrat Joseph R. Biden. Simultaneously, supporters of President Donald J. Trump gathered throughout Washington, D.C. to protest Joe Biden's expected confirmation as the 46<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. The transfer of power after the U.S. elections is historically a subdued affair and seen as the pinnacle of global democracy and stability (McDonnell et al., 2021; Barrett et al., 2021). However, as Congress started the confirmation process for the next president, supporters of outgoing President Donald J. Trump stormed the Capitol, smashed windows, and eventually occupied the building, causing members of Congress to hide and flee for their lives (Fandos & Cochrane, 2021). At least five people died (Healy, 2021) as a direct result of the Riot. One of the protestors died from gunshots fired by Capitol Police as they protected Congress and Vice President Mike Pence (Jalonick et al., 2021). After four years, Donald J. Trump's presidency ended.

The primary goal of this research was to discover connections between the rhetorical visions contained in four speeches made by Trump and the actions of the protestors who stormed the Capitol Building. By examining the Trump speeches, I discovered ongoing themes that comprised a specific area of Trump's political messaging environment. Finally, as will be shown through my research, I posit that the identified themes spread throughout Trump's community creating a shared alternative social reality that influenced protestors as they stormed the Capitol Building. First, I completed a Fantasy Theme Analysis of Trump's speeches to identify setting, action, fantasy themes,

sanctioning agents, and rhetorical visions. Second, I examined audio and video files collected by ProPublica (Groeger et al., 2021). The aggregated media files uploaded to the ProPublica website were recorded and shared by people who participated in the Capitol Riot. The protestors recorded the media content on January 6<sup>th</sup> and uploaded the content to the digital platform located at [www.parler.com](http://www.parler.com) (Groeger et al., 2021). Subsequently, the media content was blocked by Parler ([parler.com](http://parler.com)), but not before ProPublica (Groeger et al., 2021) aggregated the content and published the files on their website. Through a Fantasy Theme Analysis of the four Trump speeches, and the aggregated audio and video files, I examined the themes contained in the Trump speeches and analyzed the manifested symbolic realities that may have influenced the participants of January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

To understand what transpired on January 6<sup>th</sup>, an attempt to answer some questions regarding the Trump speeches must be made. For example, “who” were the characters in the Trump speeches? “What” action themes were included in the speeches and “where” did the action take place? “What” rhetorical visions were included in the speeches? What sanctioning agents, if any, validate the fantasy themes? And finally, how did the themes discovered in the Trump speeches manifest in the symbolic realities of the January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, protestors as portrayed by their actions and the symbols they presented at the Capitol Building? While we cannot know what motivated individual protestors, we might possibly discover the shared and manufactured social realities that influenced and motivated the protesting community.

Research shows that an important figure, such as the U.S. President, can have a great amount of influence upon a nation. Indeed, Conover and Sigelman (1982) posit that

what a political orator such as the president says or does matters and can impact society, culture, and public opinion. Their research on former President Jimmy Carter showed that once a president endorsed a public policy, the public was more apt to support the policy. Conover and Sigelman's (1982) findings state that presidential influence, "can have a very significant influence on public opinion" (p. 257). Eshbaugh-Soha and Juenke (2008) also found that a president's actions and words matter and can somewhat affect how the public thinks about certain policies. They posit, however, that for a president to increase attention to a specific message, "a strategy of sustained policy attention" (Eshbaugh-Soha & Juenke, 2008, p. 130) should be maintained. But not only can presidential speeches and national addresses influence the public, they can also influence Congress and subsequent policy making decisions (Boydston et al., 2017), ultimately impacting and motivating a call to action in the form of passing a law or voting for a candidate (Schubert et al., 2002). During times of peace and prosperity, presidential speeches and actions can reinforce the public's positive belief in the economy and social programs of a nation. In times of war, civil unrest, or peacetime, the words a president employs in their speeches can unite the population as was the case when the public rallied around George W. Bush when he gave his September 11, 2001 speech from the Oval Office in the White House (Schubert et al., 2002). Conversely, the message a president conveys in a speech can divide a country, pitting the citizens against one another in an ideological fight for identity, having both a positive and negative impact upon society (Conover & Sigelman, 1982; Ragsdale, 1984; Wang, 2013). Finally, Cowart (2020) researched issues presented in social media and their importance to social media users. She concluded that the salience of an issue was increased when the issue was endorsed by a recognizable figure

or a social media user's friend. She further concluded that, the more an issue is repeated by a recognizable figure or a friend, the more apt the issue is to gain salience and influence among the group (Cewart, 2020).

As a political figure, the president is an opinion leader. When they stand in front of cameras with microphones, their image and words are broadcast via television, cable, and the Internet. The president's words engage the receivers in the political message. The messages, delivered in the form of a persuasive campaign aide in the creation of our culture, can guide our thoughts, while influencing our actions, our lives, and impacting our sense of nationalism (Butz, 2009; Carter & Fuller, 2015; Gerbner, 1998; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). As opinion leaders, presidents have a direct connection through the media that grant them certain persuasive powers as they shape and mold the mediated reality (Gaines, 2010).

For some people, a mediated message can help to establish or reinforce personal or group identity (Bormann, 1972), while constructing a mediated social reality in which they live. Campbell (2014) argued that "the mediated culture in which we live shapes not only who we are but also what we think" (p. 4). It is well established that mediated messages can influence, shape society, and tell viewers, readers, and listeners what to think about (Dearing & Rodgers, 1996). These different forms of media have shown to have varying levels of effects upon diverse segments of society. Speeches by presidents or presidential candidates arguably influence the population at which they are directed (Cohen, 1995), while also playing a part in the shaping of political reality (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Therefore, in order to better comprehend and avoid confusion when listening to mediated messages contained in political speeches and persuasive campaigns,

it is important that the receivers, or the voting population, understand the rhetoric, themes, and symbolism presented. Nonetheless, people interpret messages differently. A person's interpretation is connected to their history, culture, and worldview. In a political speech, the politicians attempt to motivate or influence the buyer, the receiver of the message in this case, to take some action. In the political arena, the politician hopes to gain votes, keep constituents, and/or create doubt about their opponents. Indeed, the political speech is a persuasive campaign designed with the goals of maintaining the status quo or effecting change.

The idea that people are influenced by and give symbolic meaning to symbols, such as words, is well documented. Gaines (2010) proposed that "a symbol is a type of sign that must be learned from others, the meaning of which can be shared within cultural groups" (p. 12). When discussing Blumer (1969) and his work in symbolic interactionism, Carter and Fuller (2015) posited that people interact with one another and give subjective meaning to the symbols they use to communicate. A symbol can consist of language, text, images, sound, or moving pictures, all of which are used as signs and are learned from others (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Gaines, 2010). Trump's speeches were recorded live, as they were happening. My research is limited to the study of signs and symbols presented as the words contained in the transcripts of those live recordings. Trump, as an orator, was prolific and persuasive. In this research, I applied Symbolic Convergence Theory and Fantasy Theme Analysis. In this research tradition, words can be an origin point from which community, culture, or alternative social realities are created. I analyzed the rhetoric of the Trump speeches to identify the dramatic elements contained within and examined how those elements chained out or connected to

actions and symbols the Trump's followers or rhetorical community presented. Further, I identified elements showing correlations between Trump's speeches and the symbolic realities of the January 6<sup>th</sup> protestors during the Capitol Riot. The goal of SCT is not to predict what will happen nor to control human communication, but rather to allow practitioners to anticipate what will happen while offering explanations for what has happened (Bormann, 1972; Bormann & Bormann, 1980; Bormann, 1982a). Ultimately, through this research, I sought an explanation of "how" the January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, riot at the Capitol Building came to pass.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Earnest Bormann's Symbolic Convergence Theory (SCT) and its associated method of Fantasy Theme Analysis (FTA) are the theoretical pillars and associated method for this thesis. This combination of theory and method will provide a useful lens to analyze the dramas, stories, and narratives that are persistent in the Trump speeches including the June 16, 2015, Campaign Announcement Speech, the November 9, 2016, Victory Speech, the January 20, 2017, Inaugural Address, and the January 6, 2021 Capitol Rally Speech. SCT and FTA are well suited for this type of rhetorical analysis because of the dramatized narratives presented within the Trump speeches. In SCT and FTA, a critic examines the rhetoric for dramatized messages and attempts to make connections between the rhetoric, the community that received the message, and the subsequent actions of the members of the community. As described earlier, the ProPublica aggregated audio and video files were the rhetorical artifacts used to identify how fantasy themes presented in the Trump speeches influenced and spread throughout the insurgent community.

Symbolic Convergence Theory and Fantasy Theme Analysis allow researchers to interpret symbols, words, pictures, signs, or media messages. According to Bormann (1982b), SCT is a general theory. The theory offers explanations that change or evolve alongside the ever-developing mediated message. For example, as writers of mediated messages respond to new developments, they tailor the rhetoric to meet new demands before delivery of the message to the public. The theory is suitable to critiquing media campaigns. Similarly, SCT offers evolving explanations as the critiqued rhetoric changes over time. The theory states that "a participants motives are found within the rhetoric"

(Bormann, 1972, p. 407). Thus, by studying the symbols, i.e., rhetoric, the theoretician enhances their ability to predict, discover, or explain “why” people interact with fantasies or engage in a symbolic lifestyle (Bormann, 1972). To understand SCT, we must define the use of both “symbolic” and “convergence” when used in the theory.

Symbolic Convergence Theory concerns the participants who engage with and find common ground with others through the dramatic interpretation of a mediated event. Bormann argues that when participants interact with a message, they try to understand it in terms of human interaction (Borman, 1982b). During times of normalcy, chaos or confusion, people seek to understand their surrounding environment through the various symbols they receive. A basic tenet of the theory states that “humans tend to attribute symbolic meaning to the things people say and do” (Bormann, 1982b, p. 51). People attribute symbolic meaning to their actions as Bormann (1982b) posits, because “humans tend to try and understand events in terms of people as defined by their action” (p. 54). If the receivers of the message assign meaning to the words, the message becomes symbolic to the group as, “the words, that is, the rhetoric, are the social reality” (Bormann, 1972, p. 401). Finally, when the messages or symbols are shared throughout the group, and the people subsequently repeat, act out, or mimic the original messages or symbols, it can be said the people participated in the social reality.

According to *Newsweek*, their reporters have seen a classified government document (Arkin, 2021) stating that approximately 120,000 people participated in the January 6<sup>th</sup> Capitol Riot. This research is ultimately concerned with the shared social and symbolic realities among the participants in the riot and ascertaining what brought the people together. I sought to identify the converged or shared symbolic realities of the

January 6<sup>th</sup> participants. Under SCT, convergence refers to the communication process that occurs when two disparate symbolic worlds collide, come closer, overlap, or incline towards one another (Foss, 2018; Bormann, 1982b). Once convergence occurs, the community might take some action that Bormann explains, fulfills some emotional need (Bormann, 1972) that the community lacked. If an action is taken, then a community is created. Indeed, this research will specifically look at the actions the rhetorical community took on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, at the Capitol Building through the lens of Fantasy Theme Analysis.

Fantasy Theme Analysis, or FTA, is a comprehensive humanistic method of dramatic rhetorical criticism (Bormann, 1982a). Under FTA, Bormann (1972, 1982a, 1982b) states that people develop structured fantasies to interpret situations they don't understand, are chaotic, or to create a symbolic reality. Bormann (1982a) argues that in all shared communication contexts, there is a connection between rhetorical visions and community consciousness. Bormann (1982a) posits that the sharing of fantasies is connected with motivation and is an important means for people to create their realities. FTA has a set of technical terms that the rhetorical critic uses when conducting an analysis.

The fantasy theme is a building block of FTA. There are different categories under which different themes can be classified. Bormann (1982b) states that "a fantasy theme is often a narrative about living people, historic personages, or about an envisioned future" (p. 52). The fantasy theme is usually in a setting that is different from the present of the here and now. The fantasy theme can be some time in the past, the present, the near or distant future. Explaining historical events to influence and persuade future thought

and action is an established rhetorical technique and can be traced back to Aristotle (347 B.C.E). The technique is still relevant. Bormann (1982b) extended and incorporated this idea into FTA by stating a fantasy theme is usually a recurring script found within the culture of the group. The fantasy themes are slanted or framed in an artistic way that shapes perceptions of reality. Subsequently, these fantasy themes offer a justification for beliefs and actions based upon history or future desires. Because events are slanted and interpreted by different people, they provide a rhetorical means for people to explain the same events or same experiences in different or subjective ways. Bormann (1982b) found that, prior to giving a speech, highly skilled orators planned dramatizations that they hoped would change the consciousness of the audience by explaining the problems of the here and now through word choices that connected with the emotional state of the audience.

Fantasy themes can be divided into three separate groups. Foss (2018) wrote that fantasy themes can be classified as setting, character, or action themes. Setting, also sometimes referred to as scene, is the place where the action takes place (Foss, 2018), and where the “*dramatis personae* act out their roles” (Cragan & Shields, 1981, p. 6). However, “the setting or the scene is not limited to location but also includes the time of day, season, historical period” (Foss, 2018, p. 108) and perhaps, tension and the hierarchy of power that exists within a symbolic group. “Characters and themes explain those actors or agents that exist within the drama and attempt to assign motives for their actions” (Foss, 2018, p. 108). In addition, character themes depict “heroes, villains, and supporting players” (Cragan & Shields, 1981, p. 6) that exist within a rhetorical vision. Finally, plot lines, also called action themes, describe the drama or action that is taking

place (Cragan & Shields, 1981; Foss, 2018). Fantasy themes coalesce to form a shared rhetorical vision.

Berger and Luckmann (1966) state that, when we have an experience that is known, we can easily understand the situation or causes for the situation. When an individual experiences a chaotic situation, or a situation that is new or disruptive, they try to reason or explain the new situation in terms they can understand. Each person tries to understand the situation based upon, “what is relative to their personal experience, and by filtering out what matters to them” (Redmond & Trager, 2004, p. 71). Humans interpret personal and shared experiences through dramatic experience. Social fantasies (Borman, 1982b) enable people to create community by identifying and connecting with one another through shared perceptions of reality.

Fantasies are shared in media and communication contexts and there is a connection between rhetorical visions and community consciousness. The sharing of fantasies is connected with motivation and is an important means for people to create their realities (Bormann, 1982a). By participating in a group dynamic and promoting the ideologies of the group, members reinforce the group mentality and ideologies. Fantasy themes are stories that are used to unify the group and provide group identity.

After identification of the themes, the analyst attempts to identify the rhetorical vision that emerges from the previously identified fantasy themes. A rhetorical vision is a composite drama (Bormann, 1972) in which a large group of people, be they a target audience or a voting block of people, can be caught up in the symbolic reality that is created. Bormann (1982b) states that “the rhetorical vision is a unified putting-together of

various shared scripts which provides a broader view of the culture's social reality" (p. 53).

A rhetorical vision is often integrated into a message by a master analogy (Bormann, 1982a) or indexed by a slogan or label (Bormann, 1982b). During Trump's campaign announcement speech, he introduced the slogan, "Make America Great Again" (*Full text: Donald Trump announces a presidential bid*, 2015). I posit that the phrase was both a master analogy and a rhetorical vision for many people in the United States because they believed that Trump, with their support, would be able to fix the real or imagined problems that plague the United States.

A rhetorical community are those people who participate in the rhetorical vision and the associated social or symbolic reality. The participants within the rhetorical community have identified with the fantasy themes and often see themselves as active participants. Community members create codes, inside jokes, symbolic cues, and assign specific meaning to symbols thereby often creating a group identity. Under FTA, codes structure meaning and give a group their identity (Bormann, 1972, 1982a, 1982b; Gaines, 2010). I examined selected symbols that manifested on January 6, 2021, that helped to identify and sustain the rhetorical community.

As outlined above, rhetorical visions, fantasy themes, dramatic personae, and message chaining are key elements of FTA. Another element is the sanctioning agent, which, according to Cragan and Shields (1981), is the source that justifies the acceptance and spread of the rhetorical drama. In other words, the sanctioning agent is a point that enables acceptance and legitimacy (Foss, 2018). The sanctioning agent explains what motivates or drives an individual to take a particular action (Foss, 2018). The sanctioning

agent can be a historical figure or a shared thematic experience. The thematic experience is based on a commonly accepted and shared historical interpretation of a theme by a particular community and thus justifies the past, present, or future actions and realities of that community. For example, many people born in the United States share the common belief that George Washington may have said, "I cannot tell a lie." If someone were to say, in a speech, "Like Washington, I too cannot tell a lie," this would be an example of a sanctioning agent. Thus, the rhetor's choice of words suggest they are truthful and trustworthy. Further, if the receivers of the message believed the rhetor to be trustworthy and truthful like the myth of Washington, then the receivers – as part of the rhetorical community – have accepted the sanctioning agent and are now living within the constraints of the social reality as it relates to the above example.

### **Construction of Social Reality and the Persuasive Campaign**

For this research, I defined the construction of social reality as posited by Berger and Luckmann (1966). They wrote that society is created through language, which is the "most important sign system of human society" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 37). To summarize, the symbols; language and words we use typify or exemplify the shared human experience. These typifications are learned and spread throughout society. Subsequently, the typifications are objectified by individuals as they attempt to personally understand the typification. Words and actions are repeated. The habitualization of repeated words and actions develops patterns across society as the typifications, their meanings, and the associated patterns are institutionalized throughout society. When a typification or action becomes institutionalized, Berger and Luckmann (1966) argue, the habitualization and typifications are spread amongst the people and a

shared culture is formed. Moreover, for the institutional world to become legitimized, Berger and Luckmann (1966) posit that histories are created and subsequently presented to future generations resulting in their knowledge of “institutionalized conduct” (p. 65). The romanticizing of the past can occur through the symbolic use of language or through physical activities. The romanticizing of the past is found in the stories, history, and the folklore that constitute a nation’s culture. A political orator or speech writer can use the romanticizing of the past to create a social reality to promote the persuasiveness of the campaign.

Social reality exists in different temporal planes. Berger and Luckmann (1966) contend that people are able to participate in different temporal planes. The most important temporal plane is the paramount reality of the “here” and “now” (Berger & Luckman, 1966, p. 21). In the paramount reality, people are engaged in face-to-face conversation and dialogue. It is a physical plane that is immediate and cannot be denied, Berger and Luckmann (1966) call it the realissimum of (my) consciousness (p. 22). Yet, as life is experienced physically, it is also experienced temporally. Temporal experience relates to one’s ability to place oneself in the here and now, in a remembered time, or, perhaps in the future. Examples of other symbolic realities include dreams, philosophy, art, and religious experiences (p. 40). These other temporal realities are subjective to the individual as they exist outside of the realissimum of consciousness. Moreover, these other temporal realities are based upon symbols that have permeated the living memory of a community. The symbols of culture, the memories, the hopes, and the desires for the future are all tools that the political orator can use to create the symbolic realities delivered in a persuasive campaign.

Persuasive campaigns can create alternative social realities that can influence the intended audience. Historically, political orators understood the need to identify the emotional state of the intended audience. Understanding this point, the political orator identified the emotional state and needs of the audience and then crafted their speech to elicit emotions such as pity, fear, anger, shame, contempt, or indignation (Aristotle, 347 B.C.E.; Bormann, 1972) in hopes of building group consciousness that would ultimately lead the participants to take some action and participate in the group dynamic (Bormann, 1972).

Bobbitt and Sullivan (2004) define a persuasive campaign as, “an effort to gain public support for an opinion or course of action” (p. 1). Conversely, they define a propaganda campaign as, “an attempt to have a viewpoint accepted on the appeals other than merits of the case” (Bobbitt & Sullivan, 2004, p. 1). The persuasive political campaign influences people. Colin Delany (2016) in his book, *How to Use the Internet to Win in 2016*, wrote about conducting the modern digital political campaign. Delaney (2016) argued that the goal of an electoral campaign is to win. Politicians use persuasive campaigns for the creation, development, maintaining support, and ultimate procurement of approval for their political agendas and policies. The objectives of a persuasive campaign are the measurable indicators, or, whether or not one has met their goal (Delaney, 2016). While this thesis is not concerned with how the Internet or social media were used during the 2016 election, it should be noted that highly individualized targeting of political ads was used and will continue to be used in coming elections. Moreover, a large percentage of the January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, protestors used social media to communicate,

synchronously and asynchronously, between themselves and with Trump. Indeed, in the videos I analyzed, it was rare that a protestor didn't have their cell phone in their hand.

As written above, the social construction of reality is created and maintained through typification, habitualization, and institutionalization. Symbolic Convergence Theory is also concerned with the creation and sustainment of group culture. Bormann (1982b) discusses three phases to the creation and maintenance of a rhetorical vision through SCT: (1) Conscious creating, (2) conscious raising, and (3) conscious sustaining (p. 58).

For the rhetorician and student of rhetorical studies, each phase is important. Bormann posited that in the first phase, consciousness is created when a new dramatic message is put forth with which a rhetorical community can identify. Often, the new message will “contain elements of older (rhetorical) visions” (Bormann, 1982b, p. 59). This starting point thus allows for convergence to begin. In the second phase, conscious raising, the orator will “intentionally plan their persuasive efforts to gain converts” (Bormann, 1982b, p. 58). To keep the rhetorical community together and under control, the orator then moves on to the third phase. As the communities' interest in the rhetorical vision weakens, the orator must adapt. In the third phase, the orator “evolve(s) communication episodes designed to renew the faith, to celebrate community, and rekindle the zeal that accompanied the original sharing process” (Bormann, 1982b, p. 59).” If rhetorical visions are shared throughout the group and convergence occurs, these new visions “translate impulse into action” (Bormann, 1982b, p. 59).

Individuals are motivated by their own personal feelings, needs, and desires. It is often difficult to make sense of chaotic, fluid, and creative situations. The rhetorician

discovers the rhetorical community's motivations by conducting a rhetorical analysis.

Bormann posited that "the rhetorical vision of a group of people contains their drives to action" (Bormann, 1972, p. 406). While it would be ideal if a member of the Trump's rhetorical community clearly stated "why" they participated in the January 6, 2021, Capitol Insurrection, that is unlikely to happen. Therefore, I looked to the dramatized messages to understand their motivation.

### **Symbolic Convergence Theory and Fantasy Theme Analysis Remain Relevant Today**

As symbols and the stories that are present in our society evolve, SCT and FTA offer a method of critiquing shared experiences and offering explanations about mediated realities. SCT and FTA are an ever-evolving theory and method of criticism that develop within the context of the individual, group, text, symbol, story, and shared reality. When the participants are engaged, they exchange creative energy, ideas, and emotional expression. As the mediated message evolves, the rhetorical critic can evaluate the ever-evolving mediated elements. This is the strength of conducting research using SCT and FTA. However, there are critics of the theory and method.

As previously explained, the actions a receiver of a message takes are an important facet to conducting research using SCT and FTA. The actions a rhetorical community take give the rhetorical critic insight into the interpretation of the fantasy themes and the symbolic reality. When playing their part within the drama, the participants are actively engaged and aware of what they are doing through their own agency. Bormann (1972) posits that "when an actor assumes a role in a drama, he gains with the part constraining forces which impel him to do and say certain things" (p. 406).

He continues, “when a person appropriates a rhetorical vision, he gains the supporting dramas constraining forces which impel him to adopt a lifestyle and to take certain action” (Borman, 1972, p. 406). However, one critic of the theory, Joshua Gunn (2003), argues that SCT must have a psychoanalytic explanation for the imagery and that SCT is fatally flawed because of its reliance on a conscious agent. In other words, Gunn argues that Bormann needs to accept that a person’s uncontrollable subconscious imagination is the impetus for fantasy themes and rhetorical visions. Gunn further posits that Bormann is a Freudian, a point Bormann disputes. Gunn (2003) argues that individuals live in a society of “false consciousness”, as defined by Freud, and, as such, are limited by the social structures created and implemented by the ruling elites.

On the one hand, I agree that Gunn’s argument has some relevancy. For example, Gunn (2003) says that social structures must be considered when performing rhetorical analysis. However, when writing a political speech or other script to be delivered to a wide audience, the writing team surely writes with the intent to reach an established audience or create a new audience or public (Gerbner, 1977). The contents of the speech might consider societal structures, such as education, income, and employment. While Gunn’s claims may have merit, his argument has clearly missed an important point of Symbolic Convergence Theory which proposes that mediated messages are created by conscious individuals who are attempting to persuade their audience for a specific goal. Moreover, as Bormann et al. (2003) wrote in their response to Gunn, “rhetorical motives...and rhetorical fantasies... are discoverable through fantasy theme analysis” (p. 368) because “meaning, emotion, value, and motive for action are present in the communication” (p. 368). The conscience individual is engaged in the process of

communication, which, in this research, is based upon messages created by rhetors who “use rational and non-rational components of language as they creatively produce their own symbolic reality” (Bormann et al., 2003). In summary, the participants in Trump’s rhetorical community were motivated by the messages contained in Trump’s speeches. Moreover, as fully awake, conscious, and alert individuals, we can only surmise that the protestors engaged with Trump’s message based upon the appealing qualities contained within the consciously created and mediated message.

### **An Examination of Recent Work Utilizing SCT and FTA Reveals Broad Application for Critiquing Media**

Rhetorical critics continue to apply SCT and FTA to critique media texts. SCT and FTA analysis have wide applications in different forms of media content. This includes scripted entertainment in film, television, and Internet, scripted news coverage, breaking and developing news coverage and how one story can be presented to the public promoting different viewpoints. In the next portion of this thesis, I examined how four different media topics were covered by other rhetorical critics.

Using the 2008 Vice-Presidential debate as political text, Duffy and Page (2013) employed Fantasy Theme Analysis to research satirical humor on late night television shows like *The Daily Show* with Jon Stewart, *The Colbert Report*, *The Late Show* with David Letterman, and *Saturday Night Live*. Accordingly, political humor fulfills a variety of communication needs such as involvement, information, and entertainment. While examining how burlesque and satire were used in subsequent media clips, Duffy and Page (2013) identified recurring fantasy themes, characters, scenes, rhetorical visions, sanctioning agents, and how the afore mentioned chained out in the media.

Vice-Presidential candidates Sarah Palin and Joe Biden presented the same character type to the public. In the real-life debate, the candidates presented themselves as common people, sharing much with the Middle Class. By portraying themselves as common, the candidates hoped to connect with the bulk of the U.S. population by showing that they too shared the same life experiences. Because of this commonality, each candidate argued that they would be the best person to represent America in the White House. By making an emotional connection, each candidate hoped to garner support for their candidacy and political party.

Lamprooning the debate, Jon Stewart, host of *The Daily Show* broadcast on Comedy Central said the characters engaged in a “common man-off” – a contest that was meant to show how much each candidate shared with the U.S. population. The NBC network television show *Saturday Night Live* parodied the “common man-off” in an SNL sketch comedy. In that parody, Biden, claims to understand “common,” or regular people as he is a commoner from Scranton, Pennsylvania, “the worst place on earth” (Duffy & Page, 2013). Parody Palin, on the other hand, said she has been with hockey moms and Joe six-packs while Biden was part of the Washington elite (Duffy & Page, 2013).

A location can be more than a physical place or setting. A location can also become a symbolic cue or a dramatist persona. The authors identified the scenes as Wall Street, Washington, D.C., Main Street, Katie’s restaurant, Anchorage and Scranton. The geographical separation of the real-life Biden and Palin, as represented by the parodied duo, represent societal divisions in the United States. Such divisions include economic and cultural realms between the coasts and fly-over states, the affluent cities, and rural areas, and to some extent the historical division between North and South. Biden

represented the progressive North with his association with African American presidential candidate, Barack Obama. On the other hand, Palin represented the gun-toting, “don’t tread-on-me” conservative party.

### **How Television Tells a Story and Creates Social Reality**

Television coverage of a planned news event gives the aura that the event is developing in real time, is objective, and exists in the past while simultaneously moving toward the future. Television offers a powerful narrative that suspends both time and space allowing the viewer to take part in the symbolic reality that is created (Bormann, 1972, 1982a). Indeed, humans live in the here and now of body and mind, however, life is also lived in different temporal planes, such as sleeping, dreaming, daydreaming, re-imagining the past, or envisioning the future (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Many news professionals accept the belief their job is to inform the public, be non-biased, and authoritative. The planned news event is a highly scripted and technologically planned event in which those who participate in the creation of the event; engineers, reporters, directors, etc., know what is expected of them and the role they must play (Bormann, 1982a). In other words, the creative and technical personnel are actively involved in the habitualized and institutional creation of fantasy themes and, to some extent, the creation and maintaining of culture (Gerbner, 1977).

Restoration is an often-used fantasy theme in American history and political persuasion. Andrew Jackson, Abraham Lincoln, Ronald Reagan, and Donald Trump employed the restoration theme in their political discourse. Andrew Jackson, a Southern Democrat, slave-owner, and one who opposed the abolitionist movement, promoted the restoration theme. Jackson argued for placing the power of government in the hands of

the “real people” who were planters, farmers, and mechanics, and laborers (Bormann, 1982a) while fighting against the rising elite class who enjoyed a “chartered privilege.” On the other side was Abraham Lincoln. In Lincoln’s perspective, the pro-slavery forces tried to legitimize the institution by taking the country back to “its true and basic foundations” (Bormann, 1982a). Lincoln, spoke out against slavery and is remembered for the Emancipation Proclamation which freed the slaves. He embodied the unifying persona of the newly established rhetorical vision as he symbolically represented the progressive North. However, Lincoln too employed the restoration fantasy in his speeches as he claimed the country should return to the original Constitution, which he saw as an anti-slavery document, because of the words “All men are created equal” (Borman, 1982a, p. 218). Therefore, a restoration fantasy can be used by two different groups of rhetoricians promoting two separate ideologies.

When developing a restoration fantasy, the rhetor does not want to “convert to an entirely new rhetorical vision” (Bormann, 1982c, p. 141) as it would be too difficult to convince people of the new fantasy, but rather, Borman (1972) argued, give examples in political speeches with dreams that are common to the culture or tell the people that which they already know. Conservative rhetors usually rely upon established or historical heroes (Bormann, 1972). One persuasive technique is to select a historical hero and remind the audience of the hero’s past deeds, virtues, and good actions. Usually, the hero’s story has already chained out in popular culture which serves as a rallying cry for the group (Bormann, 1982a). This rhetorical concept is well established, it is something the general public already knows and is likely part of the dominant cultural identity.

Ultimately, the co-optation of historical facts creates a symbolic reality defining the parameters of society and culture.

The restoration fantasy contains a mixture of reform and conservatism (Bormann, 1982a) while keeping the major structural features of the unifying elements of historic American visions and dreams. The restoration fantasy is a powerful fantasy type for many reasons. First, the restoration fantasy, if used positively, creates a symbolic reality of a romanticized past. Second, the dramatist personae are influential characters within the restoration fantasy and serve as sanctioning agents. These sanctioning agents legitimize the restoration fantasy and allow them to be used to establish and reinforce a shared and common historical culture.

### **Ronald Reagan Inauguration and Release of Iranian Hostages**

Bormann tested the usefulness of FTA during the January 20, 1981 television coverage of president-elect Ronald Reagan's inauguration and the simultaneous release of the Iranian hostages to examine television journalism coverage (Bormann, 1982a). He posited that the television director and journalists portrayed Reagan as the embodiment of the restoration fantasy. He writes that by intertwining the footage of the hostage release with the inauguration, the television coverage served to reinforce and amplify the core restoration theme of Reagan's inaugural speech (Bormann, 1982a). On the other hand, the images of President Carter became synonymous with the fantasy theme of the USA as victim. For example, when the TV program Director cut between images of the freed hostages, departing President Carter, and incoming President Reagan, all was right in the minds of some viewers as the world was returned, or restored, to its natural order with American First and leading the way.

## **Campaign as a Dramatized Event and the Eagleton Affair**

Bormann studied the 1972 McGovern presidential campaign and the circumstances surrounding the withdrawal of his vice-presidential candidate, senator Thomas Eagleton. Bormann critiqued how fantasies moved throughout the campaign and how the television news media created a symbolic reality that discredited vice-presidential hopeful, senator Thomas Eagleton. Bormann (1973) also analyzed how radio, print, and TV news media dramatized certain events during their broadcasts. Finally, he examined how rhetorical visions chained out through the news media and through society. Bormann (1982b) writes that a total rhetoric consists of both discursive material and fantasy themes because the brain is both logical and creative when communicating ideas or grasping ideas.

When a community of people have come to share a fantasy type, it is ingrained in the consciousness of the group. Indeed, a justified shared history is necessary for the creation of society (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). The participants respond to general statements alluding to the fantasy type or code words that signal the fantasy type without the supporting references to specific themes (Bormann, 1982b). The sharing of fantasies within a group or community establishes the assumptive system portrayed in the common rhetorical vision and contributes to the special theory associated with the community's communication style (Bormann, 1982b). In Bormann's analysis of the McGovern campaign, the author argued that television media, created a shared consciousness that eventually led to Eagleton's withdrawal. The television news media, embodied in the news anchors, served as sanctioning agents to discredit Eagleton.

The primary characters involved in the Eagleton Affair can be divided into two main categories, on one side existed the politicians and on the other side, the media rhetoricians. For Bormann, characters presented by the media included: McGovern, Eagleton, and Nixon.

According to Bormann, news anchors and reporters performed their roles in front of a national audience. The characters appeared frequently on the nightly news to discuss the chances of the McGovern / Eagleton ticket of winning the White House. The entire story was broadcast on national news shows that were limited by airtime. This limit of airtime dictated the material be, attention grabbing, and well scripted. Advertising sales, the life blood of a television network, are dependent upon the number of viewers delivered. Recognizing this truth, Bormann (1973) reflected that the media were more interested in “box office success” that was dependent upon conflict and suspense rather than partisan political persuasion.

The news media used suggestive language to describe Eagleton’s mental state that was meant to exploit societies’ lack of understanding of mental health issues. Anchors and reporters all described the McGovern campaign as experiencing a major crisis (Bormann, 1973). Additionally, the news media variously reported that Eagleton was “nervous, had a possible drinking problem,... had a record of arrests for drunk driving,” and went so far as to associate Eagleton with electric shock therapy during at least one news broadcast (Bormann, 1973).

ABC, NBC, and CBS broadcast their news reports to the viewing public via live reports that included images of Eagleton and McGovern. The TV News presented a symbolic reality of Eagleton based upon information, albeit, the information presented

portrayed Eagleton as sick, untrustworthy, and therefore unable to assume the duties of vice-president. Accordingly, Bormann (1973) argues that the constant coverage of Eagleton's reported mental health issues chained out amongst the various news organizations and kept the fantasy alive and in the featured news position for a number of days.

### **Symbolic Justification and the Race for Small Modular Reactors**

Technology and technological innovation capture the minds and imaginations of scientists and ordinary people. Scientists are often able to see the endless possibilities of how science can help humankind achieve unrealized dreams and offer explanations for inexplicable problems. For some in the scientific world, technology is almost religious in its' feeling of sublimity (Sovacool & Ramana, 2015) as science may have replaced God. Today, the former is to be worshipped for its' capacity to cure, save, and solve the problems that confront our world. Technology, and its God-like qualities are the new sanctioning agents used to justify the use of Small Modular Reactors or SMRs. Sovacool and Ramana (2015) critiqued literature from various organizations: *Journal of Nuclear Materials*, *Journal of Nuclear Energy*, and the IAEA aka *The International Atomic Energy Agency* on the topic of manufacturing SMRs. The duo identified several different factors why the possibility of manufacturing SMRs persists in the minds of scientists while also identifying five different rhetorical visions associated with SMRs.

The five different rhetorical visions that were identified supported and promoted the development and use of SMRs. The rhetorical visions included risk free energy, indigenous or local self-energization, environmental nirvana, water security, and space exploration. Considering all five rhetorical visions and the four fantasies, Sovacool and

Ramana (2015) posit that the utopian fantasy is the underlying fantasy behind all five rhetorical visions.

Sovacool and Ramana (2015) reviewed the literature and identified four fantasies that ultimately led to the identification of five major rhetorical visions. First, all fantasies are either functional, utopian, contradictory, or selective. They are functional because the fantasy serves a purpose to the community or to the financial investors. They are utopian because the fantasy offers an ideal, or perfect, way of living life. They are contradictory because the fantasy offers a wide range of ambiguity that allows for interpretation and involvement by many actors. Finally, they are selective, because the rhetors can frame the fantasy in the best possible light that supports their claim.

All rhetorical visions identified share the utopian fantasy and characteristics. As an unlimited energy source, SMRs, if ever manufactured, would supply a bounty of electricity and heat. Moreover, as clean water resources become scarce, SMRs are able to power desalination plants for water purification. Finally, when built, SMRs would be virtually fool or accident-proof and local people wouldn't need to concern themselves about environmental accidents (Sovacool & Ramana, 2015). However, past historical facts paint a different picture about nuclear power.

Proponents of SMRs may have strategically neglected to recognize or acknowledge the various disasters caused by nuclear power such as Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Chernobyl, Three Mile Island and the 2011 catastrophe at Fukushima Daichi. The historical facts do not coincide with the utopian fantasy promoted by the rhetors who support SMRs. The proponents and opponents of SMRs presented conflicting information throughout their persuasive campaigns. Moreover, because the rhetoric is not

evenly presented, this is yet another example of why there is a need for a deeper understanding and analysis of mediated texts as we search for the underlying truth that will help humankind make better and more informed decisions.

### **Chapter: 3 Methodology**

When analyzing a text using Symbolic Convergence Theory and Fantasy Theme Analysis, Foss (2018) recommends following specific steps. The four steps include: “(1) selecting the artifact, (2) analyzing the artifact, (3) formulating the research questions, and (4) writing the essay” (p. 109). Additionally, there are two steps to analyzing an artifact that include “(1) coding the artifact for setting, character, and action themes; and (2) construction of the rhetorical vision from fantasy themes” (Foss, 2018, p. 109).

Through my analysis of four speeches, I identified important fantasy types. These fantasy types were consistently repeated and ultimately supported the identification of fantasy themes. The fantasy themes include setting, character, and action. These fantasy themes led me to the identification of six major rhetorical visions and one master analogy. After I conducted Fantasy Theme Analysis on the four speeches, I examined and identified five examples of alternative social realities for each rhetorical vision. These 30 different examples served as evidence that the fantasy themes and rhetorical visions contained within the Trump speeches chained out and motivated his rhetorical community in Washington, D.C. on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Moreover, based upon the participants’ actions and the symbols they employed on January 6, 2021, I posit that the rhetorical visions identified in the Trump speeches chained out to the participants at the Capitol Riot and symbolic convergence occurred as the participants shared in the symbolic realities of Trump’s persuasion campaign. In other words, their actions are the proof symbolic convergence occurred and that they adhered to the guidelines of Trump’s manufactured social reality.

I performed a rhetorical analysis of the Trump speeches through careful steps. The first step was to locate official versions of the speeches from trustworthy websites. The sites included The Washington Post, CNN, The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration's website, and AP News. After printing the speeches, I read them to first understand their thematic appeals. This thematic appeal is, of course, subjective to me and is based upon my personal history, perceived place in society, and education, etc. I then performed a close reading of each speech to identify the major themes presented. Using different color highlighters, I identified the different fantasy types included in the Trump speeches. Once I identified the fantasy types, I looked for different settings that were written into the Trump narrative. Subsequently, I identified character and action themes. I next created an Excel file that included the fantasy themes and other fantasy types according to the speeches in which they were found. I then identified the rhetorical visions included in the Trump speeches. I identified six different major rhetorical visions based upon the fantasy themes I discovered. After identifying the fantasy themes and the rhetorical visions, I grouped the fantasy themes and rhetorical visions. I next analyzed the speeches to ascertain if any of the fantasy themes, rhetorical visions, or sanctioning agents were consistent and common throughout the Trump Speeches. Finally, I analyzed the audio and video content that was uploaded to Parler to confirm what fantasy themes and rhetorical visions chained out to the Riot participants proving whether they engaged with the presented alternative social realities.

My source material consisted of unedited versions of four of Donald J. Trump's speeches. I used Donald J. Trump's June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Presidential Campaign Announcement Speech that was posted on The Washington Post website (*Full text:*

*Donald Trump announces a presidential bid, 2015*). I used the full text of the November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Presidential Victory Speech that was posted and archived on CNN (*Here's the full text of Donald Trump's victory speech, 2016*). The third speech that I critiqued was the 45<sup>th</sup> Presidential Inaugural Address that President Trump made on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017, from the Capitol Building. The Inaugural Address is archived at The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration website ([www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov)). Finally, I used the transcript posted on the Associated Press's website as my primary source for the January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, speech that President Trump made while at the Ellipse in Washington, D.C. (*Transcript of Trump's speech at rally before U.S. Capitol riot, 2021*).

### **Research Questions**

RQ1: What Fantasy Themes: Setting, character, and action were presented in the Trump's speeches?

RQ2: What are the Sanctioning Agents included in the Trump speeches?

RQ3: What Rhetorical Visions were included in the Trump speeches?

RQ4: What is the common Master Analogy for the Trump Speeches?

RQ5: What evidence exists that alternative symbolic realities emerged through the Trump speeches and manifested in the actions of the participants in the January 6, 2021, Capitol Riot?

## **Chapter 4: Fantasy Theme Analysis of Trump's Speeches (RQ1)**

Following is the justification for selecting four Trump speeches for analysis. First, the June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015, speech in which Donald Trump announced his candidacy for U.S. President in the 2016 elections establishes a historical data point for many of Trump's original dramatizations. He established the original settings, characters, and the action themes in this speech. Moreover, Trump promoted a call to action. Second, the November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016, speech in which Trump accepted victory, moved to cement the original settings, characters, and action themes while introducing new fantasy themes. Again, Trump urged action. Third, the Inaugural Address that occurred on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017, was Trump's first official speech in Office and legitimized the Trump fantasy themes and rhetorical visions as officially the views of the White House and U.S. Government at that point in history. The call to action was repeated and sanctioned by the President of the United States. Finally, the January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, speech Trump gave at the Ellipse in Washington, D.C. culminated the various fantasy themes and rhetorical visions that President Trump used in his speeches during the 1,666 days he was on the political scene. Moreover, the 1,144 days between the Inauguration Speech and the speech on January 6<sup>th</sup>, was ample time for the promoted rhetorical visions to be firmly entrenched in the Trump lexicon and to have chained out to the participants in the January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Capitol Riot. Finally, as Trump stood on the stage, in front of the microphones and cameras that broadcast his voice and images around the world, Trump urged his supporters to take action.

### **The June 16, 2015, Presidential Candidacy Announcement Speech**

#### ***Setting Themes***

On June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015, Donald J. Trump looked down upon the waiting crowd at Trump Tower in New York City. As Trump descended the escalator, Neil Young's song, "*Rocking in a Free World*" played on the PA system. Trump, a New York icon was going to make a speech. It would be the first of four important speeches that Trump would make.

In Trump's Presidential Announcement Speech, the settings, or locations where the action occurred are many. The locations can be divided between domestic and international. I was able to further divide those two setting fantasy themes to smaller and more specific areas.

The fantasy theme for domestic settings encompassed the entire United States. Trump referred to it as "our country" in this speech. "Our country" included the borders from New York to California. He specifically mentioned: New York City, Washington, D.C., and Tennessee. For Trump, the United States is the "Promised Land" and he further referenced: Washington, D.C., Brooklyn, Queens, and Los Angeles.

Trump's speech included international setting fantasy themes. Trump repeated the setting themes throughout the speech. The repeated international location settings include Mexico, China, Iraq, Syria, South America, Russia, and Japan. Trump makes a clear distinction between the United States aka "our country" and the rest of the world.

### ***Character Themes***

The protagonists, antagonists, heroes, villains, and people are caught up in the drama that Trump weaved throughout his speeches. There are three protagonists in this speech: Trump, the American people, and the American military machine. I identified

three main antagonists in this speech. They are the broken and corrupt D.C. politicians, foreign countries, and big business based in the United States.

Trump is an ever-present character throughout this speech. He is all-knowing. Trump is a protagonist because he is intelligent, smart, a winner, independent, a family man, a father, and benevolent. He is destined to lead the United States of America. Trump told his audience that the United States needs a “great leader, someone who wrote *The Art of the Deal*.” When Trump said this, he reinforced to his audience that as a published author, the patriarch of a “great family”, a successful and experienced businessperson, that, he can perform the duties of the U.S. President.

The American people are protagonists as well. According to Trump, the American people have been “lied to” by President Obama and other politicians in Washington. The American people just “want a job” so they can provide for their families. Moreover, Trump identified his base as a “large movement” of skeptical people who when gathered “exceeded everyone’s expectations.” Trump identified his base of “common-sense people” and pitted them against everyone else who, according to his speech, are “destroying our country.” From the first speech, Trump drew a line between two groups of people, “them” and “us”. The American people, according to Trump, are in direct conflict with the outgoing President Obama and, subsequently, the democratic front runner, Hillary Clinton.

The American military is an important character in this speech. It is a sense of pride for many American citizens as it defends American interests, borders, and protects democracy throughout the world. Trump connects the idea of American military dominance to economic warfare when he questioned, “When did we ever beat Japan?”

When talking about the U.S. / Mexican border Trump said, “They’re killing us at the border.” Trump painted a picture of immediate doom when he said, “even our nuclear arsenal doesn’t work?” He asked, “How are they (the politicians and military) going to beat ISIS? I don’t think so,” he concluded.

In this speech, the American military is failing to protect the country. Trump portrays the military as weak, “our enemies are getting stronger and stronger by the way,” Trump said, “and we as a country are getting weaker.” The American military are cowards who flee before the enemy. Trump said we have “thousands and thousands of wounded soldiers” in Iraq. While fighting in the Middle East, about the soldiers Trump said, “they ran, and the enemy took them,” referring to the vehicles the soldiers left behind. Trump told his crowd that, “nobody will be tougher on ISIS than Donald Trump,” and that he, “will find the General Patton or I will find General MacArthur.” At this point, it is unclear against whom, exactly, Trump and his Generals will wage war. Moreover, if the American military has failed, it is unclear who will replace them.

Trump connected the antagonists in the Announcement Speech with the undermining of American values, safety, economy, and America’s place in the global society. The antagonists Trump pointed out in this speech included: former President Obama, Washington political elites, foreigners, globalists, and large corporations.

The Make America Great Again Movement tried to restore America to the pre-Obama years. Under Trump’s symbolic reality, President Obama failed the United States. Obama failed the American people because of his “illegal immigration laws.” Moreover, Obama represented the Democratic party and the Washington elites who are “fully controlled by the lobbyists and... special interests.” For Trump, the special interest

groups and the lobbyists created the first Big Lie, Obamacare, which Trump said, “is a complete disaster.” Obama represented the supposed fraudulent political elites who, as Trump states, lied to the American public about the health of the economy. According to Trump, the American worker lacks opportunity “because China has our jobs and Mexico has our jobs.”

Big business is tied to foreign countries that support a globalist agenda. As a character theme, big business, foreign countries, and globalism are intertwined. Trump said, “we (the USA) are rebuilding China...and other countries (while) they are ripping us (off).” Trump told a story about how a friend, a manufacturer, cannot compete with China. According to Trump, the Chinese government devalues their currency while requesting payment of unfair tariffs on manufactured goods shipped to China. Trump relayed another story about how he will bring Ford Motor Company to heel if they decide to open a new plant in Mexico rather than in Tennessee. Trump said he would, “charge a tax until they (Ford) behave properly.” While these stories are important on the surface, they are more important for what they imply.

According to the Trump rhetoric, failed government policies and special interests enabled manufacturing businesses to leave U.S. shores. Under Trump’s symbolic reality, there is a conspiracy against the USA and her citizens. The conspiracy is conceived by the Globalist, promoted by lobbyists, and put into law by crooked politicians. The result is that there “are no jobs,” for the American people. Trump told his crowd the reasons for the lack of jobs in the United States included:

- Broken, corrupt, and “stupid” politicians who made bad foreign trade deals;
- Politicians “are controlled fully by the special interests”;

- Globalism and special interests are undermining the American economy and American values.

These special interest groups and lobbyists are connected to automobile companies, such as Ford, and defense contractors, such as Boeing. Trump's message is clear, while companies like Ford and Boeing earn profits in the global market, the American worker and economy suffer because of the unavailability of jobs and lack of domestic manufacturing.

### ***Action Themes***

Action themes move a story along. In a speech, the story is likewise propelled by the action themes. There are four main action themes contained in this speech. One, the action that surrounded Trump. Two, the action encircling the broken system of government in Washington, D.C. Three, the action related to the foreign invaders, and finally, the act of lying to the citizens of the United States.

Trump, as a man of action, is central to this speech and an important action theme. According to Trump, he is the only person who is qualified to handle the job of the presidency. Trump is a better negotiator than Obama. Trump beats China all the time in business. Trump is a man of action, who will be able to lead the American people to the "Promised Land." Trump vowed to be a leader who can bring back jobs and manufacturing. On one end of the political spectrum are the liars and the Washington elites. They represent everything that is wrong with the United States. On the other end, is Donald J. Trump, who has the knowledge, connections, and experience to fix and "bring it back, bigger, and stronger than ever before." Trump told the crowd and the TV audience that, together, "we will make American Great Again."

Trump promoted the ideas that Washington was broken, and the political elite worked against the people. These are important action themes. When speaking about Obama, Trump said, he is a “bad negotiator” and “stupid”. In this speech Trump first mentioned the “Big Lie.” President Obama sold the “Big Lie” to the American people when he created the Affordable Care Act aka Obamacare. According to Trump, Obamacare is expensive for the citizens and the government, and has caused people to lose their healthcare while also forcing Doctors to leave the medical profession. Trump’s message seemed to be that politicians are fraudulent, wasteful, and abusing the American system of democracy. The “Big Lie” would metamorphosis in meaning the longer Trump stayed in office.

The United States is under attack. This action theme created fear and anxiety within the rhetorical community. Trump said Mexico is “sending rapists” across the borders who are “bringing crime and drugs.” Later in the speech, Trump claimed that the United States is becoming a Third World country because of the failing infrastructure, poor system of education, and the Obama government’s inability to protect the U.S. borders from criminals from “Latin America” and “the Middle East.”

Trump expounded on this action theme when he said, “we as a country are getting weaker.” According to Trump this is because, our “military equipment is 30-years-old,” and “our nuclear arsenal doesn’t work.” The Washington political elites made bad deals domestically and internationally. They, according to Trump are engaged in both “fraud” and “waste.” In this speech, the attacks originated from outside the country as well as from within. As an antithesis to Trump, who is independently wealthy and not beholden

to the lobbyists, are President Obama and the entrenched Democrats, who are controlled “wholly” by the lobbyists and special interests.

“It’s all lies” is an action theme Trump established in this speech. It will be an ongoing theme throughout Trump’s speeches. The organizations who lied to the public included the media and the government. In the first speech, Trump told his developing rhetorical community not to believe the lies such as:

- The announcement that the GDP was “below zero.” Trump questioned the validity of the news. He asked his audience, “Whoever heard of this? It’s never below zero,”
- The reported 5.6 percent unemployment rate. “Don’t believe it,” Trump said, “our real unemployment is anywhere from 18 to 20 percent.”
- The lies told by the media. In a roundabout way and when speaking about “negotiators” Trump said the “overrated negotiators” can “buffalo” or mislead the newspapers. Without indirectly attacking the media, Trump questioned, undermined, and created doubt about their ability to report factual news because of the potential for manipulation by hegemonic provocateurs.

### **The November 9, 2016, Presidential Acceptance and Victory Speech**

The November 9th, 2016, Presidential Acceptance Speech took place at the New York Hilton in downtown Manhattan. While this speech was relatively short in comparison to the Announcement Speech, Trump repeated the fantasy themes promoted in the previous speech. Moreover, established rhetorical visions include the idea of a Movement of people unlike anything the U.S. has experienced, Trump, as the Father of the Movement, and Trump, as a re-builder of the broken United States, and a Restorer of

the American Dream. It is in this speech, that Trump also introduces and legitimizes Vice-President Mike Pence as a central figure in his victory.

### ***Setting Themes***

Trump delivered the speech from the New York Hilton in downtown Manhattan. Trump kept this speech short. His location themes were limited to only a few areas. In general, Trump focused on New York City, Washington, D.C., and the USA in general.

New York City is a place where important business takes place. It is also where Trump and his entourage were located. “Complicated business,” happens in New York when Trump spoke about the night’s presidential election. Trump had just taken a phone call from Hilary Clinton, who conceded victory. Clinton, like Trump, also had her campaign headquarters in New York City at the Javits Center.

The most important location theme in this speech is the United States of America. The victory took place in “our country,” in “our nation,” and in “our inner cities.” Trump reiterated these three phrases multiple times. By doing so, Trump included and welcomed the people located in little-known areas across the nation in his Movement. No matter where they lived in the country, Trump included them in the Movement.

The setting of a better America is a theme that Trump promoted. In this dream of a future American Utopia, Trump is the leader of a united people despite “different races, religions, beliefs, and backgrounds.” It is a place where “millions of hard-working men and women dream of a better...brighter future...”. Trump’s America will be a place where every American, “who loves their country will have the opportunity to realize his or her fullest potential.” It is a place where “we can once again dream of beautiful and successful things.” A place, Trump says, where the “people want and expect the

government to serve the people.” “And serve the people it will,” Trump promised. Trump is making a point to convince the people that they can once again dream about their future and, as united people, “begin the urgent task of rebuilding our nation and renewing the American Dream”. While Trump doesn't explicitly say the United States was divided under former President Obama, Trump said, “it is time to come together as one united people” to “unify our great country.”

### ***Character Themes***

Because this is an Acceptance Speech, Trump offered his appreciation to different characters and groups of people. Several main character themes emerged through my analysis of this speech: The central character of Donald J. Trump, the American people, the Trump inner group, and finally the broken and corrupt politicians as embodied by the defeated Hillary Clinton.

Trump is a central character in this speech. Because he won the election, he is arguably one of the most powerful political leaders in the world and now embodies the characteristics he outlined in the speech. Trump is a winner. As a winner, he beat Clinton and the others in the Democratic Party. Trump is a unifier. His goal is to “bind the wounds of division.” As a leader, Trump is the Father of this “incredible and great Movement.” As an extension of the Trump as Father of the Movement character, the people in the Movement are connected to Trump’s own family who, like the “millions of hard-working men and women...supported” Trump in this “nasty and tough business of politics.”

The American people as character are central to this speech. Their successful and glorious past have fallen into decay, but Trump will be their savior and restore them to

the greatness that is rightfully theirs. “The forgotten men and women will be forgotten no longer,” Trump told his audience. In the lexicon of Trump, we can infer that the people have been forgotten by Obama, Clinton, and the corrupt Washington politicians. From the beginning of the Trump campaign, his potential supporters went unnamed. They were a group of people that wanted change. With this speech, Trump labels them as “forgotten” and “divided.” A people who have settled for less and lost what is rightfully their “destiny.” However, the people will be united once again around a great America cause called, “a job” and are now able to “dream big” and realize their “full potential.” In this social reality, Trump will lead the people out of the darkness of the Obama years into the light of the Trump era.

The opposition played a minor character in this speech. While Trump didn't mention Clinton or Obama very often in this speech, their characters are intertwined throughout. Trump said that Clinton called to congratulate the Trump campaign on their victory. Trump established himself as a winner and Clinton as a loser. Trump planted the idea that the people were divided under Obama's government. While Trump didn't explicitly say Obama divided the people, Trump did say, “it is now time bind the wounds of division.” As a rejection to Obama vis à vis Clinton's defeat, it can be surmised that Trump's supporters believed they were “divided” and “taught to hate” (Groeger et al., 2021).

Trump introduced Mike Pence. At the very end of the speech, Trump said, “Thank you, Mike Pence.” While one may think Trump could have provided Pence, his Vice President, with more recognition, Trump was not very liberal with his praise or allotment of airtime to others. Pence as a character is a sanctioning and legitimizing agent

for Trump. Pence was the Governor of Indiana. He had a following of people in conservative circles who looked up to him. Pence was devoutly religious, and as a Governor, he was legitimately connected to Washington, D.C., unlike Trump, who was a D.C. outsider.

### ***Action Themes***

Action themes overlapped with some of the character themes. The overlap occurred when individuals and groups acted. As Bormann (1985) posits, the characters are defined by their actions and subsequently the rhetorical community can identify and make sense of the character in action. The action themes I identified include actions related to Washington, D.C., actions related to Donald J. Trump, actions related to the American people, and finally, the actions that are related to the complicated business of politics.

First, Trump is the most important character and the actions he took and will undertake on behalf the American people are of utmost importance. Trump is the undisputed leader of the “Movement.” In this speech, Trump said he will be a “President for all Americans.” He will be a unifier and “heal the wounds of division” that have plagued the country for so long. As a businessman and real estate mogul, Trump supposedly understands how to build. Trump promised the people, that together and under his presidency, they will “begin the urgent task of rebuilding our nation and renewing the American Dream.” Throughout his speech, Trump is speaking to the “forgotten” people.

The American people participated in the action theme to unite and save America. Trump infused the American people with righteous action. Trump told the people they

have come to together in a “great movement.” He told them to “dream big” as they “embark upon a project of national growth and renewal.” Trump conjured images of the past and future with his rhetoric as he told the people they must be “bold and daring” in order to “reclaim our country’s destiny.” Like the American settlers of the late 1800’s who drove wagons across the country and settled lands under the ideology of Manifest Destiny, the new American citizen is now tasked with the patriotic duty of reclaiming their destiny by spreading equality and capitalism for all. These “millions” of newly patriotic Americans will all unite together as they rebuild “our infrastructure,” reinvent the “American Dream,” and enjoy the system of American democracy where the politicians work and “serve the people.”

### **The 45<sup>th</sup> Presidential Inauguration Speech**

The Inauguration Speech took place outside the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The Inaugural Address was President Trump’s first official speech in Office and arguably sought to legitimize the fantasy themes and rhetorical visions as the official views of the White House and the Trump Government. In this speech, the seeds from the previously planted fantasy themes blossomed into mature rhetorical visions. Moreover, the rhetorical community that supported Trump consumed his political message, supported it, and took action by casting their votes for Trump.

#### ***Setting Themes***

There are three categories of settings: Washington, D.C., the United States of America, and international destinations.

According to the Trump symbolic reality, Washington, D.C. is a place of power where corruption and bad policies were made. Historically, politicians in Washington,

D.C. made policy that positively affected the citizens. According to Trump, the recent politicians in Washington, D.C., and the policies they enacted didn't benefit the American people but rather the political elite and their henchmen. Trump told the people that the "politicians prospered...and celebrated," while the "people bore the cost," and "there was little to celebrate" as "the factories closed" and "jobs left our shores."

The United States represents dual thematic settings. It is a bleak and negative setting on one side. On the other side, it is a place of renewal and hope. It includes the states such as Nebraska and the cities that have experienced devastation, such as Detroit. As a setting, the United States becomes more important than Washington.

As a negative thematic setting, The United States is a place of "carnage," and has a bleak past. It is a place "where mothers and children are trapped in poverty." In Trump's manufactured social reality, it is a place where "crime and gangs and drugs ...steal lives and rob(bed) our country of so much potential." The United States is a place where economic policies have failed "leaving rusted-out factories scattered like tombstones across the landscape of our nation."

Trump offered the people hope for the future and the restoration of the American Dream. The United States is a place where dreams can come true. It is a place of hope, renewal, and where power is consolidated within the hands of the people. Because of the corrupt politicians and the failed policies of those who controlled Washington, Trump said he would shift power from Washington, D.C. to the people. The people, who are spread across the country, from this day forward, "will become the rulers of this nation again." In the new America, the country will "start winning again," and stop listening to

“politicians who are all talk and no action.” “Now arrives the hour,” Trump said, “for action.”

The foreign countries are places where nefarious people plotted against the United States. The locations included economic zones and war zones. The failed economic policies enriched other countries at the expense of the American Middle Class, who’s “wealth has been ripped from their homes and redistributed across the entire world.” Rather than support international cooperation and continued globalization of the world economy, Trump is guided by the principle of “benefiting American workers and American families.”

The U.S. military is engaged in military operations across the globe. The thematic settings of international destination and war zones overlap with the setting of Washington, D.C. At the expense of “allowing for the sad depletion of our military,” we, “subsidized the armies of other countries.” Trump argued that since our politicians and their policies failed, the U.S. military might and ability to protect its’ citizens decreased. The war zones are places where the united civilized world will “eradicate Radical Islamic Terrorism from the face of the earth.” It is a place where the U.S. has “defended other countries borders while refusing to defend our own.” In Trump’s view, funding the U.S. military and protecting our borders will “lead to greater prosperity and strength.”

### ***Character Themes***

I identified four different character themes that are prevalent throughout this speech. The main characters include: The American Patriot, The Broken and Corrupt D.C. Politicians, God, and Donald J. Trump.

The American Patriot is a central character in the Inaugural Speech and one that will continually evolve throughout the Trump speeches. The evolution continued in the Inaugural Speech. Trump infused the American Patriot with senses of empowerment, purpose, determination, solidarity, nationalism, and hope for the future. As such, the unnamed masses and forgotten people “came together in a historic movement the likes of which the world has never seen before.” Together, the “tens of millions” of “forgotten men and women,” who supported Trump are bound in a Movement that, at its bedrock, is “total allegiance to the United States of America.” Trump tells the people when you “open your heart to patriotism, there is no room for prejudice.” That despite their differences, they must “speak their minds openly...but always pursue solidarity,” with all other American people. The voices, hopes, and dreams of the American Patriot will “define our American destiny...and guide us along the way...to making American Great Again.” “January 20, 2017,” Trump told his supporters, “will be the remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this nation again.”

As stated previously, the broken and corrupt D.C. politicians theme is an ongoing character theme prevalent throughout the Trump speeches. It continues as a character theme in the Inauguration speech as well. Within this speech, the policies of the previous administrations wreaked havoc upon the economy, education, security, and infrastructure of the United States. The “small group” of politicians in D.C. have gotten rich while “carnage” spread across the land. The politicians “prospered” while “Mothers and children, (are) trapped in poverty in our inner cities.” The politicians “constantly complained” and didn’t take any “action” while letting the “wealth, strength, and confidence of our country disappeared over the horizon.”

This speech contains Biblical references. The references legitimized Trump's movement while also supporting Trump's master analogy of Make America Great Again. The people share "one glorious destiny." Under Trump's leadership, the Christian soldiers will engage in a Holy War against Radical Islamic Terrorism which Trump will "eradicate completely from the face of the earth." The American Patriot should have no fear because they will always be "protected by God." The American Patriots all share "the same glorious freedoms, and (we) all salute the same great American Flag."

Trump as a character in the drama of this speech, fulfills three roles. First, he is part of the Great Movement along with the other American Patriots. Second, Trump will expend all his energy while working for the people of the United States. Finally, Trump – a President of the United States - is the ultimate sanctioning agent in this speech because of the power of his Office.

Trump is integral to the Great Movement. Trump, like the American Patriot is part of the Movement to save and Make America Great Again. He connects with the rhetorical community because, he too is an American citizen who has suffered and been wronged by the previous administrations. This is symbolized by Trump's repeated use of words such as: "we, together", and "our". Trump tells his people that, "we, the citizens of America, are now joined in a great national effort to rebuild our country." He continued, "together, we will determine the course of America," because, according to Trump, "for too long, a small group in our nation's capital have reaped the reward of government while the people have borne the cost." Trump and his rhetorical community are committed to the cause as Trump ends the speech by promising that:

"Together, We Will Make America Strong Again."

“We Will Make America Wealthy Again.”

“We Will Make America Safe Again.”

“We Will Make America Proud Again.”

“And Yes, Together We Will Make America Great Again.”

Successful businesses and social Movements need a visionary leader to bring the people together and drive the Movement forward. Trump, as a protagonist, embodied this character theme. As the President, Trump is legitimized and recognized for his political acumen. As the savior of democracy, Trump promised the people that he, “will never let you (the American people) down,” because he “will fight for you with every breath in my (his) body.” Trump assumed the leadership of the Movement when he spoke to and pledged allegiance to his base. He said, “the oath of office I take today is an oath of allegiance to all Americans.” Because the Inauguration recognizes the newly appointed president, it serves as a sanctioning agent for President Trump. In other words, the political system supported or sanctioned Trump’s words and actions. Moreover, Trump entered into a contract with his rhetorical community when he promised his allegiance and undying efforts to represent their best interests. Because Trump is elected President, he has legitimate authority. As the leader of the Free World and the United States, Trump is a sanctioning agent for his actions. Moreover, because the people elected Trump to office, his actions, ideas, and philosophies are sanctioned by those who voted for him and those in government that supported him. The actions of Trump’s rhetorical community are legitimized when Trump said he was, “transferring the power from Washington, back to you, the American people.” Trump assumed that he had the right to give the power

back to the people. He used the office of the President to legitimize and become his own sanctioning agent for the cause and the subsequent actions of his rhetorical community.

### *Action Themes*

The action themes in this speech are well defined. As a political orator, Trump made speeches for at least one year and seven months prior to this speech. During that time, Trump and his speech writers had ample time to sharpen their political messaging and define action themes that resonated with their support group or rhetorical community. Through my analysis, I identified five different action themes contained in this speech. The action themes include a call to action, the denial of the previous administration, Trump acting to save democracy, the people engaging in a united Movement, and God protecting America and all those within.

After campaigning for the Office of the President, Trump delivered his Inauguration Speech to the people of the United States and the world. Inauguration Day is the day Trump and his supporters denied the recent history of the United States. The day was a call to arms for his tribe as Trump said, “the time for action is now.” Trump continued, “this moment changes everything,” and that the country stands at the “birth of a new millennium.” For Trump and his supporters, the battles to be fought are against both domestic and foreign enemies.

As we have seen in other Trump speeches, Washington politicians and domestic businesses are enemies of American democracy. The Washington politicians are part of a “small group in Washington” who enjoyed the financial benefits of failed economic policies. Their immigration policies have enabled foreign invaders to cross U.S. borders and engage in “crime and drugs that have stolen too many lives and robbed our country

of so much potential.” For Trump, the Washington elites and politicians stole from the Middle Class. They shipped jobs and businesses across oceans. Promoted globalism and safety for other countries. By “refusing to defend our own (borders),” ‘America’s infrastructure has fallen [fell] into disrepair and decay.”

Trump is the savior of democracy. This action theme is symbolized repeatedly throughout this speech. Trump will work tirelessly to serve the people. As the Leader of the Movement, Trump will direct the people and the government toward a greater future where the goal is to reclaim the glories of the past. Trump will ensure that his policy of “America First” will put America’s interest ahead of the interests of foreign governments and the Globalist business elites. Under the Trump plan for democracy, the power of the government is returned into the hands of the people.

The American citizens are protected by God. In this speech, Trump said that the U.S. military and law enforcement will protect the U.S. borders and will protect against crime and drugs. But there is a higher spiritual power that protects the American people. In the speech, Trump said, “most importantly, we are protected by God.” This statement symbolizes that God protects American democracy and Trump’s rhetorical community. Moreover, the Christian God is a sanctioning agent for Trump’s quest to restore America to its former greatness. Under the Christian God’s protection, God legitimizes Trump’s plans to engage in genocide by completely eradicating Radical Islamic Terrorism “from the face of the earth.” Trump spoke directly to the American Patriot when he said, “and your courage, goodness, and love will forever guide us along our way,” to our glorious destiny. Trump combined the ideas of Church and State throughout this speech. Action

themes containing nationalist pride and religious spirituality were combined to define and reinspire the American Patriot.

Throughout his speech, Trump created a symbolic reality of the empowered American citizen. What originally started as an unnamed mass of people gathered to support Trump evolved into a Movement of change to restore the promise of democracy to the people. The people are now in control of the government, and Trump, the Father of the Movement, returned the power to them. In the speech, Trump told the people that “the government exists to serve the people.” Under the Trump symbolic reality, the people are united in their common struggle against the previous administration that undermined American values. The people, who have opened their hearts to patriotism, will defend their borders against foreign invaders and foreign companies. The people will protect the country which will lead to greater prosperity and strength. The people will define America’s future. The people are just, reasonable, and righteous. The people share one heart, one home, and one glorious destiny. The people control and dictate their needs to the government. The people in control. The people ruling the country.

### **The January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Ellipse Speech**

The Ellipse Speech was an important speech. This speech contained locations entrenched with symbolic meaning. The settings, action, characters, and fantasy themes existed in different planes or temporal zones. The symbolic reality under which the participants lived, existed in a spiritual or emotional state that spurred them to take action. The characters were well defined and full of meaning in the speech rhetoric. The fantasy themes were entrenched by this time and easily recognized by the supporting

rhetorical community. For almost five years, Trump defined the various themes that constituted his political message.

### *Setting Themes*

There are many different locations and setting themes contained in the January 6<sup>th</sup> speech. I identified three different categories of setting themes. The categories include: The United States, foreign countries, and the world at large. These three categories can further be divided into setting theme subcategories.

The United States is a category and setting theme. Within the United States category are the settings of New York, California, Washington, D.C., the Capitol Building, and Georgia. The East Coast locations are very different in their populations and historical perspectives. On the West Coast, Trump established California as a setting theme and specifically targeted Silicon Valley as a place where Big Tech has “rigged an election” despite, according to Trump, his winning “both elections” in 2016 and 2020. “Crooked” officials are in Georgia. Georgia is where they “weakened election security procedures.”

Trump mentioned foreign locations throughout the final speech. Moscow, Ukraine, and China are all locations where some action took place. In those foreign countries, media corruption and bribery ran rampant. Trump said, “Joe Biden is allowed to give a billion dollars in money to get rid of a prosecutor” who is ostensibly investigating Biden’s son, Hunter, for taking “three and half million dollars from the Mayor of Moscow’s wife.” According to Trump, Joe and Hunter Biden also received “billions of dollars” from the Chinese despite their lack of experience in managing money.

The world is the final setting theme that is integral to the Ellipse speech. It is significant as a setting theme because it has dual representations. When he spoke about corruption in the election process, Third World countries are better than the United States. Trump said Third World countries “wouldn’t even attempt to do what we caught them doing.” On the other hand, the “hundreds of thousands of great American Patriots” that are “committed to the honesty of our elections and the integrity of our glorious republic” are joined by “hundreds of thousands of people” that “came from all over the world” to support Trump. Listening to Trump, the rhetorical community can only surmise that the world is a confusing place. A place where corrupt governments control the citizens. Those citizens desired great change and Trump is the leader of that united global Movement for change.

### ***Character Themes***

The character themes contained in this speech are many. Accordingly, Trump created a dramatic narrative in which there are heroes and villains. Within this pool of characters, there are those who want to protect the United States and the system of government. Conversely there are those working to undermine Trump and his Movement. My analysis focuses on seven different character themes critical to this speech. These include Trump, Mike Pence, D.C. politicians, big business combined with the media, foreign influences, the U.S. system of government, and the American Patriot. Each character played a role in the social reality of the Trump drama in a unique way.

Trump’s character is multi-dimensional. Trump portrayed himself as honest, the Leader of the Revolution, beneficent, and smarter than the other politicians. Trump’s honesty and integrity are paramount. At the beginning of the speech, Trump told his

supporters, "I'm honest." Trump as a character is connected to his rhetorical community who are "committed to the honesty of our elections." As the leader of the Revolution, Trump told the American Patriots that "we will never concede when there is theft involved." As the Leader and Father of the Revolution, Trump is concerned with the welfare of his rhetorical community. He told his followers that "I said give them \$2,000." Trump was speaking of the government aide during the Covid 19 pandemic. Trump seemingly wanted the best for his people when he said, "you've got to let the people live." Following on the heels of this statement, Trump said that "China destroyed these people, we didn't destroy." In the social reality created by Trump, the problem is always with "the other". Trump created a social reality of "us" versus "them". Trump refused to take responsibility for his words and his actions.

The location and character themes symbolize many different concepts. This is true for Mike Pence's character as he also represented and symbolized different ideas. Pence is ever present as a shadow character. He existed in the background and never took center stage. He was the ultimate supporting character, but had a serious role to play in the presidential transition. It was Vice President Pence who was inside the Capitol Building on the floor of the Senate, confirming the votes of the most recent election. In general, the Vice President oversees and certifies the election process and announces the results of the election. Trump sanctioned Pence as the potential savior of America when he said, "I hope Mike Pence does the right thing, I hope so." Trump was referring to the fact that Pence had the power to return the election results to the states for recertification. "If Pence does the right thing," Trump said, "we win the election." Trump laid the

responsibility for denying the election results squarely on Pence's shoulders and, by doing so, Trump also created the character of Mike Pence, the traitor.

Trump cast Pence in the role of a treasonous character during the January 6<sup>th</sup> speech. In front of the large crowd that was gathered at the Ellipsis and in front of a worldwide television audience, Trump said, "Pence is going to have to come through for us, and if he doesn't, that will be a, a sad day for our country because you're sworn to uphold our Constitution." Trump rhetoric was full of double entendre. The previous sentence has at least two different meanings. First, Trump created a conflict between the hero, Trump and the villain, Pence. Speaking directly to his rhetorical community, Trump said that if Pence doesn't return the votes to the states, he will not be upholding the oath he took to protect the Constitution. Pence would then become a traitor. His second message directly empowered and served as a sanctioning agent for the rhetorical community when Trump said, "you're sworn to uphold our Constitution." Trump's message was clear: If Pence certified the votes, he was committing a traitorous act and therefore, the people could rightfully take up arms to protect American democracy.

The broken and corrupt D.C. politicians are an ongoing character theme in Trump's speeches. The corrupt D.C. politicians were "liars" under Trump's social reality. He called them "lying politicians" and said that the "Radical Left Democrats" are trying to steal the Trump "election victory" and need to be stopped. But for Trump, the broken and corrupt D.C. politicians are not limited to the radical left. Republicans are also included in this character theme. Specifically, Mitt Romney and the "24 of them," that Trump "helped get elected." Trump's rhetoric grouped both Democrats and Republicans together. One side are the Democrats and the weak Republicans who are engaged in a

“comprehensive assault on American democracy” who “have gotten away with election fraud...for years,” and “are trying to blacklist you (Trump and conservative voices) on social media. On the other side are Trump and “the people who built this nation.” One side of the battlefield are Trump and his supporters. On the other side is the establishment, consisting of Democrats, Republicans, and big business, especially Big Tech.

Perhaps, the biggest threat to U.S. democracy and the American way of life is the character theme symbolized by Big Tech. Social media companies and traditional media companies are doing business as Big Tech companies in the United States and throughout the world. According to Trump, they have undermined the American way of life. In Trump’s battle to control the message and from the beginning of the speech, Trump said that the media will not show the true size of the crowd because “they don’t want to show it,” because, as far as Trump, and therefore his rhetorical community are concerned, “the media is the biggest problem...fake news and Big Tech.” When speaking about why social media companies like Twitter and Facebook are untrustworthy Trump stated, “they (Big Tech) rigged an election,” In Trump’s social reality, big business and Big Tech are undermining U.S democracy because of their manipulation of the truth at the behest of their foreign masters.

The character theme of the foreign entity is complex. Throughout the Trump speeches, the foreigner theme is intermingled with the ideology of globalism, the people and the countries where they live such as:

- Mexico;
- Japan;

- The Middle East;
- Russia;
- China.

Globalism, as supported by foreigners, is an ideology that invaded and is taking over the United States. The character theme of the foreign entity as communist, infiltrated and influenced the D.C politicians, traditional media, and Big Tech. Trump gave his viewpoint on the media when he said, “we don’t have a free and fair press. It suppresses thought, it suppresses free speech, it has become the enemy of the people.” According to Trump, “the American people don’t believe the corrupt, fake news anymore,” because “that’s what they do, they suppress,” he continued, “that’s what they do in a Communist country.”

The final character theme I analyzed was the American Patriot. The character theme of the American Patriot is complex and multi-sided. Trump supercharged the American citizen with the power to stand up and protect American democracy from certain doom. Trump used historical, nationalistic, religious, and emotional pleas to connect with his audience to this symbolic reality. The American Patriots are unified in their quest to protect democracy because of the “enduring love for America in our (their) hearts.” While delivering the speech, Trump said that “hundreds of thousands of people” have gathered “to protect democracy,” because of the “overwhelming deep pride in this great country.” The “American Patriot” as Trump labels them, is committed to the “honesty of our elections.” The American Patriot is angry and “has had enough” of the Radical Left Democrats attempt at stealing the election that Trump won. Under Trump, the American Patriot achieved greatness. Together, they “created the greatest economy in

history...and...rebuilt the military.” The American Patriot has had enough. The American Patriot is finally standing up and “saying no” to the Radical Left Democrats, the globalists and Big Tech who are trying to “suppress” the truth and “indoctrinate your children in school by teaching them things that aren’t so.”

In this symbolic reality, the American Patriot replaced the military in defending American democracy against the foreign influence that is trying to supplant and overcome the glorious system of American democracy. The American Patriot is the modern Revolutionary soldier defending against tyranny and communism with the goal of returning the country to a better state. The American Patriot wants to Make American Great Again. Under this symbolic reality and world outlook, the American Patriot can accomplish this goal by marching to the Capitol Building and making sure that Pence and the Senators overturn the election results that will null Biden’s winning of the 2020 Presidential election.

### ***Action Themes***

The Ellipsis Speech is a motivating speech because of the action themes contained within. While the entire speech contains multiple action themes, there are two specific action themes that stand out: The Radical Left Democrats who corrupted the election process and the American Patriot who will defend American democracy against the tyranny of both domestic and foreign influence.

According to Trump, election corruption and suppression altered the election results. In the Trump rhetoric, the stealing of the election was the second Big Lie. Trump told his rhetorical community that in “every single swing state, local officials, state officials, almost all Democrats, made illegal and unconstitutional changes to election

procedures without mandated approvals by state legislators. These changes paved a way for fraud”. This statement led to the second Big Lie under the Trump administration. Namely, that Biden won the election through illegal voting practices at the local and state level. Accordingly, Big Tech and the media aided in the illegal practice of changing the voting laws.

“The radical left tries to blacklist you on social media,” Trump told his rhetorical community. In the United States, the idea of freedom of speech via a free and open press is a basic tenant of American democracy. Trump upended this idea when he said that Big Tech and social media ban Republican voices. In other words, the American people no longer receive the truth from the media. According to the rhetoric, the media suppressed the only voices – Trump and other conservative voices - that told the people the truth about what happened on election day.

Throughout the Ellipse Speech, Trump told his rhetorical community what had been done to them, by whom, how to feel, and how to think. Finally, Trump told his rhetorical community what they were going to do to correct the wrongdoings by those who stand against them. Trump drew a line-in-the-sand and placed himself and his righteous Revolutionary Patriots on one side and the corrupt enemies of American democracy on the other. Trump set the stage for the assault on the Capitol Building.

According to Trump, the corrupt losers who were against American democracy are to blame for everything. Trump extolled the American Patriot to defend American democracy. The American Patriots “gathered together in the heart of our nation’s capital for one very, very basic and simple reason: to save our democracy.” Trump told his community that “we have to get them (media and Democrats) straightened out.” There

will be opposition to the efforts by Trump's community. However, the community "will fight much harder." If Biden takes the White House, "our country will be destroyed", and the American Patriot "will not stand for that." The speech concluded with a call to arms as Trump urged his community to "walk down Pennsylvania Avenue" to the Capitol Building. When the community arrived at the Capitol, they would have to "fight like hell" or "they will no longer have a country." Through his words, Trump created a social reality that persuaded and motivated his rhetorical community to assault the Capitol Building because America was under attack and American democracy was at risk of failing.

## Chapter 5: Sanctioning Agents (RQ2)

Why did Trump's supporters march on the Capitol Building on January 6, 2021?

What propelled them to take that action? Sanctioning agents might offer some clues.

Within the framework of rhetorical criticism, the sanctioning agent allows for the justification of certain actions. Foss (1989) stated that, "[the] sanctioning agent [is a] or source of justification for the creation, acceptance, and promotion of a particular vision. A sanctioning agent might be peace, the fatherland, justice, God, love, democracy, or some other ideal concept" (p. 301). Focusing on the four Trump political speeches, I searched for the sanctioning agents that ignited the passions of the rhetorical community and ultimately influenced the group to act.

Under the Trump symbolic reality, there are multiple, intertwined sanctioning agents. Throughout this thesis, I have already discussed several sanctioning agents, such as (1) the office of the President; (2) God protecting the American Patriot; (3) God blessing and protecting the United States. However, in this portion of the work, I will expound on two distinct sanctioning agents that stand alone but are used together to push people forward. They are as follows: (1) The American Dream; and (2) American democracy.

The definition of the American Dream is varied and means different things to different people. For this thesis, the American Dream contains the following ideas, some of which were initially stated in the U.S. Constitution: (1) all men are created equal, (2) each person has the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and (3) each person is able to live freely and succeed without undue restraints from oppressive institutions despite their current or past place in society.

The idea of the American Dream occupies at least two spaces within the Trump lexicon. As I previously wrote, the death of the American Dream is a rhetorical vision that Trump promoted. Additionally, I propose that the idea of the American Dream is a sanctioning agent for the actions of the rhetorical community.

American democracy is the second sanctioning agent. A rhetorical argument could be made that American democracy makes American citizens and the USA unique. The American experiment that started in 1776 has endured for two hundred and forty-five years. American democracy separates the United States from other countries, making it, said Trump, “the greatest country in the world.” The social, political, and economic freedoms U.S. citizens enjoy are, perhaps, unparalleled throughout the world. The freedoms enjoyed today in the United States were hard won. The Founding Fathers and Revolutionary Patriots of yore fought for American democracy. Current American citizens benefit from the original patriots’ real or imagined sacrifices. Indeed, those freedoms are so valued that during the Insurrection, one participant said, “I would die for this country” (Groeger et al., 2021).

Throughout his speeches, Trump used the sanctioning agent of the American Dream to motivate his community. Moreover, the use of the American Dream as a rhetorical device evolved throughout the four speeches. After telling his audience how America was failing, had corrupt politicians, and was under economic and foreign attack, Trump summed up the Announcement Speech when he said, “sadly, the American Dream is dead.” After winning the presidential election and during the Victory Speech, Trump said, “working together, we will begin the urgent task of rebuilding our nation and renewing the American Dream.” Trump again used the idea of the American Dream in

the Inauguration speech. He said, “we the citizens of America, are now joined in a great national effort to rebuild our country and restore its promise [the American Dream] for all our people.” The use of the American Dream as a sanctioning agent evolved throughout all four speeches. The American Dream as a sanctioning agent evolved within the first three speeches as;

- The death of American Dream in the Announcement Speech;
- The renewal of the American Dream in the Victory Speech;
- The restoration the promise of the American Dream in the Inauguration Speech.

In the Ellipse Speech, Trump combined the two sanctioning agents: The death and resurrection of the American Dream with the unique American democracy. Standing in front of the crowds at the Ellipse, Trump extolled his people to defend the country. Trump used the death of the American Dream as a sanctioning agent when he said, “we’re supposed to protect our country, support our country, support our Constitution, and protect our Constitution.” Despite Trump’s claims of election fraud, the American Dream still had a chance to survive. Trump told his people, “together, we are determined to defend and preserve government of the people, by the people and for the people.” He urged his rhetorical community to action when he used American democracy as a sanctioning agent. He said, “we’re gathered here together in the heart of our nation’s capital for one very, very basic reason: to save our democracy.”

The Ellipse speech occurred on January 6, 2021. The day Presidential power was to be transferred from the outgoing president to the incoming president, the peaceful transfer of power from one administration to the next is a hallmark of American democracy. It signifies the peaceful evolution of the democratic process. The transfer of

power between administrations symbolizes an evolved democratic system and an evolved people who work toward its success. Trump infused his rhetorical community with Revolutionary rhetoric. Under Trump's symbolic reality, Washington politicians are oppressing the citizenry like the original British did. In 1776, the people fought for their freedom. Trump previously accepted the transfer of power from the Obama administration to his own in the Inauguration Speech. In that speech, Trump told his community he was transferring the power "back to [them] you, the American people." For Trump, the process of transferring power between administrations was secondary, his primary goal was to persuade the people that he transferred political power from a "small group in our nation's Capital" to the "forgotten men and women of our country." By transferring the power to the American people, Trump enabled the American citizens, now American Patriots charged with the task of Revolution, to be responsible for Making America Great Again. In the end, Trump found his new military, the American Patriot, that would fight the war against the corrupt establishment. He accomplished this by making the American Patriots the saviors of the American Dream and the protectors of democracy.

## **Chapter 6: Rhetorical Visions (RQ3)**

A rhetorical vision is a composite drama consisting of fantasy themes which are based upon fantasy types. For this thesis, the rhetorical visions, like the fantasy themes, are found within the four speeches that I analyzed. The rhetorical visions are guiding principles for the rhetorical community. For this research, I limited the identification of rhetorical visions to six different themes. While the rhetorical visions can stand alone, there is some overlap with other themes such as character and setting. Following are six rhetorical visions, including illustrative quotes by the January 6<sup>th</sup>, protestors, that I identified as germane to the Trump speeches.

### **Rhetorical Vision One:**

The American Dream is Dead.

### **Illustrative Quotes:**

“It’s over for us.” (Groeger, et al, 2021).

“This American Revolution must take place” (Groeger et al. 2021).

### **Rhetorical Vision Two:**

Washington, D.C., and Washington politicians are broken and crooked.

### **Illustrative Quotes:**

“Our government has been taken over by criminals” (Groeger et al. 2021).

“The lies, the stealing needs to end” (Groeger et al. 2021).

### **Rhetorical Vision Three:**

Donald J. Trump is the Father of the Revolution and the only person that can be trusted to tell the truth.

### **Illustrative Quotes:**

“They are really ready to stand-up and do a Revolution. Trump asked for wild. He got wild” (Groeger et al. 2021).

“Who are we here for? Trump!” (Groeger et al. 2021).

**Rhetorical Vision Four:**

The American Patriot must protect American democracy and the Constitution.

**Illustrative Quotes:**

“And we declare 1776 against the New World Order” (Groeger et al. 2021).

“We’re at the door! We’re right here! We’re coming in! They’re not stopping us now, God damnit! THIS IS OUR HOUSE MOTHER FUCKERS!” (Groeger et al. 2021).

**Rhetorical Vision Five:**

Radical Left Democrats, foreign governments, and globalists are undermining and attacking the sovereignty of the United States.

**Illustrative Quotes:**

“The real threat in this country is not socialism. It is globalism” (Groeger et al. 2021).

“He (Pence) is handing this country over to the ChiCom. May he go under the gallows” (Groeger et al. 2021).

**Rhetorical Vision Six:**

The USA, the American Patriot, and the Movement are protected by God.

**Illustrative Quotes:**

“Dear God, thank you for allowing us to stand-up for our country and what we believe in” (Groeger et al. 2021).

“And Father, we give you the heart of President Trump. Do with it as you please Lord. (Trump) Is not afraid to face the giants and take the Promised Land.” (Groeger et al. 2021).

## Chapter 7: Discussion of Master Analogy (RQ4):

### Make America Great Again

Rhetorical visions, fantasy themes, and fantasy types, combine to create a master analogy. The master analogy provides guidelines for the rhetorical vision. It is the framework that structures and holds the themes together. If the rhetorical community adheres to the guidelines presented within the master analogy, they are participating in the manufactured social reality. The master analogy that Trump promoted was the slogan, Make America Great Again. Also known as MAGA, Make America Great Again permeated each Trump speech I analyzed for this thesis. While Make America Great Again is a classic restoration theme it is also a denial of the Obama years and a call to return to an idealized and romanticized time in American history.

In every speech analyzed, Trump promoted the slogan, Make America Great Again. In the Announcement Speech, Trump said, he didn't think the other politicians would be able to Make America Great Again because of their failed policies (*Full text: Donald Trump announces a presidential bid*, 2015). In the Acceptance Speech, Trump told his people that his movement would immediately begin rebuilding our nation and renewing the American Dream (*Here's the full text of Donald Trump's victory speech*, 2016). He continued the master analogy in the Inauguration Speech. Trump told his community that they are now joined in a great national effort to rebuild our country and restore its promise for all people (*Here's the full text of Donald Trump's victory speech*, 2016). He ended the speech by saying, "Together, We Will Make America Great Again." In the last speech at the Ellipse, Trump still believed that he could Make America Great Again. This is despite all the fraud and rigging of elections, of which Trump claimed to

have proof. In the final part of the speech, Trump told his supporters that their brightest days are before them (*Transcript of Trump's speech at rally before U.S. Capitol riot, 2021*) all they had to do was walk down Constitution Avenue and “take back our country” (*Transcript of Trump's speech at rally before U.S. Capitol riot, 2021*).

The rhetorical visions and fantasy themes support the master analogy. Each rhetorical vision I identified supports the master analogy of Make America Great Again. The first and the second rhetorical vision created fear, doubt, and told how far and how much the U.S. and American citizens had regressed and lost. The third rhetorical vision identified the Leader of the Revolution. While the fourth rhetorical vision identified the soldiers who would return the country to its former greatness. The fifth rhetorical vision identified the enemies with whom Trump and his soldiers were at war. Finally, the sixth rhetorical vision presented God as the protector and sanctioning agent of the Movement.

## **Chapter 8: Manifestations of Social Realities Presented on January 6th, 2021, for Rhetorical Visions 1-5 and Discussion (RQ5)**

The analysis above highlights different fantasy themes and rhetorical visions discovered in the four Trump speeches that I analyzed. One of the goals of this research was to discover how the fantasy themes and rhetorical visions chained out among the participants of the January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Capitol Building Insurrection. I do not want to make a political statement in support for, or opposition to, President Trump and his Movement. To reiterate, by conducting this thesis, I am interested in the discovery and identification of fantasy themes and rhetorical visions that manifested in the actions and the symbols elaborated by the participants on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, in Washington, D.C.

I identified six different rhetorical visions in my research. What follows is an analysis of audio and video files that were uploaded by the January 6, 2021, participants to the website, Parler ([parler.com](https://parler.com)), and subsequently aggregated by ProPublica ([www.propublica.org](https://www.propublica.org)). For this part of the thesis, I reviewed three hundred and thirty-two different videos. The files contained both video and associated audio. The goal of this portion of the thesis was to discover connections between the fantasy themes and/or rhetorical visions found in the Trump speeches and the social realities of the January 6<sup>th</sup> participants. In this case, a participant could be engaged with a social reality if they reiterated a fantasy theme verbally, held a sign that repeated a theme, or engaged in some action that represented their engagement with the social reality as represented by a rhetorical vision previously documented. There are many positive proofs that the fantasy themes and rhetorical visions chained out to the rhetorical community. However, I limited my exposition to five examples per each rhetorical vision. I looked for key words,

sayings, chants, singing, and text to serve as the bridges connecting the fantasy themes and rhetorical visions with the symbolic realities and actions of the January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, participants. While some of the files I analyzed exhibited a person engaging with one rhetorical vision, there are instances where the evidence suggests the participants are engaged in multiple rhetorical visions and symbolic realities, suggesting that they are adhering to the guidelines established by Trump’s master analogy of Make America Great Again.

The following audio and video files were aggregated on [www.propublica.org](http://www.propublica.org). The following table will assist the reader in understanding how to locate the video footage referenced.

**Table 1**

*References to Locate Video Footage*

<b>RV #</b>	<b>Rhetorical Vision #</b>
EV #	Evidence #
MA	Master Analogy
ADCV	Around D.C. Video
NCV	Near Capitol Video
ICV	Inside Capitol Video

**Manifestations of Symbolic Realities, Fantasy Themes and Rhetorical Visions with Examples of Symbolic Convergence and Chaining Throughout Trump’s Rhetorical Community**

*Rhetorical Vision #1: The American Dream is Dead*

**RV1 EV1 ADCV at time 1439 (00:07).** Young men in suits and ties stand on the steps of an unidentified monument in Washington, D.C. The young men are surrounded by supporters who stand guard while nodding their heads in agreement as one of the young men spoke into his bullhorn. The young man said, “this American Revolution must take place because our sovereignty, or Constitution, and our country has been stolen from us.”

**RV1 EV2 NCV at time 1259B.** The crowd marched and chanted at the Capitol Building. Amongst the chants of “we the people, we the people,” another man declared, “This is war! This is war!” (Groeger et al., 2021).

**RV1 EV3 ADCV at time 1331A.** Crowds march on Constitution Avenue in Washington, D.C. Offscreen, a man narrated over the cellphone video. He said, “what we fight for is Freedom. And that is a powerful idea. Even our enemies want to be Free” (Groeger et al., 2021).

**RV1 EV4 NCV at time 1259B (05:57).** The crowd is gathered at the base of the Capitol Building near the erected scaffolding structure. A man with a bullhorn stands on the top of the scaffolding and addressed the crowd as they chanted, “stop the steal! Stop the steal!”, the man said, “they seek to ruin our lives for disagreeing with them. Indeed, they no longer seek the truth, but to win by any means necessary.” He continued, “we as a people have been divided and conquered. In the past decade, we have been taught to hate. Men must hate women. Blacks must hate whites” (Groeger et al., 2021).

**RV1 EV5 NCV at time 1511G.** A man in a camouflage flak jacket stands among protestors who wear MAGA baseball hats and MAGA winter beanies. The man told the

crowd, “It’s over for us...I came here today to perpetrate. I came here today because my freedom is at stake...I want all the criminals arrested” (Groeger et al., 2021).

***Rhetorical Vision #2: Washington, D.C. is Broken and Washington***

***Politicians are Crooked***

**RV2 EV1 NCV at time 1504C.** A woman wearing sunglasses and a red “Make America Great Again” hat narrated to her cell phone. The Capitol Building is in the background. The woman narrated, “I’m live at the Capitol Building. Where we have overtaken the building. And wondering if the Media hears us now.” She continued, “there is no violence here, but we’re upset. The lies, the stealing needs to end. And our government needs to listen. Do you hear us now?” (Groeger et al., 2021).

**RV2 EV2 NCV at time 1455D.** A man narrates over his cell phone video as he pans the crowd gathered at the front steps of the Capitol Building. The man is surrounded by the crowd of people. The people carried flags: The American flag and an American flag with text superimposed that reads, “Trump, Protect the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment, The Right To Keep and Bear Arms”. Some people wore camouflage jackets and red beanie hats with the text, “Make America Great Again”. The man said into his cell phone,

But, because we are patriots here on our soil, and we’re just trying to stand up for our Constitution and the law of the land, we’re getting turned down by the police department that took the same oath, the same oath that I took and many other veterans, in this land and here they are wiping their ass with our Constitution.

They say they’re not the enemy but... (Groeger et al., 2021)

**RV2 EV3 NCV at time 1452E.** The crowd is gathered on the lawn outside of the Capitol Building. The cell phone panned across the crowd. One person carried a sign that

read, “INVESTIGATE ELECTION FRAUD NOW. PROSECUTE THOSE WHO ARE GUILTY.” Some of the people carry flags. One flag has an image of Donald Trump printed on it. Trump is dressed as Rambo and he carries an assault rifle. There are multiple flags with a yellow background, a coiled snake, and text that reads, “don’t tread on me.” In the background, a man said, “our government has been taken over by criminals.” Another man responded, “we need to end this now” (Groeger et al., 2021).

**RV2 EV4 NCV at time 1457A (00:10).** The crowd is gathered on the lawn of the Capitol Mall. The Capitol Building is in the background. Offscreen people talk to one another. A woman said, “yeah, because Pence is a traitor.” A man responded, “Pence is a fucking traitor. He’ll forever go down in history” (Groeger et al., 2021).

**RV2 EV5 NCV at time 1327B.** The cellphone video is taken from an overhead angle. A fence separates the protestors and the Capitol Police. A man is repeatedly thrown against the fence. The Capitol Police drag the man over the fence and hold him on the bloody pavement. The crowd chants “Revolution. Revolution. Revolution.” A single voice rises above the din. The man said, “hey you suited fuck, we’re coming for you. Yeah, you in the suit. This is our country” (Groeger et al., 2021).

***Rhetorical Vision #3: Donald J. Trump is the Father of the Revolution and the Only Person That Can be Trusted***

**RV3 EV1 NCV at time 1358.** The crowd chanted, “who are we here for? Trump! Who are we here for? Trump!” (Groeger et al., 2021).

**RV3 EV2 NCV at time 1408A.** A man narrated offscreen, “they are really ready to stand-up and do a Revolutionary War! Hey, Trump asked for wild, he got wild!” (Groeger et al., 2021).

**RV3 EV3 ADCV at time 1434B.** A man dressed as the Revolutionary Leader and First President of the United States, George Washington, wades across the Reflecting Pool at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. The man carries two flags: A flag of the United States and a flag with a blue base and white letters that reads, “Trump, 2020. Keep America Great.” The man said, “there is a just God who will rule over this nation. And will deliver us again, a man of God who has fought for this country, Donald Trump as our President for the next four years” (Groeger et al., 2021).

**RV3 EV4 ICV at time 1522.** The crowd is inside the Capitol Building. A man, who wears a red, Make America Great Again baseball hat, tells a Capitol Police Officer that he is a traitor. The crowd inside the Capitol chanted, “Fight for Trump! Fight for Trump!” (Groeger et al., 2021).

**RV3 EV5 NCV at time 1706B.** The man known as the QAnon Shaman stands on the steps outside the Capitol Building. He holds an American flag that is attached to a pole. He is shirtless, he wears a coonskin cap and buckskin leggings. An unidentified man asked the Shaman, “What is your message to everybody now? What are you yelling about?” The Shaman replied, “Donald Trump asked everybody to go home. He just said...he just put out a Tweet. It’s a minute long. He asked everybody to go home” (Groeger et al., 2021).

#### ***Rhetorical Vision #4: The American Patriot Must Protect Democracy and the Constitution***

**RV4 EV1 ADCV at time 1310.** Internet Host of Infowars, Alex Jones, stands on a stage in Washington, D.C. and talks to the crowd. Jones said,

The Globalist CHICOM is now, that they have bitten off more than they can chew. And that the American Sleeping Giant is awake. Here it is an incredible honor, an incredible pleasure to get to meet and see some of these amazing human souls, some of these great Americans. And we are so blessed that President Trump for standing against this fraud. Defiantly. (Groeger et al., 2021)

Jones continues, “the new world is on the rock. That’s why they’re having to steal these elections. That’s not the actions of a strong group, that's the actions of a weak group.” Jones adds, “and we declare 1776 against the New World Order” (Groeger et al., 2021).

**RV4 EV2 ICV at time 1432.** A loose group of men and women walk through the Halls of Congress under the Capitol Building. They wear red MAGA baseball hats and carry sticks. A man narrates over the cell phone video. He says, “we are in the Halls of Congress. We don’t want war, but we’re prepared to fight for our Liberty” (Groeger et al., 2021).

**RV4 EV3 NCV at time 1353A.** Cellphone video is taken behind a crowd of men who stand on the steps of the Capitol Building. The men are dressed in camouflage jackets. They wear camouflage and black military helmets. Baseball hats sport the American flag design. Protestors wear red winter beanies with “Trump for President” insignia. The cellphone pans around and shows the protestors standing on the steps and are squared off against the Capitol Police. The voice narrates to the cellphone, “we’re at the gate. We’re coming through this mother fucker tonight. We’re at the door! We’re right here! We’re coming in! They’re not stopping us now, God damnit! THIS IS OUR HOUSE MOTHER FUCKERS!” (Groeger et al., 2021).

**RV4 EV4 NCV at time 1403B.** A man is surrounded by protestors on the grounds of the Capitol Building. In the background, protestors carry American flags. Someone carries an Appeal to Heaven flag. The flag with a lone pine tree and the text, “Appeal to Heaven” was originally ordered by George Washington in 1775. The man tells the crowd,

You know what? Every damn one of us needs to be up there pushing the damn front doors in and dragging their asses out here. Because they work for us. And they work for the Chinese. And they turn their backs on us. And until America gets serious about taking back our country, they’re not gonna take us serious. (Groeger et al., 2021)

**RV4 EV5 ICV at time 1445:** Cellphone video shows protestors at the Rotunda inside the Capitol Building. The crowd noise echoes throughout the Rotunda. A voice asks, “Whose House?” Other protestors respond, “Our House.” The protestors wear red MAGA baseball caps. Protestors also wear military outfits including military helmets, goggles, bulletproof vests, and camouflage clothing. A masked man dressed for war talks to the cellphone. He says, “we took over the Capitol. Overran the Capitol.” A younger man enters the camera frame and says, “we’re in the fucking Capitol bro.” (Groeger et al., 2021).

***Rhetorical Vision #5: Radical Left Democrats, Foreign Governments, and Globalists Are Undermining Democracy and the Constitution***

**RV5 EV1 ADCV at time 1310.** Internet Host of Infowars, Alex Jones, stands on stage in Washington, D.C. and talks to the crowd. Jones said,

The Globalist CHICOM is now, that they have bitten off more than they can chew. And that the American Sleeping Giant is awake. Here it is an incredible honor, an incredible pleasure to get to meet and see some of these amazing human souls, some of these great Americans. And we are so blessed that President Trump for standing against this fraud. Defiantly. (Groeger et al., 2021)

Jones continues, “the new world is on the rock. That’s why they’re having to steal these elections. That’s not the actions of a strong group, that’s the actions of a weak group.” Jones added, “and we declare 1776 against the New World Order” (Groeger et al., 2021).

**RV5 EV2 ADCV at time 1439.** Young men in suits and ties stand on the steps of an unidentified monument in Washington, D.C. The young men are surrounded by supporters who stand guard while nodding their heads in agreement as one of the young men speaks into his bullhorn. The young man said,

And I hope bloodlessly, or it can take place another way. But either way this American Revolution must take place because our sovereignty, or Constitution, and our country has been stolen from us. We will accept nothing less. We are going to take our country back. And you know exactly what that means. The country has been taken over by basically, foreign, global, special interests. Honestly, I think people talk about socialism a little bit too much. The real threat in this country is not socialism. It is globalism. And it is about time we start to name the Globalist Establishment that is ruining this country. (Groeger et al., 2021)

The young man continued, “the truth is that our real enemy is the public and private partnership between global special interests that have bought our government, looted our cities and are attempting to replace our population” (Groeger et al., 2021).

**RV5 EV3 ADCV at time 1645.** A man walks alone by himself after the Insurrection. He wears a red MAGA baseball cap and a blue scarf. He narrated to the cellphone, “The Gestapo came and stopped the people from going into the building that is theirs.” He continued,

We have the right to go in there. We do. If you don’t understand that the American citizens have the right to go in there and you think it’s OK for them to act like this, you need to go to another country. You need to go to a communist country, a socialist country because that is how they do it there. That’s not how they do it here. (Groeger et al., 2021)

**RV5 EV4 NCV at time 1520B.** A man stands near the stairs leading up to the Capitol Building. A large American flag hangs from the top of the scaffolding in the background. The man wears a red MAGA baseball cap. The crowd holds American flags. They hold yellow – “Don’t Tread On Me,” flags. They have flags with stars for the original 13 Colonies surrounding the letters, 1776. The man in the red MAGA cap said,

He (Pence) is handing over this country to the ChiCom. May he, go under the gallows. I hope he is put under the firing squad and found guilty of treason because men like Pence are the reason this country is falling apart. We must eliminate the RINO’s at the state and federal level and put in true, red-blooded Americans, who will fight with their lives against this global tyranny. (Groeger et al., 2021)

**RV5 EV5 NCV at time 1349B (02:34).** A dense crowd is gathered around an elevated area. Alex Jones stands atop the elevated area and speaks to the crowd. The crowd holds different flags in their hands. There is a flag with a yellow background and a coiled snake with text that reads, “DON’T TREAD ON ME!” Protestors hold the American Flag. There are flags that have a blue background with “Trump” and “Keep America Great” written in white. One person holds a placard that has the Chinese Flag as the background. Chinese President, Xi Jinping, is wearing a black suit. Joe Biden is dressed in a red dress. Xi and Biden hold one another in an embrace. The male Xi and female Biden smile outwardly. (Groeger et al., 2021)

***Rhetorical Vision #6: The USA, the American Patriot and the Movement are Protected by God***

**RV6 EV1 ADCV at time 1422.** The cellphone pans around the crowd gathered on the lawn of the Capitol Mall. A group of people sing together. The people sang, “the lord will fight the battle for his people and we cry aloud unto him and he will crush the enemy.” (Groeger et al., 2021).

**RV6 EV2 NCV at time 1329.** An unidentified person holds their cellphone high as they walk toward the Capitol Building. In the distance, a man holds a yellow placard with black letters. The sign reads, “Jesus Saves.” While holding the sign the man repeated, “The Blood of Jesus. The Blood of Jesus. The Blood of Jesus.” (Groeger et al., 2021).

**RV6 EV3 NCV at time 1348B.** A young man stands in front of the cellphone. Behind him, the crowd screams, and chants. There are American flags and “Trump 2020”

flags in the background. The youth wears a red baseball cap. The cap reads, “TRUMP AMERICA FIRST.” The youth said,

I was up here peacefully praying for a police officer when I was shot in the face with a flashbang grenade. I can’t hear out of my left ear. I have 2nd degree burns on my face. My hair caught on fire. I can barely see out of this eye. (Groeger et al., 2021)

**RV6 EV4 ICV at time 1442B.** A youth sings “Glory, Glory, Hallelujah” with the flag waving that is gathered inside the Rotunda of the Capitol Building. The youth drops to his knees and cries. He is joined by other young men who help him to his feet. The youths gather to pray. The cellphone camera is aimed at the ceiling. The youths are in shadow, and the cellphone camera focuses on the ceiling that is painted with The Apotheosis of Washington. The youths prayed together with these words,

Dear God. God. Thank you for your service. Thank you for allowing us to stand up for our country and what we believe in. Guide us so that we may do your work. And pray for them. Pray for the brothers that stand beside me. In the name of Jesus. Amen. (Groeger et al., 2021)

**RV6 EV5 NCV at time 1453A.** A woman stands in the middle of the street. She speaks into a speaker and addresses the crowd. The woman said,

Lord, I thank you for the dream that you gave me on Psalm Sunday. That President Trump was filled with the Holy Ghost and that he gave up his stage for a Revival. I dreamt it. And I thank you Lord that this is the hour. This is the time we call forth Revival. We thank you Lord. You say you can change the heart of a King as if changing the direction of a river. And Father, we give you the heart of

President Trump. Do with it as you please Lord. We thank you Lord and his is the Cyrus in this hour. He is a cane of Joshua in this hour. That is not afraid to face the Giants and take the Promised Land. (Groeger et al., 2021)

***Master Analogy: Make America Great Again***

**MA EV1 NCV at time 1706B.** The man known as the QAnon Shaman stands on the steps outside the Capitol Building. He holds an American flag that is attached to a pole. He is shirtless, he wears a coonskin cap, and buckskin leggings. An unidentified man asks the Shaman, “What is your message to everybody now? What are you yelling about?” The Shaman replies, “Donald Trump asked everybody to go home. He just said...he just put out a Tweet. It’s a minute long. He asked everybody to go home.” The man asks, “Why do you think so?” The QAnon Shaman replies, “Because dude, we won the fucking day. We fucking won.” “How did we win?” the man asks.

We won by sending a message to the Senators and the Congressmen. We won by sending a message to Pence. Ok. That, if they don’t do as they, are, as they’re, uh, their oath to do, if they don’t uphold the Constitution, then we will remove them from Office, one way or the other. (Groeger et al., 2021)

**MA EV2 ADCV at time 1434B.** A man dressed as the Revolutionary Leader and First President of the United States, George Washington, wades across the Reflecting Pool at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. The man carries two flags: A flag of the United States and a flag with a blue base and white letters that reads, “Trump, 2020. Keep America Great.” The man salutes the cheering crowd. He raises the bullhorn and says, “Patrick Henry said, [three or free] millions of people armed with the Holy cause of

Liberty are invincible. A just God rules over the destiny of nations. There is a just God who will rule over this nation. And will deliver us Again.” (Groeger et al., 2021).

**MA EV3 NCV at time 1332 (01:00).** The crowd is gathered on the side of the Capitol Building. Smoke drifts through the air. A bomb goes off and the people cheer. There are many flags: Traditional American flags with the 50 stars and stripes, a yellow flag with a coiled snake with the text, “Don’t tread on me.” (Groeger et al., 2021). A blue flag with white letters that reads, “Trump, 2020. Keep America Great.” (Groeger et al., 2021). A woman yells, “Take back our country!” (Groeger et al., 2021). After the bomb goes off, a man yells, “Yeah baby! You can’t scare us! We want our country back.” (Groeger et al., 2021). The people pick up the chant and begin clapping rhythmically while chanting, “We want our country back! We want our country back! We want our country back!” (Groeger et al., 2021).

**MA EV4 ICV at time 1434.** The crowd broke into the Capitol Building and are inside. The men carry flags that are attached to long poles. People wear red MAGA baseball caps. Bandanas that are designed like American flags are wrapped around men’s necks. A man yells, “Where are the fucking traitors? Drag them out by their fucking hair! Where are the fucking traitors?” (Groeger et al., 2021).

**MA EV5 ICV at time 1657.** The protestors are inside a room inside the Capitol Building. The office is torn apart. The chairs and desks are knocked over. A woman is heard offscreen saying, “I will die for this country.” (Groeger et al., 2021).

## Chapter 9: Conclusion

As with any good narrative or persuasive campaign, the rhetorician must write a speech that evokes an emotional response. The speech must have meaning and symbolism to which the audience relates. Connections must be made. Where does this occur? Can we touch an emotion? When the proverbial lightbulb of an idea ignites, where does it occur and in what space? The individual creative space might be the place where memories, desires, hopes, dreams, and emotions cross paths with our human desire to understand the surrounding physical world. The individual creative space exists outside of time and in a suspended state of reality. It is internal and subjective to each person. It is indeed, the place where symbolic convergence occurs. It is the place where the rhetor's symbols make an emotional and intellectual connection with the receiver through the dramatized message. This research is important because it highlights what can happen when rhetoric in political speeches combines emotional appeals and dramatized mediated messages to persuade a segment of society to take some action.

In Trump's first speech, he created an alternate social reality that unsettled many Americans. Through his word imagery, Trump sowed doubt, made people angry, and created a social reality of fear. He appealed to American sensibilities of respect for the office of the President, God, and country.

Trump's speech touched on historical moments that impacted the USA and different countries throughout the world. Trump asked his supporters, "When did we beat Japan at anything?" He continued, "They beat us all the time." With this statement Trump accomplished two things: first, he touched the historical chord of World War II that included Pearl Harbor, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki. Second, after exposing the emotions

connected to WWII, Trump connected the economics of the automobile industry – which Japan is a leader – with issues at the U.S. / Mexico border and the fear of foreigners. Trump asked, “When do we beat Mexico at the border?” Trump then tied the past with the present when he said, “And now they (Mexico) are beating us economically,” he continued, “they are not our friend, believe me. They’re killing us economically.” Throughout the speech, Trump connected the success of the Japanese automotive industry with the loss of American manufacturing jobs and the outsourcing of American industry to Mexico with illegal immigration and “criminals” from Mexico who are trying to “kill us.”

This speech disrupted the common social reality for many Americans. Trump acknowledged the people should be proud of their shared history, while also creating fear and hatred against foreigners who were invading the United States and beating the USA economically. In this speech, Trump promoted the social reality that: The American Dream was dead, economic opportunities didn’t exist, the weak and corrupt politicians were allowing foreigners to invade and undermine the United States, and finally, the military was unable to protect the citizens of the United States.

Trump wove a masterful narrative in the Presidential Acceptance and Victory Speech. It was a mostly positive and uplifting speech that invited participation in the rebuilding of America. Trump combined and connected themes from the past, present, and the future throughout this speech. For example, Trump presented the facts surrounding Secretary Clinton’s telephone call in which she conceded victory. That is a pivotal moment because it signified that the people rejected the last eight years of

President Obama. It signified the new Trumpian order would repudiate anything the Democrats, Obama or his base supported in the past.

This speech empowered the citizens of the United States to take responsibility for the problems facing the United States. He implored them to look toward the future so that each person may “realize his or her full potential.” The speech is motivating because, flush with victory, Trump appealed to his supporters’ desire to never “settle for anything less than the best,” He rekindled the belief that every citizen can achieve the American Dream when he stated, “no dream is too big. No challenge is too great. Nothing we want for our future is beyond our reach.”

This speech connected with a deep-seated nationalism that existed in willing recipients and reaffirmed that, despite the supposed death of the American Dream, the people, the patriots, would be able to “reclaim our country’s destiny,” and once again be successful. Finally, Trump promised that those who have been forgotten, will not be forgotten any longer. Trump promised from this moment, the push for change begins and each American citizen can live in the American Utopia that Trump has created.

This speech was the culmination of a hard-fought battle toward the White House. This speech cemented the social reality of Trump’s rhetorical community engaged in the battle to save America. Moreover, Trump presented the social reality that every person could reclaim their version of the American Dream and the united rhetorical community worked toward their common goal under Trump’s leadership.

Throughout the 45<sup>th</sup> Presidential Inauguration Speech, Trump promoted his social realities. He promoted the social reality that the United States government was broken and corrupt. The second part to this social reality is the glorious light at the end of the

tunnel. It is a dark and dangerous tunnel that is locked by a door to which only Donald Trump holds the symbolic key. If the people would only follow Trump, they would achieve sanctuary and be granted God's everlasting favor. This social and symbolic reality marks a new beginning and possibly the official birthday of the Trump Movement. Trump used words and imagery to connect his rhetorical community with a new social reality of history, their spiritual selves, and their aspirations for the future. Trump engaged his followers in the drama he created by connecting the past to the present and the future.

Trump promoted an alternative social reality of the history of the United States. It was once a great country but the original government's Constitutional "promise" to the people has been "broken" and needed to be restored. The politicians in Washington and the leaders of big business "flourished" while families across America struggled to survive.

After setting the stage of the glorious past and the current "carnage" the rhetorical community recently experienced, Trump infused the American Patriot with nationalistic pride. They were united people marching toward their divine place in history. God was their sanctioning agent that protected and enabled the American Patriot. The Divine Right of America's place in the world was protected by God. Trump's words empowered the American Patriot to create a social reality in which all people from all walks of life are engaged in a righteous war to Make America Great Again. America will be great for the American Patriot and for future generations.

The American Patriot lived under the social reality that they were in charge of the government. The new birthday of the United States was the day that Trump was

inaugurated. On that day, the people once again took charge of the government. The day was a call to arms and the beginning of the Revolution. The future was bright as the united people rallied to save and Make American Great Again through a deeply nationalistic commitment to “live together in unity” while being loyal “to our country” and “rediscovering loyalty to one another.”

The Ellipse Speech was Trump’s final speech. Through it, Trump used different emotions to motivate his acolytes: Nationalism, pride, power, anger, fear, and hope. The speech was a culmination of Trump’s previous speeches. He expounded on and repeated fantasy themes and rhetorical visions such as: Everyone else is lying, the media is suppressing our voices, and our system of government and politicians are corrupt. But one emotive stood above the others. Trump connected with his communities’ sense of nationalism to propel them to action.

The rhetorical communities’ sense of nationalism is at the root of their shared symbolic reality. Trump motivated the community by appealing to their beliefs that the United States and democracy were worth dying for. Based upon the shared past of overcoming domestic and foreign enemies, winning wars and conflicts, Trump rallied the people based upon their feelings of nationalism, hope for the future, and desire to return the United States to its romanticized original version of itself. In essence, Trump maintained and propelled the rhetorical communities’ engagement with the social reality that the modern American Patriot was once again the Protector of democracy.

In the fantasy theme of America being attacked from within by Radical Left Democrats and their Globalists paymasters, Trump was the General Washington who ordered his troops to fight the oppressors as if 2021 were 1776. Trump’s quasi religio-

militaristic marching orders to the American Patriots were to restore order to America, stop the fraud, and as Trump said, “straighten them, the Radical Left Democrats, out and save our country.” If we accept that the motive is contained in the symbols, i.e., the words used in the speeches, then Trump’s words are a call to arms. In this social reality, Trump’s followers believed they had to overthrow the Democrats, the Globalists, and big business – the evildoers - who broke the American Dream while undermining American values and democracy. Trump presented a social reality that America was under attack and that his rhetorical community were the militia that was going to save democracy and Make America Great Again.

In summation, this research shows connections exist between the rhetorical visions and the social realities of the participants of the January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Capitol Riot. In my research, I presented multiple fantasy themes that aided in the identification of six different rhetorical visions. Further, I cited evidence based upon user-generated audio and video files that positively displays the fantasy themes and rhetorical visions found in the Trump speeches chained out to and influenced Trump’s rhetorical community. Because the rhetorical community lived under the guidelines of the various social realities created by the Trump speeches, direct and influential connections exist between the symbols in the speeches and the actions of the people who assaulted the Capitol Building on January 6, 2021. While the research is not exhaustive in scope, it establishes a baseline and a place for which future research can proceed.

### **Limitations of Research**

Throughout the writing of this thesis, I questioned myself, my motives, my theory, methods, and my research questions. As I ventured into the unknown wilderness

in my quest for understanding, I questioned what motivated me to complete this research. Why was it important to understand how people from similar backgrounds held certain beliefs while refuting others?

This research and the associated findings were limited. Access, time, finances, and bias were the main limitations of this research. My analysis could be faulted because of my own personal bias and subsequent misinterpretation. While I endeavored to correctly interpret the symbols based upon Fantasy Theme Analysis and Symbolic Convergence Theory, the possibility exists that I incorrectly analyzed or misinterpreted the fantasy themes and rhetorical visions because of my personal subjectivity, bias, lack of information, or inadequate experience.

Stories, speeches, and persuasive campaigns are subjective to the interpretation of the reader, listener, and participant. Constructivists believe there are many sides to a story. The multitude of truths, or small t's (Brennen, 2013), dictate that there will be many different interpretations of a rhetorical text. The challenges of my research included the identification of subjective interpretations contained within the texts I critiqued. I believe people are always looking for meaning in their lives. When people engage with media texts, their natural inclinations are influenced by the persuasive message, and the receiver of the message subsequently creates subjective meanings and exists within the symbolic reality created by the media texts (Berger, 1998; Brennen, 2013; Creswell, 2018). Symbolic Convergence Theory explains how groups create identity when communicated symbols overlap. As people consumed mediated texts, in this case speeches made by Donald J. Trump, they were persuaded and influenced. They ultimately created a rhetorical community based upon shared social realities that

propelled them to take action on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, at the United States Capitol Building. Through this research, I tried to show how the rhetoric and themes in the speeches, chained out to the Trump rhetorical community, sustained the community, and motivated the community to act on January 6, 2021.

### **Future Research**

While I found answers to my questions, further research needs to be completed on this topic. Different speeches, social media, geo-targeted digital messaging, the Covid-19 pandemic, the development and implementation of propaganda, and sociocultural studies are examples of topics that may help understand why people marched to “Save democracy” by storming the Capitol Building on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

My research focused on four speeches made by Donald J. Trump, leading up to and during the four years he was President of the United States. However, Trump made many speeches on topics ranging from climate change, the Russian investigation, the Covid-19 Pandemic, and the Charlottesville Rally. Future research could be undertaken to gather a comprehensive picture of how the fantasy themes and rhetorical visions presented in Trump’s complete body of speeches influenced the January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, participants.

I used audio and video files posted on the social media site Parler (parler.com) to connect the fantasy themes with the rhetorical community that engaged in the Capitol Building Insurrection. In the Parler videos that ProPublica aggregated, the participants used their cell phones to record audio and video of themselves. The participants then uploaded the content to social media sites such as Parler, Facebook, Twitter, and others. Future research should be conducted to ascertain the influence of social media on the

narrated message of Trump's speeches. What were the sources of social media posts and how did they trickle through the Internet and reach viewers? How did Trump's communication via Twitter influence the January 6<sup>th</sup> participants? Further research could be conducted into the influence of social media and how the one version of the truth is possibly distorted the further it is separated from the rhetor.

A global catastrophe undoubtedly disrupts society on different levels. The Covid-19 pandemic was a global event that impacted people in the United States and across the world. The Trump administration dealt with the pandemic in a way that was frequently at odds with departments within his own administration. Future research could look at speeches that Trump made about the Coronavirus. Researchers could examine Trump's repudiation of the virus combined with the promotion of his virus origin-theories to make connections with the January 6<sup>th</sup> participants.

The limitations of this research could be answered in Doctoral work. Specifically, "Has the United States as a country, culture, and society arrived at the point in which we live in an all-electronic organically composed and total symbolic environment?" (Gerbner, 1977).

Finally, the actions of the participants in the January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Insurrection begins and ends with people. Trump had a dream to be President of the United States of America. A team of political consultants and planners decided upon the best persuasion techniques to be utilized during Trump's campaign and time in Office. Did those techniques include the use of propaganda? Politicians, business owners, media personalities, and everyday Americans supported Trump throughout his time in Washington, D.C. People climbed over the walls of the Capitol Building and smashed

windows on January 6, 2021. People died that day. Future research could look at the socio-economic and sociocultural qualities of the participants of the Capitol Riot. Who were they? Where did they come from? What were their grievances? Did they feel left behind by society? What news resources did they use to stay informed? And finally, how much time did they spend on the Internet and social media? The research ideas mentioned above are not exhaustive but might help us to better understand the social movement that, I argue, Donald J. Trump initiated, promoted, sustained, and led.

## References

- Arkin, W. M. (2021, December 23). *Exclusive: Classified documents reveal the number of January 6 protestors*. Newsweek. <https://www.newsweek.com/exclusive-classified-documents-reveal-number-january-6-protestors-1661296>
- Barrett, T., Raju, M., & Nickeas, P. (2021, January 7). *U.S. Capitol secured, 4 dead after rioters stormed the halls of Congress to block Biden's win*. CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/06/politics/us-capitol-lockdown/index.html>
- Berger, A. A. (1998). *Media research techniques* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Sage Publications.
- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. Doubleday & Company.
- Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method*. University of California Press.
- Bobbitt, R., & Sullivan, R. (2004). *Developing the public relations campaign: A team-based approach* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Pearson.
- Bormann, E. G. (1972). Fantasy and rhetorical vision: The rhetorical criticism of social reality. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 58(4), 396-407. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00335637209383138>
- Bormann, E. G. (1973). The Eagleton affair: A fantasy theme analysis. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 59(2), 143-159. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00335637309383163>
- Bormann, E. G. (1982a). I. Fantasy and rhetorical vision: Ten years later. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 68, 288-305. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00335638209383614>
- Bormann, E. G. (1982b). The symbolic convergence theory of communication: Applications and implications for teachers and consultants. *Journal of Applied*

*Communication Research*, 10(1), 50-61.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00909888209365212>

Bormann, E. G. (1982c). A fantasy theme analysis of the television coverage of the hostage release and the Reagan Inaugural. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 68(2), 133-145. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00335638209383599>

Bormann, E. G. (1985). *The force of fantasy. Restoring the American Dream*. Carbondale and Edwardsville.

Bormann, E. G., Cragan, J. F., & Shields, D. C. (2003). Defending symbolic convergence theory from an imaginary Gunn. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 89(4), 366-372. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0033563032000160990>

Bormann, E. G., Bormann, N. C. (1980). *Speech communication: A basic approach* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) Harper & Row.

Boydston, A. E., Vliegthart, R., & Baker, M. L. (2017). The conditional nature of Presidential Agenda Influence on TV News: the case of education. *International Journal of Communication*, 11, 2540-2561. <http://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/5997>

Brennen, B. (2013). *Qualitative research methods for media studies*. Routledge.

Butz, D. A. (2009). National symbols as agents of psychological and social change. *Political Psychology*, 30(5), 779-804. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2009.00725.x>

Campbell, R., Jensen, J., Gomery, D., Fabios, B., & Frechette, J. (2014). *Media in society: A brief introduction*. Bedford/St. Martin's.

- Carter, M. J., & Fuller, C. (2015). Symbolic interactionism. *Sociopedia.isa*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/205684601561>
- Cohen, J. E. (1995). Presidential rhetoric and the public agenda. *American Journal of Political Science*, 39(1), 87-107. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111759>
- Conover, J. P., & Sigelman, L. (1982). Presidential influence and public opinion: The case of the Iranian Hostage Crisis. *Social Science Quarterly*., 63(2), 249-264.
- Cragan, J. F., & Shields, D. C. (1981). *Applied communication research: A dramatic approach*. Waveland Press.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. (2018). *Research design, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach*. Sage Publications.
- Dearing, J. W., & Rodgers, E. (1996). *Agenda-Setting*. Sage Publications.
- Delaney, C. (2016). *How to use the Internet to win in 2016: A comprehensive guide to online politics for campaigns and advocates*. epolitics.com.
- Duffy, M., & Page, J. (2009). Does political satire matter? You betcha! A dramatic analysis of the 2008 vice presidential debates and comedy satire. *Conference Papers – National Communication Association*, 1.
- Esbaugh-Soha, M., & Juenke, G. E. (2022). The politics of the President's immigration rhetoric. *American Politics Research*, 50(1), 117-130.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2F1532673X211042283>
- Esbaugh-Soha, M., & Peak, J. S. (2008). The agenda-setting impact of major presidential TV addresses. *Political Communication*, 25, 113-137.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600701641490>

- Fandos, N., & Cochrane, E. (2021, January 6). *After pro Trump storms Capitol, Congress confirms Biden's win*. The New York Times.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/06/us/politics/congress-gop-subvert-election.html>
- Foss, S. K. (1989). *Rhetorical criticism: Exploration and practice*. Waveland Press.
- Foss, S. K. (2018). *Rhetorical criticism: Exploration and practice* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Waveland Press.
- Full text: Donald Trump announces a presidential bid*. (2015, June 16). The Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/06/16/full-text-donald-trump-announces-a-presidential-bid/>
- Gaines, E. (2010). *Media literacy and semiotics*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gerbner, G. (1998). Cultivation analysis: An overview. *Mass Communication & Society*, 1(3/4), 175-194. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.1998.9677855>
- Gerbner, G. (1977). Television: The new state religion? *ETC: A Review of General Semantics*, 34(2), 145-150.
- Groeger, L. V., Kao, J., Shaw, A., Syed, M., & Eliahou, M. (2021, January 17). *What Parler saw during the attack on the Capitol*. ProPublica.  
<https://projects.propublica.org/parler-capitol-videos/>
- Gunn, J. (2003). Refiguring fantasy: Imagination and its decline in U.S. rhetorical studies. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 89(1), 41-59.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630308168>

Healy, J. (2021, January 11). *These are the five people who died in the Capitol Riots*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/11/us/who-died-in-capitol-building-attack.html>

*Here's the full text of Donald Trump's victory speech*. (2016, November 9). CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2016/11/09/politics/donald-trump-victory-speech/index.html>

Jalonick, M. C., Taylor, A., Mascaro, L., & Woodward, C. (2021, January 5). *Chaos, violence, mockery as pro-Trump mob occupies Congress*. Associated Press. <https://apnews.com/article/us-capitol-lockdown-2f56a611445df15fb9640893bb9f7a93>

*Manifest destiny*. (2019, November 15). History.com. <https://www.history.com/topics/westward-expansion/manifest-destiny#:~:text=Manifest%20Destiny%2C%20a%20phrase%20coined,the%20entire%20North%20American%20continent>

McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176–187.

McDonnel, P. J., Lintchium, K., & Kirschbaum, E. (2021, January 9). *After attack on the U.S. Capitol, some wonder about the state of democracy around the world*. Los Angeles Times. <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2021-01-09/across-globe-many-wonder-is-u-s-still-that-beacon-of-democracy>

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Traitor. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved April 14, 2022, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/traitor>

- Montanaro, D. (2016, September 10). *Hillary Clinton's 'basket of deplorables,' in full context of this ugly campaign*. NPR.  
<https://www.npr.org/2016/09/10/493427601/hillary-clintons-basket->
- Ragsdale, L. (1984). The politics of presidential speechmaking, 1949-1980. *American Political Science Review*, 78(4), 971-984. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1955802>
- Redmond, J., & Trager, R. (2004). *Balancing on the wire. The art of managing media organizations* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Atomic Dog Publishing.
- Remarks of President Donald J. Trump – as prepared for delivery. Inaugural Address.* (2017, January 20). The White House.  
<https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/the-inaugural-address/>
- Schubert, J. N., Stewart, P. A., Curran, M. A. (2002). A defining presidential moment: 9/11 and the Rally Effect. *International Society of Political Psychology*, 23(3), 559-583. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/0162-895X.00298>
- Sovacool, B. K., & Ramana, M. V. (2015). Back to the future: Small modular reactors, nuclear fantasies, and symbolic convergence. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 40(1), 96-125. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0162243914542350>
- The COVID tracking project (2021, March 7). *National data: Deaths*.  
<https://covidtracking.com/data/national/deaths>
- Transcript of Trump's speech at rally before U.S. Capitol riot.* (2021, January 6). AP News. <https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-capitol-siege-media-e79eb5164613d6718e9f4502eb471f27>
- Wang, C.-H. (2013). Why people vote? Rationality or emotion. *International Political Science Review*, 34(5), 483-501. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0162243913490365>

## Appendix

### Supplemental Information

**Table 2**

*Coding for Setting, Character, and Action, The June 16, 2016, President Candidacy*

*Announcement Speech*

<b>Rhetorical Vision</b>	<b>Setting</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Verbal Action</b>	<b>Fantasy Type</b>
American First				
Make America Great Again	Washington, D.C, The USA, NYC, Tennessee	I (Trump), nobody but Trump, common sense person	I (Trump) can rebuild America, we need someone to make the country great again, we need someone to take the brand of the country and make it great again	Trump as builder, Trump as leader, USA is about money, USA leads the world, USA is divine, USA is shining example, USA is beacon on the hill, refusal of Obama, return to fabled ethnically pure American people, Restoration
The American Dream is dead	The USA, global, dumping ground, Third World	They, special interest, donors, Third world country, Washington, D.C.	No victories, serious trouble, we (USA) have nothing, we (USA) need money	The USA is a Third World country, USA and the people are lost, feeling of shame because the USA has lost so much, refusal of Obama
Redefining American Identity	The USA, Washington, D.C.	They (foreign governments), not you, not criminals, not rapists, not murderers, not drug dealers	They (foreign governments) are sending criminals, rapists, murderers, and drug dealers	The ethnic make-up of the USA is changing, an invasion of foreigners, governments trying to undermine the USA, U.S. citizens are no longer the Chosen People, real Americans helped build the country, refusal of Obama, refusal of people who look like Obama, refusal of foreign people

<b>Rhetorical Vision</b>	<b>Setting</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Verbal Action</b>	<b>Fantasy Type</b>
The U.S. Military is broken	Middle East, Syria, Iraq, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Yemen	U.S. Military, Putin, Russians, Chinese, Radical Islamic Terrorists, Isis, Japanese, Chinese, Mexicans	Yemen Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Russia, China, Middle East, Mexican / U.S. border, when did we beat Mexico, Japan, China? We are dying, they are killing us, Isis is getting stronger, U.S. is getting weaker, nuclear arsenal doesn't work	Fear of invasion, fear of losing prominent place in the world, military cannot protect the citizens, waste of taxpayer money, refusal of Obama policies
Washington, D.C. and politicians are broken and crooked	Washington, D.C, New York	President Obama, politicians, donors, lobbyists	Terminate Obama's illegal executive order on immigration, get rid of fraud, waste, and abuse of social security, first Big Lie is Obamacare, politicians fully controlled by lobbyists, Obama negative force for USA, got job because he made a campaign contribution	Democrats are abusing the government, Democrats are committing crimes, Democrats are cheating the system, Democrats are cheating the people, Democrats are lying, Democrats are in-league with other forces to control and undermine the USA, refusal of Obama
The 1st Big Lie	USA	President Obama, U.S. citizens	Obamacare, repeal and replace, a complete disaster	Obama and Democrats are cheating. Obama and Democrats are wasting taxpayer money, refusal of Obama
Citizens Tired of Foreigners	USA, Mexico, Latin America, South America	Hispanic people, U.S. citizens, they, Mexicans	Not the best people, people just want a job, Mexico has all our Jobs, they are killing us at the border	Invasion of foreigners, foreigners are a drain on the system, foreigners take jobs, foreigners commit crime and bring drugs, the problems in the USA are caused by foreigners
The Establishment Lies	USA	Economists	GDP below zero, who ever heard of this?, Don't believe it, buffalo the newspapers	Don't trust anyone or anything but Trump, Obama and the Democrats lie, you are

Rhetorical Vision	Setting	Character	Verbal Action	Fantasy Type
				being lied to and manipulated
Patriots, Traitors, Winners, and Losers	Washington, D.C, The USA, New York	Our politicians, High School footballers, cheerleaders, Jeb Bush, Marco Rubio, Obama, Trump, Trump Family, politicians	How stupid are our politicians? Politicians can't answer the questions, politicians are all talk no action, doesn't have a clue, I beat China all the time, we have people that are stupid, are they intelligent?	Republican candidates are part of the system, all politicians are dumb and stupid, Trump is independent, Trump is a winner, Trump is the Master, politicians are like dogs
Mike Pence as Patriot and savior of democracy				
Politician as Traitor	Washington, D.C.	President Obama, our leaders	Obama not a cheerleader for America, he's the one that did Bergdahl, we get a traitor, we get a no-good traitor, controlled by special interests, doesn't understand the game, bad negotiator, doesn't understand the game, we have people that are corrupt, we have losers, we have people selling this country down the drain	Obama is weak like a girl, Obama is a traitor like Bergdahl, Democrats are in-league with other forces to control and undermine the USA, Democrats are dumb and stupid, foreigners and big business influence the USA government
Trump as Father of the Movement	The USA	Trump, I, We, father, mother, parent, children, Ivanka, Jared, Don Jr., great family, forgotten people, General Patton, General MacArthur	Trump, someone who knows the game, someone who wrote Art of the Deal, I'm rich, independent, we're really good, I will find the General Patton or I will find	Trump is all-knowing, Trump is smart, Trump is independent, Trump is successful, Trump is a family-man, Trump should be emulated, Trump as war-time president

Rhetorical Vision	Setting	Character	Verbal Action	Fantasy Type
			the General MacArthur	
Don't Trust Anything but Trump	Where Trump is, New York, Washington, D.C.	Economists, Politicians, government	Don't believe what you hear, it's full of nonsense, believe me, I don't believe economists or their reports	Nothing can be trusted except Trump; Trump tells the truth
Trump as Unifier and Rebuilder of the USA	New York City, Trump Tower, Middle East, Syria, China, Brooklyn, golf course	Trump, Chinese, Saudi Arabians, American people, I (Trump), Ford company	I give to charities, I'm a nice person, I don't brag, build all over the world, I know the smartest negotiators, election based on competence, charge tax until they behave properly	Trump cares, Trump is a benevolent man, Trump has the experience to Make America Great Again, Trump is smart, Trump is humble, Restoration
Politics as...	New York City, Trump Tower, Middle East, Syria, Boston, China	Trump, Tom Brady, the Chinese, the Saudi Arabians, Islamic Terrorists	I got it in a war with China	Politics is sport, Politics is war, Trump beats everyone at the great game of life
Movement of Millions	New York, Trump Tower, USA, TV audience, Internet audience	People in audience, tremendous people, some group of people, thousands	A large movement, beyond anybody's expectations	Trump recognized the unknown Movement, Millions of people are upset with the Obama government, The people have gathered together because they want change, The power of the People, The beginning of change
The Great American Patriot				
People as Military and Protectors or democracy	USA, Washington, D.C.	Lobbyists, donors, U.S. citizens	It has to stop now	The people will enact change, Trump will lead the people to change the U.S. government, The power of the People, call to arms, call to war

<b>Rhetorical Vision</b>	<b>Setting</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Verbal Action</b>	<b>Fantasy Type</b>
Violent Mob Mentality				
Government for the People				
The United States of America, American democracy, and the American Patriots are protected by God	The USA, the Promised Land	God, Trump, President, politicians	The greatest job president God ever created; politicians won't bring us to the Promised Land	God created Trump, God wants Trump to be president, the Democrats and other Republicans won't restore America, Trump will deliver us to the Promised Land, Trump is the new Messiah
Common Sense Approach	The USA	You (U.S. citizens)	You got to use your head	Everyone can understand the simple problem, The causes for USA problems are obvious
Radical Left Democrats, Foreign Governments, and Globalists are Undermining and Attacking the Sovereignty of the USA	Washington, D.C. Russia, China, Mexico, Japan, Middle East	Donors, special interests, Democrats, politicians, (speech), Chinese government, Boeing	Washington controlled by special interests and donors, people that are controlled by special interests, wanted Boeing's secrets before purchasing planes	Large corporations don't care about U.S. citizens only profits, foreign governments cheat in business, Democrats are in-league with other forces to control and undermine the USA, foreigners and big business influence the USA government, call to arms
Big Tech, big business, and Lobbyists Control D.C.	Washington, D.C. Russia, China, Mexico, Japan, Middle East	Donors, special interests, Democrats, politicians, (speech), lobbyists	Washington controlled by special interests and donors, destroying our country, get rid of the fraud, get rid of the waste and abuse	Foreign governments cheat in business, Democrats are in-league with other forces to control and undermine the USA, foreigners and big business influence the USA government, U.S. citizens are being cheated, U.S. citizens are being lied to, U.S. citizens are being manipulated, time for change, call to arms

Rhetorical Vision	Setting	Character	Verbal Action	Fantasy Type
Enemies of the State				
The 2nd Big Lie				

**Table 3**

*Coding for Setting, Character, and Action, Donald J. Trump's Presidential Victory*

*Speech*

Rhetorical Vision	Setting	Character	Verbal Action	Fantasy Type
American First	The USA	American interests	We will always put America's interests first	Trump cares about the USA, Trump's party will protect the citizens, Trump will lead the people, American interests first and foremost, time for change, call to arms
Make America Great Again	The USA, the USA place in history, New York, our nation	We, American citizens, men, women, our	Working together we can renew the American Dream, dream big and bold and daring, fix cities roads and airports, reclaim our destiny, dream big and bold, realize his or her full potential, dream of beautiful and successful things	The USA will assume its rightful place in the world, the USA will lead the world, citizens will restore America to its former glory, the new USA will be a Utopia, return to fabled ethnically pure Americans, a new beginning with Trump leading the way, restoration through Revolution, call to arms
The American Dream is dead	The USA	American citizens	America is divided	Obama and Clinton killed the American Dream. The bad American Dream died when Clinton / Obama lost the election
Redefining American Identity				
The U.S. Military is broken	The USA	Military veterans	We will take care of our veterans	The citizens and Trump will fix the broken system, U.S. military cannot protect the U.S. citizens, the U.S.

Rhetorical Vision	Setting	Character	Verbal Action	Fantasy Type
Washington, D.C. and politicians are broken and crooked				citizens and Trump will care for the veterans and military
The 1st Big Lie				
Citizens Tired of Foreigners				
The Establishment Lies				
Patriots, Traitors, Winners, and Losers	The USA	We, the American people	Renew the American Dream	Team Trump and the U.S. citizens are winners, restoration fantasy through change
Mike Pence as Patriot and savior of democracy	Washington, D.C., New York, the USA	Trump, Mike Pence	Thank you, Mike Pence,	Mike Pence is a man of honor, Mike Pence can be trusted, Mike Pence is the good part of the Establishment, Mike Pence as elder statesman
Politician as Traitor				
Trump as Father of the Movement	The USA, New York, Washington, D.C.	Trump, all Americans, parents, sisters, brother, family, Melania, (children) Ivanka, Don, Eric, Tiffany, Barron, Chris Christie, Rudy Giuliani, Jeff Sessions, Gen. Mike Flynn, Reince Priebus	I will be a president for all Americans	Trump is all-knowing, Trump is smart, Trump is tough, Trump is successful, Trump is a family-man, Trump should be emulated, Trump has the right team, All Americans are the children of Trump, Trump as leader of revolution

<b>Rhetorical Vision</b>	<b>Setting</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Verbal Action</b>	<b>Fantasy Type</b>
Don't Trust Anything but Trump				
Trump as Unifier and Rebuilder of the USA	The United States	American people, Trump, Trump's party, Secretary Clinton	President for all Americans, bind the wounds of division, she (Clinton) called us, congratulated us on our victory, it's about us	Trump is above nasty politics; Trump will unite the people
Politics as...	New York, Washington, D.C.	Trump, Hillary Clinton	Nasty business	Politics is business
Movement of Millions	The USA, our country	Millions, a Great Movement, a Movement for all, we	Millions of hard-working men and women, a movement for all Americans regardless of race, religion, and background, or belief, historic victory	A united Movement to Make America Great Again, all people joined in the Movement, the Movement transcends race, religion, and history, a new beginning, a call to arms
The Great American Patriot	Inner cities	Forgotten men and women	Will not be forgotten	The fabled people who originally made the USA great, the forgotten people of small-town America, the people who are self-sufficient, the people who don't trust the government, the people who don't make their living from Big Tech or big business, the people who don't have access to money or education, The people who will effect change
People as Military and Protectors or democracy				
Violent Mob Mentality				
Government for the People	The USA	Government	Will serve the people	The people are in control of the government, a return to a fabled original state of government, restoring the government to its original

Rhetorical Vision	Setting	Character	Verbal Action	Fantasy Type
				state and purpose, a time for change, the people restoring America to its former glory
The United States of America, American democracy, and the American Patriots are protected by God	The USA	We, American people	Have untapped potential, reclaim our country's destiny	The position of the United States is preordained by God, God protects the United States, God protects the citizens of the USA
Common Sense Approach				
Radical Left Democrats, Foreign Governments, and Globalists are Undermining and Attacking the Sovereignty of the USA				
Big Tech, big business, and Lobbyists Control D.C.				
Enemies of the State				
The 2nd Big Lie				

**Table 4**

*Coding for Setting, Character, and Action, Donald J. Trump's Inauguration Day Speech*

<b>Rhetorical Vision</b>	<b>Setting</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Verbal Action</b>	<b>Fantasy Type</b>
American First	The USA, the world, the land	A new vision, American workers, American families	A new vision will govern the land, protect our industries and keep foreigners from destroying our jobs, benefiting American workers and American families	America no longer last, the USA will only care about what happens within its borders, the government will take care of Americans first and foremost, a call to arms
Make America Great Again	The USA	Together, you, your	We determine the course of America, today that all changes, this is your day, your celebration, the time for action is now, this moment changes everything, birth of a new millennium, bring back our jobs, protect our borders, bring back our dreams, we will think big and dream bigger, the birth of a new millennium, everyone can fill their hearts with the same dreams	The people and President Trump are on a quest, this is the dawn of a new era of prosperity, change happens now, it is alright to let your true personality show, America for Americans, the people share the dreams of the USA and are united in the cause, a call to arms, restoration by renewing the American Dream
The American Dream is dead	The USA	We, our, the people, foreigners, other governments, other nations, mothers, children	National effort to rebuild our country, factories closed, jobs lost, drugs, crime, no jobs, poverty, crime, tombstones, gangs, carnage, the wealth, strength, and confidence of our country disappeared, foreigners destroying our jobs	The Dream died under Obama and will be revived under Trump, Obama and the Democrats raped the United States, foreigners and foreign countries are undermining U.S. sovereignty, repudiation of Obama, repudiation of past
Redefining American Identity	The USA	Together, the forgotten men and women, Radical Islamic Terrorism	We determine the course of America, will no longer be forgotten, eradicate completely from the face of the earth	The people who stand-up against Radical Islamic Terrorism and Democrats are the true Americans, the original people will rise up and take control of the government, the people and Trump are one as they are united, emulate Trump

Rhetorical Vision	Setting	Character	Verbal Action	Fantasy Type
The U.S. Military is broken	Other countries, other nations	Foreign lands, politicians	Our infrastructure has decayed, sad depletion of our military, subsidized the armies of other countries	The U.S. military cannot protect the U.S. citizens, the Democrats are undermining the US military and system
Washington, D.C. and politicians are broken and crooked	Washington, D.C, The U.S.	Politicians, the people, small group in Washington	Politicians flourished while people suffered	The Democrats and politician raped the system, the Democrats abused the system, an elite group controls Washington, D.C. and the world, the U.S. citizen has been taken advantage of by the Dems and the other politicians, the Democrats are like the English Crown who enjoyed life while the Patriots struggled under taxation
The 1st Big Lie				
Citizens Tired of Foreigners	Other countries, other nations, the world	Foreign people, the Middle Class, foreigners, gangs, politicians	We enriched other foreign countries, defended other nations, helped develop our countries while our infrastructure decayed, the wealth of the Middle Class has been ripped from their homes and redistributed across the world, protect our industries and keep foreigners from destroying our jobs, protect our borders, steal lives, rob country of so much potential, refused to defend our borders	The US citizens have been manipulated, The US citizens have been taken advantage of, the wealth of the U.S. is supporting foreign people and foreign governments, big business does not care about their employees – only about profits, U.S. jobs are now found in China and Mexico, foreigners at the root of problem
The Establishment Lies				

Rhetorical Vision	Setting	Character	Verbal Action	Fantasy Type
Patriots, Traitors, Winners, and Losers	Washington, D.C, The USA, January 20, 2017	President Obama, Mrs. Obama, the People	Transferring power from Washington, D.C., the day the people became rulers of the country again	The people are the winners, Trump is a winner, repudiation of Obama, repudiation of Democrats, insiders are Patriots, outsiders are traitors, a call to arms, restoration through revolution
Mike Pence as Patriot and savior of democracy				
Politician as Traitor				
Trump as Father of the Movement	The USA	Trump, religious leader	When you open your heart to Patriotism there is no room for prejudice, God bless America and God bless you	Trump is the undisputed leader of the Movement, Trump is father to all patriots, Trump is akin to the heroes of the Revolutionary War, Trump is a new Founding Father, Trump is leader of the Revolution
Don't Trust Anything but Trump				
Trump as Unifier and Rebuilder of the USA	The USA, Washington, D.C.	We, our, I, Trump	National effort to rebuild our country, we share one heart, together will make American strong again, we will make America wealthy again, we will make America proud again, we will make America safe again, we will make America Great Again, fight for you, never let you down	Trump united the people in a great Movement, the people are united to reclaim America, repudiation of Obama, Trump is a fighter, Trump can be nasty, Trump knows business, Trump is a connected guy, money solves all problems, the people are patriots, revolution through united national effort

<b>Rhetorical Vision</b>	<b>Setting</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Verbal Action</b>	<b>Fantasy Type</b>
Politics as...				
Movement of Millions	January 20, 2017, Washington, D.C, USA	We, our, the people, rulers, millions of people, Washington politicians	National effort to rebuild our country, define our American destiny, people became rulers of the country again, never before seen, never to be ignored by the Washington politicians again	The people are in charge of the government, the time of the Democrats and weak Republicans is over, a call to arms
The Great American Patriot	January 20, 2017, Washington, D.C., USA	The people, the forgotten men and women	National effort to rebuild our country, the government is controlled by the people, rulers of the country again, came together in a historic Movement, we share one heart, one home, new national pride will stir our souls, lift our spirits, heal our divisions, total allegiance to the United States	The people are in charge of the government, the American Patriot will be remembered in history, patriots are protected by God, U.S. patriotism spans race and religion, patriotism is the great Unifier
People as Military and Protectors of democracy	The USA, Washington, D.C.	The people, Washington, D.C. (politicians), the forgotten men and women	We are transferring power from Washington, D.C. to the people, government is controlled by the people, now arrives the hour, action, new national pride will stir our souls, lift our spirits, heal our divisions	The people are in charge of the government, change starts now under Trump, a new day of hope and change, the people are the protectors of democracy, the people replaced the military as protectors of democracy
Violent Mob Mentality (The Mob)		The forgotten men and women	In control of the government, now arrives the hour of action	
Government for the People	The USA, Washington, D.C	The people, Washington, D.C. (politicians)	We are transferring power from Washington, D.C. to the people, speak freely but debate	The great new American Patriots are like the Founding Fathers and share the

Rhetorical Vision	Setting	Character	Verbal Action	Fantasy Type
			honestly, pursue solidarity	same burdens promoting democracy
The United States of America, American democracy, and the American Patriots are protected by God	The USA, Washington, D.C., urban sprawl of Detroit, windswept plains of Nebraska	The government, we, you, God's people, child, they	Every four years there is a peaceful transfer of power, we share one glorious destiny, we will be the shining example for everyone to follow, protected by God, glorious freedoms and salute the same great American flag, when you open your heart to Patriotism there is no room for prejudice, The Bible tells us, "how good it is when God's people live together in unity," one glorious destiny, everyone can fill their hearts with the same dreams and they are infused with the breath of life by the same Almighty Creator, God bless America, God bless you	The U.S. system of democracy is blessed by God, The USA is the shining example, The USA is a beacon or righteousness, God – America – and the U.S. citizen are bound together in the quest to Make America Great Again, God wants the U.S. citizen to follow Trump and be united in their common quest, God protects the Revolution, God wants Restoration through Revolution
Common Sense Approach				
Radical Left Democrats, Foreign Governments, and Globalists are Undermining and Attacking the Sovereignty of the USA				
Big Tech, big business, and Lobbyists Control D.C.				
Enemies of the State				

Rhetorical Vision	Setting	Character	Verbal Action	Fantasy Type
The 2nd Big Lie				

**Table 5**

*Coding for Setting, Character, and Action, January 6, 2021, Ellipse Speech*

Rhetorical Vision	Setting	Character	Verbal Action	Fantasy Type
American First				
Make America Great Again				
The American Dream is dead	Washington, D.C.	Our country, we, the people	Has had enough (of the fraud and corruption), our country has been under siege for a long time	The Democrats and weak Republicans killed the American Dream, The Democrats and Republicans are criminals, the Democrats and Republicans manipulated the system and the people
Redefining American Identity	The USA, Washington, D.C.	Biden	Cancel culture	The Democrats will undermine the USA way of life, The Democrats will rewrite the shared U.S. history
The U.S. Military is broken	Washington, global	They (politicians)	Policies weakened our military	The U.S. military cannot protect democracy, The Democrats and Globalists weakened the U.S. economy and military might
Washington, D.C. and politicians are broken and crooked	Washington, D.C, the USA, Moscow, Ukraine, China	They (politicians), we, criminals, Hunter Biden, Joe Biden, Radical Left Democrats, Mitt Romney, 24 of	They rigged an election, like never before, policies lost our jobs, we don't have free and fair election, they are ruthless, this is a criminal enterprise, Hunter took three and a	The Democrats are criminals, the Democrats are undermining the U.S. economy and system of democracy, the Dems are with the Globalists to weaken

Rhetorical Vision	Setting	Character	Verbal Action	Fantasy Type
		them (Republicans)	half million dollars from the Mayor of Moscow's wife, the Biden's received billions of dollars, need to be stopped, comprehensive assault on democracy	the USA, the Biden's are criminals, there are Republicans that are in-league with the Radical Left Democrats
The 1st Big Lie				
Citizens Tired of Foreigners	Washington, D.C, (global)	They (politicians)	Policies opened our borders	Foreigners invading the USA, foreigners undermining the USA system of democracy, no military to protect the USA citizens
The Establishment Lies	Washington, D.C.	They (the media), Big Tech, you, criminals, lying politicians	Will not show the magnitude (of the crowds), won't show what is really happening, the media and Big Tech don't cover stories fairly, they are fake, you won't hear the facts from the fake news media, this is a criminal enterprise, the people don't believe the corrupt fake news anymore	The news media lies, tech companies are controlled by the government, big business, and foreigners, the Radical Left Democrats are criminals, Trump is the only person that tells the truth
Patriots, Traitors, Winners, and Losers				
Mike Pence as Patriot and savior of democracy	Washington, D.C.	Mike Pence, I (Trump)	All MP has to do is send it back for recertification, it takes courage to do nothing, don't approve, MP can send the vote back to Congress, MP I hope you're listening and will stand-up for our country, I hope MP has the courage, I hope MP does the right thing, if	Mike Pence as savior of democracy, Mike Pence the Defender of democracy

Rhetorical Vision	Setting	Character	Verbal Action	Fantasy Type
			Pence does the right thing, we win the election	
Politician as Traitor	Washington, D.C. (Capitol Building)	Mike Pence	He (MP) is sworn to uphold the Constitution, I'm not hearing good things	Mike Pence the Traitor, Mike Pence the Weak
Trump as Father of the Movement	Washington, D.C., (in Trump's experience)	Trump, I	Have never seen anything like it, travelled across the country, never a Movement like this before	Trump the all-knowing, Trump the Father of modern democracy, Trump the Demi-God, Trump the Father of the Movement, Trump the rightful Leader, Trump the chosen one
Don't Trust Anything but Trump	Washington, D.C. (Where Trump is)	I (Trump), they, the media, the people, criminals, a lot of people	I'm honest, they have asserted an outrageous lie, the people don't trust the media anymore, don't believe it	Trump is like Washington and Lincoln, Trump is the only one that can be trusted, Radical Left Democrats and Republicans are criminals, Radical Left Democrats and Republicans are lying to the people, you can't trust the media, tech, or the Establishment
Trump as Unifier and Rebuilder of the USA	Washington, D.C.	I (Trump), together	Give them \$2,000, let the people live, we are going to walk down to the Capitol, I'll be there, we will drain the swamp	Trump is beneficent, Trump cares about the U.S. citizens, Trump will be with the people during the Revolt, Trump as Leader of the Movement
Politics as...				
Movement of Millions	Washington, D.C.	Hundreds of thousands of people, I (Trump), we	This is a Movement, have never seen anything like it, never a Movement like this before, amazing Movement, we have	The unnamed masses united around Trump, The people discarded by Obama have united to take back the country

Rhetorical Vision	Setting	Character	Verbal Action	Fantasy Type
			over 250,000 people here	
The Great American Patriot	All over the world, all over the country, Washington, D.C.	They, hundreds of thousands of American patriots, A Movement	Came from all over the country, came from all over the world, extraordinary love for country, deep enduring love of America in our hearts, committed to the honesty of our elections, overwhelming pride in this great country	The unnamed masses united around Trump, the Great American Patriot is from all across America, the Great American Patriot is united in the fight to save America from destruction
People as Military and Protectors or democracy	Our country, Washington, D.C.	Our country, we, the Radical Left Democrats, Tech companies, the people who built this nation	Has had enough, will not stand for that, we gathered in Washington, D.C. to save democracy, to protect democracy, we are not going to stand for the defrauding and destroying of our country, we are going to walk down to the Capitol, we have to show strength and we have to be strong, we have to get them straightened out, they will never stop us, this is a time for strength and we are finally standing up and saying, "no", it's about time someone did something about it, we are going forward, stop the steal, abuse of power has to be stopped, fight much harder, fight like hell, drain the swamp and clean our nation's Capital, we will walk down Pennsylvania Avenue and give them the pride and boldness the need to take back our country, we will never concede when there is theft involved	The people will unite to defend democracy, repudiation of Obama, repudiation of globalism, repudiation of foreigners, right to bare arms, the people instead of the military are protecting American democracy, the people are engaged in a modern Revolutionary War, a call to arms, the Radical Left Democrats and weak Republicans are traitors against America, her citizens and democracy, a call to arms

<b>Rhetorical Vision</b>	<b>Setting</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Verbal Action</b>	<b>Fantasy Type</b>
Violent Mob Mentality	Washington, D.C, the USA, our country	The people, we, our	Aren't going to take it any longer, we will never concede, our country has had enough, We're not going to stand for the defrauding and destroying of our country	A call to arms
Government for the People	Great country	Enormous crowd	We are determined to defend and preserve government of the people, by the people, and for the people	A call to arms, the people protecting American democracy instead of the military protecting it
The United States of America, American democracy, and the American Patriots are protected by God	American	American democracy	Blessed with elections, our glorious republic, the greatest country in the world	God will protect America, God will protect the Great American Patriot, The Movement is protected by God
Common Sense Approach	The USA	You	You gotta use your head	The problems are obvious, Ordinary people can see the problems
Radical Left Democrats, Foreign Governments, and Globalists are Undermining and Attacking the Sovereignty of the USA	Washington, D.C, foreign governments, China	Biden, Communists criminals, children	China destroyed our people, we didn't destroy, No cancel culture or taking down Washington or Lincoln monuments, Biden Administration could make it happen, Communists suppress the media, the media suppresses Trump, they are Communists, suppression – it's what Communists countries do, indoctrinate your children, the Democrats made unconstitutional changes election procedures, this is a criminal enterprise	Foreigners undermining the USA, Foreign governments undermining the USA, Radical Left Democrats – Republicans – Big Tech – media – and foreigners are executing a plan to take over America, Big Tech are Communists, Radical Left Democrats are criminals, crime against democracy

Rhetorical Vision	Setting	Character	Verbal Action	Fantasy Type
Big Tech, big business, and Lobbyists Control D.C.	California, Silicon Valley	Big Tech, media, criminals, Radical Left	Don't cover stories fairly, they are fake, we don't have a free and fair press, the media is trying to suppress and intimidate us into believing their hoaxes and lies, blacklist you on social media, Twitter will shadow ban Republicans with big voices, this is a criminal enterprise, the media is the biggest problem, fake news and Big Tech, enemy of the people	The media lies, Big Tech is Communists, media controlled by government – Big Tech – and foreign governments, the Great American Patriot is surrounded by enemies, Radical Left Democrats and Republicans (MP) are enemies of the State
Enemies of the State				
The 2nd Big Lie	Our country, every state, Penn, AZ, MI, GA, NV, WI, Third World	We, they, politicians, criminals, local officials, state officials, Democrats	Rigged an election like never before, we have evidence that we won, the states were defrauded, using Corona virus as a pretext and scam, biggest theft in American history, Third World wouldn't attempt what we caught them doing, made illegal and unconstitutional changes to election procedures, paved a way for fraud, it is an assault against our democracy, the fraud took place in every state, this is a criminal enterprise, this is the greatest lie in history	The Radical Left Democrats and Republicans are criminals, they are undermining democracy, They committed crimes against the American Patriot and American democracy

**Table 6**

*Evidence Coding for Verbal, Textual and Clothing Symbols for Rhetorical Vision One:*

*The American Dream is Dead*

Evidence Category	Verbal Symbols	Textual Symbols	Clothing Symbols
RV1 EV1 ADCV 1439	This American Revolution must take place because our sovereignty, our country, our constitution has been stolen from us.	A traditional American flag, A blue flag with "AF" America First text, blue flags with Trump 2020 text, Appeal To Heaven flag with lone pine tree, flag of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran, Original flag of South Vietnam with yellow base and three stripes.	Winter beanies with Trump text, Red MAGA baseball hats, bandanas designed as American flag
RV1 EV2 NCV 1259B (00:25)	We the people! We the people! This is war! This is war! USA USA USA!	A blue flag with text that says "Trump 2020 Stop the bullshit", a white flag with a black coiled snake with text that reads - Liberty or Death - Do not tread on me", a blue flag with "Trump 2020 Keep America Great" text	A red Guy Fawkes mask, camouflage baseball hats, Red MAGA baseball hats
RV1 EV3 ADCV 1331A (01:00)	Fight for your rights, what we fight for is freedom, that is a powerful idea, even our enemies want to be free, even our enemies want to be free, stop the steal! Stop the steal!	A sign with the written text "show is the ballots", a sign with the text "Buck Fiden", a sign with text "Trump for President", a sign that says "we voted no to China Joe"	Red MAGA baseball caps, Jackets designed as American flags, baseball hats with "Trump 45" text
RV1 EV4 NCV 1259B (05:57)	They seek to ruin our lives for disagreeing with them, indeed as happens with our justice system no longer do they seek the truth, we as a people have been divided and conquered, we have been taught to hate.	A sign that says "Fuck Biden", traditional American flags, a traditional American flag with AF in place of the 50 stars, a rainbow flag, A black flag with a coiled orange snake with the text "Don't tread on me", an original South Vietnam flag, a white flag with an outline of a fish inside designed as American flag with the text "Proud American Christian"	A cowboy hat with the text "Trump for President", red MAGA baseball hat, camouflage baseball hat with "Trump 2020" text, A red Guy Fawkes mask, a red shirt with the South Vietnam flag
RV1 EV5 NCV 1511G	It's over for us. I came here today to perpetrate. I came here	A blue flag with white text that reads "Trump 2020"	A camouflage flak jacket, a red MAGA winter beanie, a black

Evidence Category	Verbal Symbols	Textual Symbols	Clothing Symbols
	today because my freedom is at stake. I want all the criminals arrested.		baseball hat with "Trump 2020" text, a facemask designed as an American flag

**Table 7**

*Evidence Coding for Verbal, Textual and Clothing Symbols for Rhetorical Vision Two:*

*Washington, D.C. is Broken and Washington Politicians are Crooked*

Evidence Category	Verbal Symbols	Textual Symbols	Clothing Symbols
RV2 EV1 NCV 1504C	We have overtaken the building, wondering if the media hears us now, no violence here, we're upset, the lies, the stealing needs to end, our government needs to listen.	A blue flag with "Trump for President" text	A red Make America Great Again hat
RV2 EV2 NCV 1455D (00:27)	We are patriots, trying to stand-up for our Constitution, they are wiping their ass with our Constitution, they say they aren't the enemy but...	A flag that reads "Trump protect the 2nd Amendment", yellow flags with black coiled snakes with text that reads "Don't tread on me"	A red MAGA baseball hat, camouflage baseball hat, camouflage jacket, camouflage pants, a red baseball hat with the text "USA 45", a bandana designed as the American flag
RV2 EV3 NCV 1452E	Our government has been taken over by criminals, we need to end this now.	A white placard with the text, "Investigate election fraud now, prosecute those who are guilty", An American flag with the text "TRUMP" written over the stars, A blue flag with "AF" America First, a dark blue flag with the text "Fuck Biden", a red flag with white letters saying "TRUMP 2020 Keep America Great"	Red, white, and blue winter beanie with text "TRUMP", red MAGA baseball hats, a black t-shirt with a picture of Trump superimposed over the American flag with the text "Stop the Steal"

Evidence Category	Verbal Symbols	Textual Symbols	Clothing Symbols
RV2 EV4 NCV 1457A (00:10)	Yeah, because Pence is a traitor, Pence is a fucking traitor, he'll forever go down in history.	A sign with the text "Make guillotines great again", a blue flag with the text "Trump 2020 Keep America Great", Epstein did not kill himself, a sign with the text "Bill Gates is a Turd"	Red MAGA baseball hats, red winter beanies with text "Trump", camouflage hats, a black military helmet
RV2 EV5 NCV 1327B	Revolution, revolution, you suited fuck, we're coming for you, this is our country.	A red flag with the text "Trump 2020", a yellow flag with a black coiled snake that reads "Don't tread on me"	Red MAGA baseball hats, camouflage jacket, camouflage face covering, a gas mask, black flak jacket

**Table 8**

*Evidence Coding for Verbal, Textual and Clothing Symbols for Rhetorical Vision Three:*

*Donald J. Trump is the Father of the Revolution and the Only Person That can be*

*Trusted*

Evidence Category	Verbal Symbols	Textual Symbols	Clothing Symbols
RV3 EV1 NCV 1358 (00:50)	Who are we here for? Trump! Who are we here for? Trump! Who are we here for? Trump!	Flag of TN with red base - three blue stars - and white and blue stripe, Flag with text "2020 the sequel - make liberals cry again", a sign with text "We the People", Trump as Captain America flag	Camouflage flak jacket, camouflage facial covering, red MAGA baseball hat
RV3 EV2 NCV 1408A	They are really ready to stand-up and do a Revolutionary War! Hey, Trump asked for wild, he got wild!	An Appeal to Heaven flag	
RV3 EV3 ADCV 1434B	A man of God who has fought for this country, Donald Trump as our president for the next four years.	A traditional U.S. flag, A flag that reads - Trump 2020 Keep America Great	Man dressed as George Washington as he crosses the water in the Reflecting Pool

<b>Evidence Category</b>	<b>Verbal Symbols</b>	<b>Textual Symbols</b>	<b>Clothing Symbols</b>
RV3 EV4 ICV 1522	You're a traitor, fight for Trump, fight for Trump.	A blue flag with white text that reads "Trump 2020"	A red Make America Great Again cap, military flak jackets, camouflage military gloves, gas masks
RV3 EV5 NCV 1706B	Donald Trump asked everyone to go home, he put out a Tweet, he asked everyone to go home.	A traditional U.S. flag mounted on a wooden pole	A coonskin cap with horns, buckskin pants, face painted red white and blue, bird feathers hanging from ears interlace with beads

**Table 9**

*Evidence Coding for Verbal, Textual and Clothing Symbols for Rhetorical Vision Four:  
The American Patriot Must Protect Democracy and the Constitution*

<b>Evidence Category</b>	<b>Verbal Symbols</b>	<b>Textual Symbols</b>	<b>Clothing Symbols</b>
RV4 EV1 ADCV 1310	The sleeping giant is awake, we declare 1776 against the New World Order.	A traditional American flag, a flag with text "Trump 2020", a sign that says "Jesus Saves", a sign that says "AZ Life Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness"	Camouflage backpack, a facemask designed as the American flag
RV4 EV2 ICV 1432	We don't want war, but we're prepared to fight for our liberty.	Traditional American flag, a sign that reads "Trump Won"	Red Make America Great Again hats
RV4 EV3 NCV 1353A	We're at the gate. We're coming through this mother fucker tonight. We're at the door. We're right here. We're coming in. Their not stopping us now God damnit. This is our house mother fuckers!	A blue flag with text "Trump 2020 Make America Great Again"	Camouflage backpacks, camouflage army jackets, military helmets, protection goggles
RV4 EV4 1403B	Every damn one of us needs to be up there	Traditional U.S. flags, Appeal to Heaven flag, a	Camouflage winter hats, a white baseball

Evidence Category	Verbal Symbols	Textual Symbols	Clothing Symbols
	pushing the damn front doors in and dragging their asses out here, they work for us, they work for the Chinese, turned their backs on us, until America gets serious about taking back our country, they're not gonna take us serious.	yellow flag with text "Don't Tread on Me", a blue flag with "Trump 2020 Make American Great Again", a black flag with Trump as Rambo including assault rifles and bands of ammunition across his chest	cap with text "Make America Great Again", swimming goggles
RV4 EV5 ICV 1445	Whose house? our house, whose house? our house? we took over the Capitol, overran the Capitol, we're in the fucking Capitol bro.	Traditional American flag, a blue "Trump 2020" flag	Red Make American Great Again hats, military helmets, goggles, bulletproof vests, camouflage clothing, a red "Trump MAGA 46" baseball hat,

**Table 10**

*Evidence Coding for Verbal, Textual and Clothing Symbols for Rhetorical Vision Five: Radical Left Democrats, Foreign Governments, and Globalists Are Undermining and Attacking Democracy and the Constitution*

Evidence Category	Verbal Symbols	Textual Symbols	Clothing Symbols
RV5 EV1 ADCV 1310	The globalist CHICOM is now, this fraud, they're having to steal elections, a weak group, we declare 1776.	A traditional American flag, a flag with text "Trump 2020", a sign that says "Jesus Saves", a sign that says "AZ Life Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness"	Camouflage backpack, a facemask designed as the American flag
RV5 EV2 ADCV 1439	I hope bloodlessly, or another way, this American Revolution must take place, our sovereignty, our country has been stolen, our country has been taken over by foreign - global - special interests, the Globalist	A blue flag with white letters that reads "AF America First", traditional American flag, a yellow flag with three red stripes (original Vietnamese flag)	Winter beanies with "Trump 2020" text, red MAGA baseball caps, camouflage pants

Evidence Category	Verbal Symbols	Textual Symbols	Clothing Symbols
RV5 EV3 ADCV 1645	Establishment that is ruining this country, looted our cities, attempting to replace our population. The real threat to our country is globalism.	A red, white, and blue flag with "Trump 2020" text, traditional American flag	A red Make America Great Again hat
RV5 EV4 NCV 1520B	He (Pence) is handing this country over to the ChiCom, may he go under the gallows, put before a firing squad and found guilty of treason, eliminate the RINO's, put in true, red-blooded Americans, fight for their lives against this global tyranny.	A traditional U.S. flag, a flag that reads - Don't tread on me, flags with 1776 surrounded by 13 stars, ALT Right green flag with black and white stripes (KEK), flag of South Korea, Red letters that spell B-I-G-L-Y, national flag of Japan	A red Make America Great Again hat, coonskin cap, camouflage gloves, a white T-shirt with Trump posing in George Washington attire, a melting red-white-blue skull on a black hoodie
RV5 EV5 NCV 1349B (02:34)	Crowd chanting "We the people", Crowd chanting "Stop the steal".	A flag that reads - Don't tread on me, traditional U.S. flags, a flag that reads - Trump, a flag that reads - Keep America Great, A flag showing Biden a Chinese President Xi Jinping embracing. Biden is dressed like a woman while Xi is dressed like a man, an American flag with "76" in place of the stars	Red winter beanies with text "Trump 2020", a read winter beanie designed as the Confederate flag, military helmet, red sweatshirt with logo of Trump designed as ALT RIGHT "Kek"

Table 11

*Evidence Coding for Verbal, Textual and Clothing Symbols for Rhetorical Vision Six:*

*The USA, the American People and the Movement are Protected by God*

<b>Evidence Category</b>	<b>Verbal Symbols</b>	<b>Textual Symbols</b>	<b>Clothing Symbols</b>
RV6 EV1 ADCV 1422	The Lord will fight the battle for his people, we cry unto him, he will crush the enemy.	A blue flag with text that reads "Trump 2020 Keep America Great", a sign that reads "stop the steal", a sign that reads "save America"	Camouflage jacket, red "Trump Make America Great Again" baseball hat, navy blue winter beanie with stars - stripes - and "Trump" text
RV6 EV2 NCV 1329	The blood of Jesus, the blood of Jesus, the blood of Jesus.	A sign reads "Jesus Saves", A red flag with a white train with text that reads "Trump Train", a white sign that reads "China is Asshole", a red flag with white text that reads "Stop the Steal Pray for Trump"	A blue winter jacket with "NFL" text, a red baseball cap with text "Keep America Great"
RV6 EV3 NCV 1348B	I was up here praying peacefully for a police officer when I was shot in the face.	Traditional U.S. flags, flags that reads "Trump 2020", a sign with Trump as frog "Kek", a traditional American flag	A hat with text "Trump America First", camouflage hat, a yellow winter hat with Trump in green and orange as "Kek" from symbol, flak jacket
RV6 EV4 ICV 1442B	Singing - Glory, Glory, Hallelujah. Dear God, thank you for your service, thank you for allowing us to stand up for our country, guide us so that we may do your work, pray for the brothers that stand beside me, in the name of Jesus, Amen.	Traditional American flag, a blue flag with text that reads "Trump 2020 Keep America Great", a yellow flag with a black snake and text "Don't Tread on Me"	Black military helmet, camouflage jacket
RV6 EV5 NCV 1453A	President Trump was filled with the Holy Ghost, Lord that this is the hour, the time we call forth for Revival, Father - we give you the heart	A blue flag with text that reads "Trump 2020 Keep America Great", a white flag with blue text that reads "Trump 2020	Trump shawl that reads "Trump Keep America Great", flak jacket, a banner that reads "Chinese

Evidence Category	Verbal Symbols	Textual Symbols	Clothing Symbols
	of President Trump, his is the Cyrus in this hour, he is a cane of Joshua in this hour, not afraid to face the Giants and take the Promised Land.	and no more bullshit!", a yellow flag with black snake and text "Don't Tread on Me"	Americans for Trump"

**Table 12**

*Evidence Coding for Verbal, Textual and Clothing Symbols for Master Analogy: Make America Great Again*

Evidence Category	Verbal Symbols	Textual Symbols	Clothing Symbols
MA EV1 NCV 1706B	We won the fucking day, we fucking won, by sending a message to the Senators and the Congressman and to Pence, if they don't uphold the Constitution, we will remove them from Office one way or the other.	A traditional U.S. flag mounted on a wooden pole	A coonskin cap with horns, buckskin pants, face painted red white and blue, bird feathers hanging from ears interlace with beads
MA EV2 ADCV 1434B	Patrick Henry said, people armed with Holy cause of liberty are invincible, a just God rules over the destiny of nations, God will rule over this nation, deliver us again.	Trump 2020, Keep America Great	Man dressed as George Washington, Father of country
MA EV3 NCV 1332	We want our country back.	A sign with text "Transparency Take Courage", a sign with text "End the lockdown, we are all Essential, AZ for Freedom", a black flag with Trump holding Rambo weapon	Camouflage hat, a red hat with text "Trump 2020 Make America Great Again"
MA EV4 ICV 1434	Where are the fucking traitors? Drag them out by their fucking hair. Where are the fucking traitors?	Traditional American flag, blue flag with text "Trump 2020 Keep America Great"	Bandanas designed as American flag, red MAGA baseball hat, a camouflage hat with text "Tactical

<b>Evidence Category</b>	<b>Verbal Symbols</b>	<b>Textual Symbols</b>	<b>Clothing Symbols</b>
MA EV5 ICV 1657	I would die for this country	A red flag with blue and white letters that reads "Trump 2020"	Citizen", camouflage pants, military helmet  Black clad person with black mask, military helmet, red MAGA baseball hat, gas mask