A Rhetorical Analysis of John F. Kennedy's "Inaugural Address" of January 29, 1961

Marjorie T. Hutton

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A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF JOHN F. KENNEDY'S

"INAUGURAL ADDRESS" OF JANUARY 20, 1961

(TITLE)

BY

Marjorie T. Hutton

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Master of Science in Education

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1967

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to acknowledge the assistance and encouragement of her advisor, Dr. Jon Hopkins, Professor of Speech, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois.
CHAPTER I

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The Inaugural Address of President Kennedy is a matter of summons to citizens by the new head of our great Republic. Around nearly every sentence of it could be written a thesis, so packed is it with implications.

Plainly he has had humility, scruples, care and anxiety about what he thinks, writes, and says, hoping his words will stand up and make sense and perhaps wisdom for his own and later times. When our generation has passed away, when the tongues of praise and comment now speaking have turned to a cold dumb dust, it will be written that John F. Kennedy walked with the American people in their vast diversity and gave them all he had toward their moving on into new phases of their great adventure.1

Origin of the Study

The subject of this thesis was suggested to the writer by Dr. Jon Hopkins, Professor of Speech, at Eastern Illinois University. In one of the many conversations between the writer and the advisor, Dr. Hopkins confided that he would like to see the Speech Department of Eastern Illinois University eventually have a complete file of theses researched on the Inaugural Addresses of our national Presidents.

Immediately, the "Inaugural Address" of John F. Kennedy entered the writer's mind. The idea of doing a rhetorical analysis on the "Inaugural Address" was very exciting to the writer.

With the approval of Dr. Hopkins, the writer departed for the library for further research.

Review of the Literature

Before beginning the study of the "Inaugural Address" of John F. Kennedy, it was necessary to ascertain whether such a study had been done before or was in progress. According to William M. Sattler, "the writer of a thesis is responsible for knowing the present level of knowledge in regard to his subject."²

In order to establish the originality of the study the indexes of research in the field of speech were checked.³

Dissertation Abstracts were also checked.⁴

Listed below in chronological order, are the graduate studies which have been completed on the speaking of President Kennedy.


It can be seen from this investigation that many facets have been studied concerning the speaking of John F. Kennedy. Also from this investigation came the conclusion that no critical analysis of the "Inaugural Address" of John Kennedy has been done or is being done except as a comparison to other Inaugural Addresses or as may have arisen incidental to historical studies or biographies. Homer Hockett stated it thus: "The essay (Master) should be an original study. This does not mean that it must treat of a subject never before touched, but that it would be handled in an original way."5

Significance of the Study

From a review of the literature it would seem that a study of John F. Kennedy's "Inaugural Address" would be worthwhile and perhaps might lead to a better understanding of the general speaking ability of President Kennedy and what he hoped to accomplish during his tenure in office.

Another significant value which could be ascribed to such a study would be its addition to the present existing criticism

of American orators. Many American rhetorical critics have stressed the values of studying American speakers. Donald C. Bryant, W. Norwood Erigance, and Marie Hockmuth (Nichols) have emphasized as their aim "to continue the examination of men and women who, by oral discourse, have helped shape American ideals and policy." 6

Bower Aly wrote concerning a need for critical analysis of American oratory:

The emphasis on other approaches to the history of speech making should not obscure the value of the biographical approach exhibited in A History and Criticism of American Public Address. Only 23 American speakers were treated therein. There is every reason why additional studies should be undertaken. . . 7

Ernest J. Wraege stated that there is a need for an organized body of literature which places speeches and speaking in proper relationship to the history of ideas. Research in the ideas communicated through speeches needs doing as a means of contributing to knowledge and understanding generally. 8 The latter statement is one of the objectives of this study as Kennedy presented several ideas in his "Inaugural Address" which are significant today.

Wraege goes on to say that from a wide investigation of sermons, lectures, and speeches related to issues, movements,


and periods, we may extend and refine our knowledge of social ideas portrayed in history. Such an attempt would constitute a kind of anthropological approach to a segment of cultural history.9  

Dallas C. Dickey said:

Great movements of history begin in obscure places and gather momentum only when leaders arise who can speak the wants of many. It may be given to one speaker to speak for a nation, to another for a region, and to a third for a small locality. The accident of time and— not the greatness of wisdom of the speaker—may determine which role he shall play. We need to study the movements and issues in different periods of American history and give attention to the interrelations of various speakers with the issues.10

The writer feels that this study might be of value eventually to a future scholar studying the New Frontier Movement.

Certainly, the study would be of value to the author as an individual. Wayne N. Thompson summarizes the values to the writer in this way:

The preparation of the thesis, can be a rich educational experience, which: (1) provides training in research methods; (2) requires the integration of the knowledge and the skills of several fields... (3) makes the students an 'expert' within a defined area; and (4) leads to conclusions regarding the theory and practice of rhetoric in our own time.11

In support of the merit of this study the author feels that the values of this study would be of historical, rhetorical and individual significance.

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9Ibid., p. 456.


Isolating and Defining the Research Problem

The method of research which will be used in this study will be the historical-critical research method.

J. Jeffrey Auer describes the historical method as thus:

"Defined formally, historical research is the study of a period, person, or phenomena in human development, in order to record discovered facts in an accurate, coherent and critical narrative that posits causations and probabilities."

Auer employed five elements which he considers essential to this method: (1) a problem (a carefully isolated period, person, or phenomena as the subjects of the historical narrative and the positing of causations and probabilities) and relevant information about it, including previous research; (2) a working hypothesis, or a theoretical solution, or the means of arriving at a solution, to be expressed in terms of causations and probabilities; (3) a research design, including techniques for gathering, criticizing, and synthesizing evidence bearing upon the period, person or phenomena to be studied; (4) the collection of evidence, using the procedures and sources called for in the research design; and (5) analysis, or interpretation, probabilities or causations concerning the period, person or phenomena studied.

In a study of a period of history, and the part played in it by speechmaking, several concepts of historical study should be included. They are: (1) a description of the historical causes leading up to the issues being discussed; (2) a reviewing

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13Ibid., pp. 28-29.
of the main facts concerning the life, character and works of an individual; (3) a reconstruction of the immediate speaking situation (audience and occasion analysis, the speaker's reputation and objectives both immediate and long range); (4) a study of the speaker's style and delivery, including personality, voice, manner of delivery, etc.; (5) a conclusion and evaluation of the speakers effect on the immediate audience and his place in the pattern of history and; (6) the tracing of ideas and doctrines from their origins, through various stages in their development and the current attitudes prevailing toward them. 14

As indicated above ("Crisin of Study"), the writer will limit this study to John F. Kennedy's speaking and more specifically, the study will be centered on his "Inaugural Address" which was delivered on January 20, 1961 at twelve noon, just outside the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.

It will be the purpose of this study to make a rhetorical analysis of the January 20, 1961 "Inaugural Address" of John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

The Working Hypothesis

Having isolated and defined the research problem, the second step according to Auer, is to formulate a working hypothesis. Defined by Hockett, the hypothesis of a research study is "a tentative conclusion about the facts observed, the truth of which must be tested by further observation."

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15 Hockett, p. 38.
Auer formally defines a hypothesis as a proposition (stated categorically or in question form) providing a tentative answer to a question about the nature of a possible relationship between two or more variables. Formulating it, anticipates validity.\textsuperscript{16}

It is assumed that by a critical analysis of the "Inaugural Address" given by John F. Kennedy on the day before he actually took office as President of the United States, his speaking effectiveness and abilities on this occasion may be evaluated. The hypothesis in this study is that John F. Kennedy probably presented a highly effective "Inaugural Address."

Divisions of the Research Design

For purposes of clarity, this paper is divided into several areas: (1) those materials describing the historical and rhetorical atmosphere of the period; (2) biographical sources concerning John Kennedy and his historical importance; and (3) references which concern Kennedy's "Inaugural Address."

In order to discover these materials, the following sources were used: the card catalogue of the Eastern Illinois University Booth Library; Reader's Guide; Speech Index, 1956-1961; Biographical Directory of the American Congress; Who's Who in America, 1960-61; Current Biography, 1961; and U.S. Navy Biographical Dictionary. These sources were supplemented by bibliographies and textual references in related books and periodical articles which will appear in the bibliography of this paper.

The first area to be investigated was the historical period

\textsuperscript{16}Auer, p. 72.
and atmosphere in which Mr. Kennedy lived and worked. The importance of this type of knowledge was included by Brignance in his list of elements for the historical-critical method— the study of historical causes behind the issues being discussed.\textsuperscript{17}

Ernest J. Wragge goes along with this trend of thought when he stated:

Inasmuch as the American System is compounded of political and economic ideas, competence in handling the data of history is necessary; but it is also to be remembered that inasmuch as the ideas are projected through speeches, they are also the province of the rhetorician; that inasmuch as they are employed in speeches with the object of reaching and effecting a wide audience, the ideas are framed in a context of rhetorical necessities and possibilities. To adopt the rhetorical perspective is actually to approximate more closely a genuinely historical point of view when analyzing and interpreting speeches as documents of ideas in social history.\textsuperscript{18}

The reasoning behind the need for this element of research is found in this statement:

One cannot study the literature without studying the historical foundations on which it rests. . . . . we must bring that past before our eyes as though it were the living present.\textsuperscript{19}

In order to obtain the necessary historical background for this period leading up to the "Inaugural Address," the following sources were chosen. First, for a general background of this period one history was selected because of the well-known reputation of the authors. Covering the years 1865-1961, Samuel Morrison and Henry Commager's, Growth of the American Republic, Volume II, presents a good over-all picture of events and issues

\textsuperscript{17}Brignance, p. 557
\textsuperscript{18}Wragge, p. 455.
\textsuperscript{19}Brignance, p. 557.
leading up to the 1960 election.20

A second history of the United States was also recommended by Dr. Syndergaard which provides an excellent background of this period, this being Allan Nevins and Henry Commager's, A Short History of the United States.

The second major area of investigation for sources involves the discovery of materials concerning the life of John Kennedy. Marie Hochmuth emphasized the importance of knowledge of the speaker to analysis of the speaking when she said, "There is no gainsaying the fact that when speeches are being evaluated the speaker is of paramount importance."21 Thus it is very important to gain facts and knowledge concerning the educational background of John F. Kennedy, his family and parental influences, religious beliefs, his physical state of being and his political career. There is a considerable amount of biographical material from which to make a choice, mostly in the forms of periodical articles and books. It became necessary to choose the more reliable and informative works. I elected to do this by determining that the author should be relatively free from bias both favorable and unfavorable and that the biographer must have had access to sufficient materials to make the biographical facts accurate.

One source which the writer feels to be one of the more reliable ones, was James MacGregor Burns, John Kennedy.22

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20 Dr. Rex F. Syndergaard, Head of the History Department, Eastern Illinois University, recommended this source as one of the best for this particular period of American History.

21 Hochmuth, p. 9.
A Political Profile. This book is neither an authorized biography nor a campaign biography, but an attempt to supply needed information, a measure of analysis, and a few judgments on one of the best known and least-understood of American political leaders at a crucial point in his country’s, and his own, history. 22 Mr. Burns talked extensively with President Kennedy, recorded their conversations on tape; he interviewed Mr. Kennedy's wife and parents and other members of his family, his teachers, assistants, political supporters and political opponents: he also traveled with the President during his campaigning. Most important, Mr. Burns had full access to past and current files of correspondence, legislative records, family records, etc. Historian Allan Nevins supports the choice of this book when he says "A remarkable achievement... It is seldom that we find a book on the recent or current scene which shows so much penetration. It should achieve its object by making Mr. Kennedy really understood." 23

Another reliable book-length biography which provided a firsthand insight into Mr. Kennedy's life is Theodore C. Sorensen's Kennedy. This book does not purport to be a full scale biography of John Kennedy or a comprehensive history of his era. Yet it is more than a personal memoir. Mr. Sorensen has relied principally on his own files and recollections rather than on what others have written. This book praises John Kennedy and what he has done, not merely out of loyalty and affection,


23 Allan Nevins, Jacket Blurb on the above source.
but out of deep pride and conviction. Regarding this book, the
New York Times said, "The nearest thing we will ever have to
the memoirs Kennedy intended to write."24

The third basic source is Theodore H. White's, The Making
of the President 1960. It is interesting to note that Nevins
and Commager selected this book and also the one by Sorensen
for their suggested bibliography readings.25 Another good book
for reference is one written by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.,
A Thousand Days. Further biographical material was discovered
in numerous periodicals.

The final area in which sources were discovered deals
with those concerning the setting of the speech and the "Inaugural
Address" itself. The events surrounding the speech are well
reported and there are numerous available sources to aid in
reconstructing the particular speech situation and rhetorical
atmosphere surrounding it. The New York Times (Jan. 21, 1960)
gives an extremely detailed account of the Inauguration and the
"Inaugural Address." The importance of this type of information
was suggested by Thonssen and Baird when they stated:

Motivated by the desire to view a particular speech
in its larger social setting, he (the author) reconstructs
as far as the facts will permit the social milieu of
the period. This reconstruction centers largely
about two considerations: The tracing of the ante­
cedents--historical, economic, political, social,
cultural--which impinge upon the ideas set forth
in the speech; and the examining of details and

Row, 1965), Jacket.

25Allan Nevins and Henry Steele Commager, A Short History
and circumstances—including the audience—relative to the specific occasion on which the speech was given.26

Organization of the Study

The study will be divided into six chapters, each having a specific function: (1) nature and purpose of the study, (2) a rhetorical biography of John F. Kennedy, (3) the rhetorical atmosphere concerning major issues confronting the American people from the November, 1960 presidential election to January 21, 1961, (4) the immediate setting of Kennedy's "Inaugural Address," (5) analysis of the January 20, 1961 "Inaugural Address," and (6) the conclusion.

Within these six divisions are all the elements constituting analysis using the historical-critical method as described by Brigance and Auer.

Chapter I treats the origin of study, review of the literature, significance of the study, isolation of the research problem, working hypothesis, divisions of the research design, organization of the study, and criteria to be used in rhetorical analysis.

Chapter II serves as a biographical study of John Kennedy with particular emphasis on his family background as well as his speaking abilities, these matters are included along with the study of his philosophy and ideals.

Chapter III describes the rhetorical atmosphere concerning major national issues confronting the American public from


Chapter IV attempts to reconstruct the speech situation on January 20, 1961, including audience and occasion analysis.

Chapter V undertakes the rhetorical analysis of the chosen speech in order to accomplish the purpose of this study.

Chapter VI contains the attempt of the author to draw the general conclusions resulting from the rhetorical analysis of this speech.

Criteria for Rhetorical Analysis

Before establishing criteria by which to carry on rhetorical analysis, a definition of speech criticism or rhetorical analysis is in order. Herbert A. Wichelns of Cornell University said that rhetorical criticism "is concerned with affect. It regards a speech as a communication to a specific audience, and holds its business to be the analysis and appreciation of the orator's method of imparting his ideas to his hearers."27

Thomssen and Baird describe it thus:

The criticism of oratory involves three stages: the examination of the facts, the formulation of criteria, and the application of the standards to the facts for purposes of general evaluation. . . . The source of the basic canon of rhetorical criticism is found in the formula: A speech is the result of an interaction of speaker, subject, audience, and occasion. The end toward which the critic's efforts are directed largely is the determination of the effect of the speech.28


28Thomssen and Baird, p. 23.
In order for the critic to understand the speech, he has to view the speech as emerging from the interaction of speaker, audience, and occasion; and he has to study the subsequent effect of the speech upon the audience.

Wayland Maxfield Parrish, a coeditor with Marie Hochmuth, of *American Speeches* suggest that the critic will interpret and evaluate a speech in terms of its effect upon an audience of qualified listeners.2

Thus, the writer decided to use *American Speeches* as a background source for criteria for rhetorical analysis of John F. Kennedy's "Inaugural Address." This criteria is as follows:

I. The basic question: Has the speaker discovered and employed in this case the available means of persuasion?

II. Specific questions to be answered:
   A. Is there evidence in the speech that the speaker possessed persuasive personal qualities - virtue, intelligence, and good will?
      1. Did he establish his own authority with the audience?
      2. Did he have a sympathetic understanding of their way of life, their thoughts, and their problems?
      3. Did he impress his audience as being well-informed on his subject?
      4. Was he given to dogmatism, exaggeration, and overstatement?
      5. Did he have a sense of humor?
      6. Was he sincere, friendly, fair-minded, modest, self-respecting, respectful, courteous, and tactful?

   B. Analysis of the content:
      1. Did the speaker choose the right things to say?
         a. Did he seem to be acquainted with all the pertinent facts bearing on his subject?
         b. Did he use those that were most significant and persuasive?

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1) Were these really facts or only guesses, opinion, hearsay?

2) Did he draw valid inferences from the evidence?

3) Did he arrange the evidence and inferences into a coherent logical structure that could satisfy the understanding and win conviction?

2. What was the speaker's proposition or central thesis?

3. What were the issues with which he dealt?

4. What were the main supporting ideas?

5. Was the speech organized in general?
   a. Was the Introduction designed to win an intelligent, sympathetic, and attentive hearing?
   b. Did the Discussion proceed step by step in conformity with the need, the mood, and the expectation of the audience?
   c. Did the Conclusion sum up what had been said and make a final appeal?

6. To which "motives" did the speaker appeal?

7. What was the nature and quality of the speaker's style?
   a. Was his style "immediately clear" to his audience?
   b. Were the vocabulary, allusions, illustrations, and sentence structure suited to the speaker, the audience, the occasion?

1) Did he use concrete wording, effective descriptions, and flights of imagination?

2) Was there conciseness of statement, economy or style, and brevity or utterance?

3) Was the style "spoken" rather than "written"?

   c. Were there occasional passages of sustained nobility and beauty?

C. Delivery

1. What was the nature and quality of the speaker's posture, movement, gesture, pronunciation, articulation, voice quality and use (pitch, rate, force)?

Conclusion

The purpose of the writer in the first chapter has been to clarify the nature and purpose of the study by treating (1) the

30Ibid., pp. 1-20.
origin of the study, (2) a review of the literature, (3) the significance of the study, (4) the isolation and definition of the research problem, (5) the working hypothesis, (6) the divisions of the research design, (7) the organization of the study, (8) the standards of rhetorical analysis in question form, and (9) a conclusion.
CHAPTER II

A HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN F. KENNEDY

Recent rhetorical studies stress the importance of studying the speaker's background in order to determine: (1) his personal resources for recognizing the pressing problems of his time, (2) his facility in making analyses of issues, and (3) his capacity for formulation of ideas.

The purpose of Chapter II is to analyze the background and preparation of John Kennedy as an orator. In order to achieve this purpose a study is made of his family background; early childhood; formal education; naval career; marriage; political career; philosophical beliefs; and the major issues which are revealed in his rhetorical works.

Family Background

John Fitzgerald Kennedy was born in Brookline, a suburb of Boston, on May 29, 1917, the second of nine children of Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr., and Rose (Fitzgerald) Kennedy. Both his grandfathers were sons of Irish immigrants who had moved to Massachusetts after the potato famine in Ireland in 1847, and both had become prominent in politics. Patrick J. Kennedy, whose business interests included operating a saloon, served in both houses of the Massachusetts legislature, and John F. ("Honey Fitz") Fitzgerald was a mayor of Boston.
John F. Kennedy's older brother was Joseph, Jr., who died on a mission as a navy flier in World War II. Robert F. and Edward Moore are his younger brothers. His sisters are Rosemary, Bunice (Mrs. Robert Sargent Shriver, Jr.), Patricia (ex-wife of Peter Lawford) and Jean (Mrs. Stephen Smith). Another sister, Kathleen, who had married the Marquess of Hartington, died in a plane crash in France in 1946.

Parental Influences on John Kennedy

Although Joe Kennedy, Sr. was often absent from home while he amassed his millions, he always had firm ideas on his children's upbringing. But what was more important than money was the training he gave his children—a regimen of discipline tempered and transformed by affection. As John Kennedy put it one night at the White House:

My father wasn't around as much as some fathers when I was young; but, whether he was there or not, he made his children feel that they were the most important things in the world to him. He was so terribly interested in everything we were doing. He held up standards for us, and he was very tough when we failed to meet those standards.31

A close friend of the family said, "Every single kid was raised to think, First, what shall I do about this problem? Second, what will Dad say about my solution of it?"32

The father wanted his children to be competitive with one another, and they vied among themselves fiercely in parlor games and sports wherever the family circle centered—Boston.

32 Burns, p. 20.
Bronxville, Washington, London, Palm Beach, the Riviera, Hyannisport. Sibling unity as well as sibling rivalry was encouraged. Once Joe Kennedy found himself in a violent argument with his two older sons. "Let'em fight. The important thing is that they fight together. I can take care of myself."33

He wanted his children, however competitive they might be with one another, to present a united front against the outside world. The fierce loyalty of the Kennedys to each other exists to this day and was especially helpful to John Kennedy in his political campaigns. A long-time family friend said:

They are the most competitive and at the same time the most cohesive family I've ever seen. They fight each other, yet they feed on each other. They stimulate each other. Their minds strike sparks. Each of them has warm friends. But none they like so much as they like and admire their own brothers and sisters.34

The steadying element in this large and spirited household was Rose Kennedy, who was devoted to the Catholic Church and who managed to convey a sense of religious obligation and a sense of duty to her large family. "She was terribly religious," John Kennedy said. "She was a little removed, and still is, which I think is the only way to survive when you have nine children. I thought she was a very model mother for a big family."35

In her husband's absence, she would work up current-events topics and guide the discussions of them by the children at the table as her husband would have expected it. They would assign a subject to one child and instruct him to find all he could on

34ibid., p. 21.
35ibid.
on the subject. Then they would tell the other children to do the same so they could question the first one when he made his report and see how much he really knew. Both father and mother tried to develop alert minds in their children by giving them mental exercise, just as they encouraged physical exercise, and the same competitive spirit prevailed at the table discussions that was present in the touch football games on the lawn. According to Evelyn Lincoln, Kennedy's inquiring mind and search for all the facts reflected this type of training which he had received around the family table when he was growing up.36

To allow his children to carry out freely and fully their feelings of responsibility to public life, Joseph P. Kennedy set up trust funds giving each of them $1,000,000 when they reached maturity. "I put them in a position where each one of them could spit in my eye and tell me where to go," he said, "and there was nothing to prevent them from becoming rich idlebums if they wanted to."37 He also told them that they had an obligation to take part in public life, but like the English gentry of the early years, the Kennedys expected each son to excel in a different career. They assumed that young Joe would go into politics, and they felt that Jack might become a teacher or a writer as he was a sickly, bookish boy who preferred reading to the family calisthenics.

Young Jack kept up his side in the competitive world of the Kennedys, but for all his vitality he had both a frailness


37Time, p. 21.
and a sensitivity which may have made him a little lonely at times. He was sick in bed with diphtheria, scarlet fever, acute appendicitis, and chronic stomach trouble. He loved to read and loneliness and sickness made him read all the more. He was absorbed in history and biography—King Arthur, Scottish Chiefs, The White Company and later, Churchill's Marlborough when he was in his teens. His memory of what he read was photographic, and situations, scenes, and quotations stuck in his mind for the rest of his life.3

It would appear that both the parents of John Kennedy influenced his life; however, it seems that his father was the more dominant influence. Paul Fay, a war-time buddy of Jack Kennedy, had the following to say:

Hugh Sidey of Time Magazine directed this question to me. "Red, how much influence do you feel that the Senator's father has had on his career? Do you feel that he is the motivating force behind the amazing drive and ambition of the entire family?" "Hugh," I replied, "I think that Mr. Kennedy has been the most vital force in the careers of the Kennedy men and women, particularly after they left grade school and entered high school and college."

To Jack Kennedy I said, "I want to tell Sidey that it is my impression—and it will be strictly an impression, because I didn't know you until after college and I'll make this point clear—from what I have been able to gather in conversations with you and your family, that during your years in school your dad was the key figure in encouraging a career in public service. That during your years in college, the Navy, and immediately after that your dad was the one person whose opinion you cared most for—to make him proud and pleased with your accomplishments. But simply, as the years went on and you assumed greater and greater responsibility, you still enjoyed the approval of your own personal desire to do what was right."3

39 Schlesinger, p. 35.

Early Childhood and Education

Jack Kennedy spent the early part of his childhood in a large frame house in Brookline, Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston. It was a quiet, lower-middle-class area. As his father became more prosperous, the family moved to higher-class houses and neighborhoods. In Brookline, Jack first went to grade school. Dexter School was a private academy but not a parochial school; at that time the two older Kennedy boys may have been its only Catholic students.\(^{40}\)

Sometimes their Grandfather Fitzgerald would pick up the boys and take them to a Red Sox game or to the swan boats in Boston's Public Garden or to some other favorite haunt. One of Jack's earliest memories is of touring the wards with his grandfather when he was running for governor in 1922. "Fitz" even tried out some of his speeches with the six-year old boy as an audience of one. An old-time Bostonian, Clem Norton, believes young Jack's first speech was to a group of Fitzgerald's cronies at a Parker House Hotel gathering.\(^{41}\) After the boy had been waiting outside for an hour or so, he was brought in, and old John F. picked him up and placed him on a table with the words: "Here's my grandson, here's the finest grandson in the world." To which young John F. responded, "My Grandpa is the finest grandpa in the world." And the crowd cheered Jack Kennedy's first public speech.\(^{42}\)

\(^{40}\)Burns, p. 22.

\(^{41}\)Ibid., p. 23.

\(^{42}\)Sorensen, p. 16.
Jack went to fourth, fifth, and sixth grades at Riverdale School in New York. His teachers remembered him later as a rather slight boy, polite, industrious and likable with a special interest in English history—and a spirited temper.43

John Kennedy's childhood seems to have been a happy one; it was an easy prosperous life, supervised by maids and nurses, with several younger sisters to boss and play with.

Canterbury and Choate

At thirteen years of age, Jack left his Bronxville, New York home for boarding school. For one year he went to Canterbury School in New Milford, Connecticut, the only Catholic school he ever attended. His studies at Canterbury went only moderately well; his main troubles were in Latin and spelling. By the fall of 1930, the Depression was on, and Jack wrote his father, "Please send me the Literary (sic) Digest because I did not know about the Market Slump until a long time after, or a paper."44 The year at Canterbury was cut short at Easter by a severe attack of appendicitis, and Jack never returned.

The next fall he attended with his brother Joe, the exclusive Choate Preparatory School for boys in Wallingford, Connecticut. The boys' father chose Choate because he wanted them to mix and compete with a greater variety of boys than in a Catholic school. Both his teachers and fellows liked him. Lem Billings recalls that when they met at Choate in 1931, fourteen-year-old Jack Kennedy was a New York Times subscriber.

43Burns, p. 23.
44Ibid., p. 25.
"the only subscriber that age I knew, and he read every word of it."45

As at Canterbury, he went out for a half-dozen sports but failed to make the varsity. In his studies, his Latin was still low, his French not much better, his English and history only fair. He graduated sixty-fourth in a class of 112. But he must have shown some glimpse of his potential ability and later drive for his classmates voted him "the most likely to succeed."46 Jack Kennedy was eighteen when he graduated from Choate, a tall, thin, wiry boy, with a narrow face and an uncontrollable mop of hair.

Harvard

Joe Kennedy had gone on to Harvard after winning athletic and scholarly honors at Choate that Jack could not equal. Partly because many of his classmates were going, partly to get away from Joe’s reputation, Jack chose Princeton instead of his father’s and his brother’s alma mater.47 That summer Jack was packed off to the London School of Economics to study under the noted agnostic Socialist professor Harold J. Laski. In the elder Kennedy’s opinion, he was also a "nut and a crank." But I never taught the boys to disapprove of someone just because I didn’t like him. They had heard enough from me, and I decided they should be exposed to someone of intelligence.

47Ibid., p. 29.
and vitality on the other side. He actually had little contact with Lasti as he became ill with jaundice and had to leave England. His career at Princeton was cut short at Christmas by a recurrence of jaundice, so he was forced to stay out of school the rest of the year. Then he decided to go to Harvard rather than to return to Princeton.

Jack's first two years at Harvard were very similar to those at Choate. Sports still excited him far more than his studies, and swimming was his passion and best sport. He was plagued by illness, however, and he also injured his back at football, an injury that would be with him for the rest of his life. At the end of his freshman year he was in the second lowest group of passing students. He did no better his sophomore year although he concentrated on history and government and read a good deal on his own, especially American history and biography. He was moderately active in extra-curricular activities; he joined Winthrop House, worked on the editorial staff of the Harvard Crimson, belonged to St. Paul's Catholic Club, and was chosen a member of the Spee Club and Hasty Pudding.

Jack's junior year at Harvard found his grades improving and he became much more involved in his studies. He was majoring in government with emphasis on international relations. He read extensively in political theory and followed the newspapers closely.

Solid, sound, earnest, but not brilliant—this is how his professors of government summed him up. "Kennedy

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43 Manchester, p. 177.
44 Burns, p. 31.
is surprisingly able when he gets down to work," one of them noted. "His preparation may be spotty, but his general ability should bolster him up. A commendable fellow." He was affectionate, generous, and loyal to those who broke through his reserve, a reserve that was sometimes disguised as coquettishness, sometimes as coolness. 50

During the spring and summer of 1939, Kennedy obtained permission from Harvard and traveled to Europe to study conditions leading to the war. To make up for the semester in Europe, he took extra courses his senior year, all either in government or economics, and he won 5 grades in all of them and became a candidate for a degree with honors in political science. To gain these honors he needed to submit an undergraduate thesis, and this was Kennedy's main intellectual effort during his senior year. 51 His subject was "Appeasement at Munich," a thesis on England's unpreparedness for war. His thesis had been so well received at Harvard that Kennedy decided to try to get it published. Encouraged by Arthur Krock of the New York Times, he expanded his paper into the book, Why England Slept, which was published by Wilfred Funk, with a foreword by Henry R. Luce in 1940.

After receiving his B.S. degree cum laude from Harvard in 1940, Kennedy completed a six month business course at Stanford University in California and then left to take a long trip through South America.

Naval Career

In the spring of 1941 he tried to enlist in the United

50 Ibid., p. 33.
51 Ibid., p. 39.
States Navy but was rejected because of his old back condition. He went through five months of strengthening exercises and managed to pass a Navy fitness test in September. 52 He worked in Intelligence on a new digest for the Navy Chief of Staff in Washington. Although he had applied for active duty, it was not until late 1942 that Kennedy was assigned to a Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron. His instructors rated him near perfect in ship handling, good in technical matters, and "very willing and conscientious." 53

In August, 1943, Jack Kennedy's PT-109, was torpedoed by the Japanese while on patrol off the Solomon Islands. Kennedy is credited with having saved the lives of several of his crewmen, one of whom he towed through the water for three miles by a life belt that he held between his teeth.

The Navy bestowed upon him the Purple Heart, the Navy and Marine Corps Medal and a citation signed by Admiral William F. Halsey. 54

The rest of the war for Kennedy was one of frustration. He contracted malaria and dropped down to 125 pounds. The PT boat explosion aggravated his old back injury causing him great pain. In the late spring of 1944, he entered Chelsea Naval Hospital near Boston.

Kennedy's Navy superiors found him to be pleasant, quiet, conscientious, and intelligent; they gave him a low rating only in "military bearing and neatness." 55

52Schlesinger, p. 36.
53Burns, p. 43.
54Ibid., p. 53.
55Ibid.
friend, said the following:

There was no question in my mind or the minds of Barney Ross, Jim Reed, and Byron White that Jack Kennedy was an exceptional man. Barney and I made boot in 1943 that someday Jack Kennedy would be President of the United States. We set the odds at ten thousand to one, because he was still out in the war zone, his health was poor, he was young, and unforeseen circumstances could make it impossible for him to reach the White House. Jack Kennedy's greatness was so apparent to me that I did something very unusual for a man. I saved every letter or note that he ever sent me beginning during the war years.56

Political Career

In 1945 Kennedy covered the United Nations Conference on International Organization in San Francisco for the Chicago Herald-American and other Hurst newspapers. He also covered the Potsdam Conference in August for International News Service. After that, he had had enough reporting. Paul Fay quoted the following from some correspondence with Kennedy:

During those months just after his discharge from the Navy, I'm convinced Jack saw his future as a writer—perhaps as a newspaper columnist commenting chiefly on politics. But gradually his ambitions changed in the months after his brother Joe's death. He knew that his father now saw him as the heir to the political traditions of the family. "I can feel Pappy's eyes on the back of my neck," he once said to me during this period... Although at that time Jack seemed indifferent to the whole idea of a political career, you sensed his movement in that direction.57

To be sure, the elder Kennedy wanted his son to enter political life and made his views known, but Jack was undecided and had mixed feelings about a political career.58 He was still somewhat shy and withdrawn with people outside of his own social

56Fay, pp. 141-142.
57Ibid., p. 152.
58Burns, p. 57.
circle. He disliked the backslapping and handshaking, and he
was not optimistic about his own ability in the speech making
area. However, Jack made his political debut in 1946 when
he became a candidate for the Democratic nomination to the
House of Representatives from Massachusetts' Eleventh Congress-
ional District. Kennedy ran as independently as possible of
political bosses, refusing to be the protege of anybody and
appealing to voters directly in many speeches. A good example
of this was when David Powers, who later was to serve as a
top White House aide, said:

I set it up for him to make a speech to the Gold Star
mothers, and you never in your life heard such a speech.
He's hemming and hawing and you'd need a pair of pliers
to drag the next sentence out of him. The women are
all sitting there, waiting to hear something, and
very little is coming out. Worse than that, it looks
like he never learned how to end a speech. It's
going on and on and I'm beginning to perspire. All
of a sudden he says it. The right words come to him
and he says it. He says: "Well, I think I know how
you ladies feel. My mother, too, lost a son in the
war." They broke into applause; some of them started
to cry, and the mothers rushed forward to grab his
hand and hug him. That was his first campaign, and
from that minute onward, you could see the tide turn
his way.60

By the middle of August in 1952, Congressman Kennedy
had spoken in 311 of the 351 cities and towns that make up the
State of Massachusetts. Requests for him to speak poured in at
the rate of fifty to sixty a week. He did not employ ghost
writers but authored his own speeches. Over a period of eighteen
months he averaged six or seven speeches a day and more on

59Ibid.
60The Thousand Days, ed. Paul Ballot (New York: The
Kennedy won the primary and had little difficulty in winning the November election to the Eightieth Congress. Two years later he was re-elected without opposition and in 1950, defeated Republican Vincent J. Celeste by almost five to one. During his three terms in the House of Representatives Kennedy served on the District of Columbia Committee and the Education and Labor Committee.

In 1952, he decided to run against incumbent Senator Henry Cabot Lodge for the United States Senate in the November election. With the help of his family he fought a vigorous and back-breaking campaign, writing letters, ringing doorbells, giving innumerable tea parties and receptions, and making speeches in every part of the state. It is said that after this experience, Kennedy painfully wrote out his fifteen-minute speeches in longhand and memorized them verbatim. The business manager of that campaign still has some of the manuscripts. Kennedy defeated Lodge by more than 70,000 votes and took his seat in the Senate in the Eighty-Third Congress on January 5, 1954. During his years in the Senate he served on the Government Operations Committee, the Labor and Public Welfare Committee, the Foreign Relations Committee, and the Joint Economic Committee.

The Democratic National Convention in Chicago in August of 1956, first brought John Kennedy to national prominence. Although he lost the Vice-Presidential nomination to Senator

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62 Manchester, p. 75.
Estes Kefauver of Tennessee, he showed surprising strength and became a new hope for the Democrats. That hope brightened when Massachusetts returned him by an overwhelming majority to the Senate in 1958. Senator Kennedy did not particularly like to make speeches. "Those guys who can make the rafters ring with hokum--well, I guess that's okay, but it keeps me from being an effective political speaker," he said in December, 1957. Instead, as Time then noted, Kennedy "imports a remarkable quality of shy, sense-making sincerity." 63

On January 2, 1960, Kennedy announced his candidacy for the Democratic Presidential nomination and on July 13th at the Democratic National Convention at Los Angeles, was nominated on the first ballot with forty-five more votes than was required. Perhaps it was Adlai Stevenson who gave the best summation of the Democratic candidate when, trying to describe the difference between himself and Kennedy, he told an East Los Angeles meeting: "Do you remember that in classical times, when Cicero had finished speaking, the people said: 'How well he spoke', but, when Democritus had finished speaking, the people said: 'Let us march'?" 64

The October 27, 1960 issue of the New York Times came out with the following:

The New York Times, speaking as an independent newspaper, today announces its support of John F. Kennedy for President. Two considerations have carried special weight in determining foreign judgment. One of these is a matter of foreign policy. The other is a question of assuring a unified direction of the nation's affairs at a difficult moment in history. 65

The climax of John Fitzgerald's political career came on November 8, 1960 when he defeated Richard M. Nixon and was inaugurated as the thirty-fifth President of the United States on January 20, 1961.

Marriage and Health

John F. Kennedy married Jacqueline Lee Bouvier on September 12, 1953. She was a Catholic and a daughter of John V. Bouvier III, a Manhattan financier, and the stepdaughter of Hugh D. Auchincloss. Their daughter Caroline was born on November 27, 1957, and a son, John Fitzgerald, Jr., was born on November 25, 1960—the first son born to a President-elect of the United States.

Mrs. Kennedy remembers her husband in their courtship as on crutches more often than not.66 The PT boat collision had affected his back, already weakened by his Harvard football injury. When he returned to the United States, he had a lumbar disc operation at the Chelsea Naval Hospital, relieving the pressure on the nerve fibers. According to Robert Kennedy, "At least one half of the days that he spent on this earth were days of intense pain."67 Then he found out that he had a form of Addison's disease—a degeneration of the adrenal glands. By 1954, Kennedy's back pain became so intense that he decided to try another operation, this time a lumbar fusion with a steel plate inserted in his spine. The steel plate led to a staphylococcus infection, and a second operation was required to remove the plate. Just as he was beginning to start to walk again, one of

66 Schlesinger, p. 96.

67 Ibid., p. 95.
his crutches broke, he fell and was back in bed again.68

The operations did not help as they left his back weaker than ever. The following spring Dr. Janet Travell, a New York physician who had treated certain painful muscular conditions with Novacaine, came to John Kennedy's attention. Dr. Travell discovered that Kennedy's left leg was three-quarters of an inch shorter than his right, so he procured shoes with a lift on his left foot and a lowered heel on the right; he also wore a small back brace and finding relief in a rocking chair in Dr. Travell's office, acquired one for himself.69

Kennedy never liked for anyone to ask how he was feeling. When he was in pain, others could tell only as his manner grew a little brusque and his face white and drawn. Some of his friends had a theory about his illnesses—that they were nature's way of compelling Kennedy to rest and take a respite from the strenuous life that he wouldn't otherwise do.70

While Kennedy was convalescing from his back surgery, he began to do research and writing on the issue of political courage as displayed by noted American legislators. Early in 1956 Harper and Brothers published Profiles in Courage which was an instant success. A year after publication this book was awarded the Pulitzer prize for biography. Probably no other honor meant so much to John F. Kennedy as this recognition of intellectual and literary distinction.71

\[68\text{Ibid., p. 96.}\]
\[69\text{Ibid., p. 97.}\]
\[70\text{Burns, p. 58.}\]
\[71\text{Ibid., p. 102.}\]
Philosophical Beliefs and Campaign Issues

Regarding Kennedy, Schlesinger has said:

The convergence of intelligence and ambition gave Kennedy an increasing coherent political philosophy--his intelligence is sharp, analytical, practical and unfettered. He thinks constantly in terms of problems and is willing to consider anything that promises a secure solution. This determined his approach to the Presidency.72

Kennedy was developing with emphasis, and with more and more eloquence, his distinctive theme--the appeal to get the country moving again.73 He said repeatedly in the 1960 Campaign that the voter's choice was between the contented and the concerned. He tried to present realistic arguments in urging voters not be complacent about the country's future as it was developing under the Republicans both at home and abroad.

It is generally accepted that the four nationwide televised debates between Kennedy and Nixon in the fall of 1960 were responsible for making Senator Kennedy as well-known to the public as Vice-President Nixon was. There were four debates--on Sept. 26th, Oct. 7th, Oct. 13th and Oct. 21st. Each individual broadcast averaged a viewing audience of between 65 to 70 million people.74 The debates helped to mold in the public mind all of the campaign issues and candidate images; they were a primary factor in Kennedy's ultimate electoral victory, as it was Kennedy who impressed the great majority as being more decisive and more vigorous.75 Kennedy's sincerity and vitality appealed to millions

72Lasky, p. 209.
73Schlesinger, p. 66.
75Sorensen, p. 223.
of voters who would otherwise have dismissed him as too young or known nothing about him but his religion. Kennedy's campaign style, tested and sharpened by seven spring primaries, appealed to an inner feeling that the soft and easy life was not enough and that our national potential was unfulfilled. 76 "His incredibly intensive campaign had convinced the uncommitted, projected his own convictions, demonstrated his quick intelligence, converted his youth into an asset, and showed Democratic anti-Catholics that he was not only a Catholic."

Although Kennedy's religion was not a recognized issue between the two candidates, Kennedy was repeatedly compelled to affirm his belief in the separation between the Church and State. The University of Michigan Survey Research Center made a study in April, 1961 and found that the main issue of the campaign was religious and that Kennedy's faith had cost him about 1,500,000 votes. Even Joe Kennedy said: "I didn't think it (election) would be so close. I was wrong on two things. First, I thought he would get a bigger Catholic vote than he did. Second, I did not think so many would vote against him because of his religion." 77

In a speech on Church and State which was delivered to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association, Houston, Texas on September 12, 1960, John F. Kennedy defined the critical issues confronting the American people:

76 Ibid., p. 240.
77 Ibid., p. 241.
78 Hugh Sidey, "Joe Kennedy's Feelings About His Son," Life, XXXIX (December 19, 1960), 32.
I want to emphasize from the outset that I believe that we have far more critical issues in the 1960 election: the spread of Communist influence, until it now festers only ninety miles off the coast of Florida—the humiliating treatment of our President and Vice-President by those who no longer respect our power—the hungry children I saw in West Virginia, the old people who cannot pay their doctor’s bills, the families forced to give up their farms—America with too many slums, with too few schools, and too late to the moon and outer space. These are the real issues which should decide this campaign. And they are not religious issues—for war and hunger and ignorance and despair know no religious barrier.79

Rhetorical Influences on John Kennedy

The two areas of rhetorical influence on John Kennedy are the authors he studied and read and the people he knew. These influences are important to a study of Kennedy’s speech-making since the subject matter for speaking is based upon knowledge and experience.

Some of the authors and books which John Kennedy is known to have studied are Franz Werfel’s The Forty Days of Musa Dagh, Tolstoy’s War and Peace, George Kennan’s Russia and the West Under Lenin and Stalin, Alan Morehead’s The White Nile, Henry A. Kissinger’s Necessity for Choice, A.J.P. Taylor’s Origin of the Second World War, Barbara Tuchman’s The Guns of August, Cecil’s Melbourne, Churchill’s Marlborough, Duff-Copper’s Talleyrand, the historical novels of Mary Renault and contemporary novelists.80

He read the English press as thoroughly as American

79 White, p. 391.
80 Manchester, pp. 82, 92, 93.
newspapers, particularly the Spectator, Times, New Statesman, Economist and Manchester Guardian Weekly.31

Kennedy was always impressed by ideas, during the war he kept a notebook to record thoughts, and by the stimulus of debate and discussion among his Naval buddies.32 As Richard Nixon found out, Kennedy could quote other authors besides himself. Kennedy's bookishness was one of his debating strengths as he had a wealth of facts at his command. William Manchester described it thus:

Even his conversation is studded with allusions, and he may be the only Hearst reporter ever to have cited Richard Brinsley Sheridan in a news story. In a single address he has quoted Wilson, Goethe, Faulkner, Artemus Ward, Finley Peter Dunne, Swift, Emerson, Lord Asquith, Tennyson, and Queen Victoria.33

Besides these sources which he is known to have read, he was the chief senatorial patron of the Library of Congress, Harvard's Library and numerous libraries including his father's and his own.34

The people John Kennedy knew were probably important influences in his speaking career, and of course this list is unending and impressive. Being born to wealth and having a father influential in government, business, and diplomatic circles, the Kennedy family was personally acquainted with many of the top dignitaries and celebrities of the world.

31Ibid., p. 32.
32Ibid., p. 33.
33Ibid.
34Ibid., p. 92.
When the January 20, 1961 Inaugural speech is analyzed later in the paper, the writer will attempt to determine the influences of the sources John Kennedy read and studied along with the influences of the people with whom he was acquainted.

Conclusion

After studying the life of John F. Kennedy including parental influences, early childhood, elementary education, life at Choate and Harvard, Naval career and travels, people he knew and studied, political affiliations, main issues with which he was concerned, and writing and speeches, there are several conclusions which can be drawn: (1) He had a happy childhood and was greatly influenced by his father; (2) He had an excellent formal education and was a well read person; (3) His observations from his numerous travels were significant and were reflected in his later writings and speeches; (4) The main issues with which he concerned himself were for the betterment of some of the problems of mankind.

Newspapermen of long experience such as Charles Markmann and Mark Sherwin, state Kennedy's importance to the United States when they say:

The United States has not often elected Presidents whose personalities have dominated their administrations, whose individualities have remained as immediately recognizable symbols, whose official records can be weighted for success and failure only in constant and direct reference to the intellect and character of the single man who was the head of both state and government. Washington was one of these few dynamic Presidents; Jackson was another, and there were Lincoln, the two Roosevelts, Wilson and Truman. The name of John F.

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Markmann and Sherwin, p. 3.
Kennedy must be added to the roster of those American Chief Executives marked by a complete rejection of Olympian detachment and a compelling passion for constant involvement in all the business of government.

Tom Wicker adds his comments when he states:

This is what haunts me about Kennedy—not just that he was a man of certain admirable visions, but that he had the kind of mind that could entertain vision, the kind of outlook that could put in perspective the gambits and maneuvers of the moment, see truly the futility of most means, the uncertain glory of most ends.86

Perhaps the best summation of Kennedy's attributes was said by an old family friend, Arthur Krock for the New York Times:

Kennedy was endearingly and admirably human. This was what drew to him the people of this nation and the world. That this was a principal source of the share of greatness which is his due.87


87Ibid., p. 11.
CHAPTER III

THE RHETORICAL ATMOSPHERE IN AMERICA
(November, 1960-January 21, 1961)

The world which awaited Kennedy's "Inaugural Address" was a troubled world. It is necessary to examine this period in order to discover the issues which were discussed by John F. Kennedy. This should help us to recognize the speech "as a cultural product of a particular time. . ." 88

1960 World and Domestic Situation

In New York, the historic 15th General Assembly of the United Nations battled with the serious problems of colonialism, East-West relations and disarmament. In the Congo and in Laos, dangerous situations developed with the United States involved in both clashes. All around the world there were crises: in Vietnam, in the Straits of Formosa, in Jordan and Saudi Arabia, in Hungary, in the Middle East and Suez, in Berlin, in Kashmir, in the Argentine, in Guatemala, in the Congo, and in Cuba. Hovering overhead was the never-ending crisis presented by the growth of Soviet and Chinese power, and the threat of atomic annihilation.

International clouds were growing wider. Chinese Reds infiltrated Laos and set up a rival Communist government. The

88 Hochmuth, p. 4.
civil war continued in Viet Nam. A revolution in South Korea overthrew Syngman Rhee. The Congo was embroiled in civil war; Castro and the United States came to a parting of ways. In 1957, the Soviet Union had launched the first space capsule to orbit the earth and a new cold war plan. In the three years that followed, the freedom of West Berlin had been threatened by a Soviet ultimatum, supported by claims of medium-range ballistic missiles which were supposedly targeted on Western Europe. The independence of Laos and of South Viet Nam had been endangered by pro-Communist forces. The Russians had invested billions of dollars in military and economic aid, including arms for Indonesia, the Aswan Dam for Egypt, steel mills for India and arms for the Algerian forces. They had obtained a base in the Western Hemisphere in Cuba while Red China was building its own Afro-Asian states and its own atomic bomb. The population and poverty grew faster in the developing countries than all their resources and U. S. assistance combined. The United Nations was in disarray. Other countries were confused and uncertain when Americans talked about the equality of man or about their desire for disarmament or about their commitment to defend freedom.

As President Eisenhower prepared to step down from his office, he said that progress toward freedom and peace,

... is persistently threatened by the conflict now engulfing the world. It commands our whole attention.

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89 Sorensen, p. 256.

90 Ibid., p. 257.
in the United States the missile and space efforts had started late. The third recession in seven years had caused the highest unemployment in many years. The American gold reserves were at their lowest level in many years. Other American frustrations included problems of the oppressed Negro population, the increasing cost of subsidizing large farms, the increasing number of overcrowded school classrooms and the problem of senior citizens.

Cabinet and Staff Appointees

Despite the uncertainty felt among many people of the world, Kennedy proceeded immediately to act as President-elect. That was essential to his first purpose—to win national acceptance of his leadership. The problem of taking over the Government with 2,380,500 federal employees, a continuing cold war, a $77-billion budget, a business recession, unemployment, and a restless population was not to be approached casually. The Twentieth Amendment left Kennedy only ten weeks or seventy-two days to take command of the machinery of government. There is no constitutional machinery for transferring power from one administration to another. There were

93 Markmann and Sherwin, p. 53.
seventy-two days in which to form an administration, staff the White House, fill approximately seventy-five key Cabinet and policy posts, prepare a legislative program that could be promptly incorporated into messages and bills, and to formulate concrete policies and plans for all of the problems of the country, both foreign and domestic.

Seventy-two days gave him very little time but he had already started. Clark Girford, former Special Counsel to President Truman and a skilled Washington negotiator, was acting as Kennedy's liaison with the Eisenhower staff to arrange for the transfer of power. David E. Bell, a Harvard professor with practical experiences as a Budget aide in the Truman Administration, had been selected for the key spot of Director of the Budget. Also at Kennedy's request, Adlai Stevenson had agreed the past July to prepare a detailed study of foreign-policy problems and recommendations on how to handle them.94 In typical Kennedy fashion, he had also asked Columbia Professor Richard Neustadt to outline his own views on the personnel problems with which the new president would be faced. These task reports, prepared for the advice and information of the nation's chief executive, constituted an approximation of a blueprint for the United States in the years ahead—they authoritatively indicated the terrain of the new frontiers.95 It is difficult to believe that President Kennedy would have authorized the preparation and publication of the

94 Fuller, p. 37.

It was easy to name the White House staff as Kennedy simply gave his personal team new titles. Theodore C. Sorensen became Special Counsel to the President. Lawrence F. O'Brien and P. Kenneth O'Donnell, who had been assistant campaign managers, became congressional liaison and Appointments Secretary, respectively. Pierre Salinger became Press Secretary. Richard Goodwin, Myer Fieldman and Ralph Dungan became Special Assistants. Dean McGeorge Bundy was made Advisor on Foreign Affairs. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., the former Harvard historian, became Special Assistant to the President.

Next, came the job of picking out the Cabinet. The President-elect said: "I want to get the best men I can for these Cabinet jobs. I don't care if they are Democrats, Republicans or Igorots". 96 Within a week after the election the talent hunt was on and between 6,000 and 7,000 names were submitted to consider for the 600 to 700 Cabinet, sub-Cabinet, and other Presidentially appointed positions that Kennedy had to fill. 97

By Mid-December Kennedy had completed the roster of his Cabinet. His Secretary of State was Dean Rusk, at the time of the appointment he was president of the Rockefeller Foundation. C. Douglas Dillon, Eisenhower's Under Secretary of State, was chosen as Secretary of the Treasury. Secretary of Defense was Robert S. McNamara, forty-four-year-old president

97Fuller, p. 41.
of the Ford Motor Company. The Attorney General was the President-elect's thirty-five-year-old brother, Robert F. Kennedy. J. Edward Day, vice-president of the Prudential Insurance Company and a lawyer, was appointed Postmaster General. Orville L. Freeman, a former governor of Minnesota was the Secretary of Agriculture. Arthur J. Goldberg, one of the most articulate of labor's top strategists, was chosen to be Secretary of Labor. For Secretary of Commerce, Kennedy nominated Governor Luther Hodges of North Carolina. The new Secretary of the Interior was Representative Stewart L. Udall of Arizona. Governor Abraham Ribicoff of Connecticut was appointed Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare. Adlai Stevenson was appointed Ambassador to the United Nations which was considered a Cabinet-rank position.

There were several interesting aspects of the Cabinet. Its average age was forty-seven; the youngest member was thirty-five, the oldest was sixty-two. All were college graduates—four from Harvard; one had graduated summa cum laude and three were members of Phi Beta Kappa; six also held law degrees. Eight were veterans of World War II and most of them saw combat.98

Except for brief visits to Nixon, Boston and the LBJ ranch in Texas, Kennedy divided his time between Palm Beach, Washington and New York. His office was the living room or library of whichever home he inhabited at the time. While

98Markmann and Sherwin, p. 66.
another President might have awaited his inauguration and then appointed study groups to give him time and ideas, Kennedy had a different conception of his duty. When asked what his first effort would be as President, he had replied; "... to determine what the unfinished business was, what our agenda was, and set it before the American people in the early months of 1961." 99

Meanwhile, the Kennedy task-force reports rolled in. From Senator Paul H. Douglas came a volume on depressed areas. Purdue University's Frederick Hovde brought around a massive proposal for education. Several of the topics generally touched upon in the Stevenson report—including foreign economic policy, food surpluses, Africa, USIA, overseas personnel and disarmament were assigned to a series of new task forces. There were also studies conducted on housing and cities, health and Social Security, taxation, minimum wages, outer space, Latin America, India, cultural exchanges, and the Peace Corps. Close to one hundred men served on these task forces and were drawn largely from the professions, foundations and university faculties. The members of these task forces received no compensation and usually no expense money. 100 They brought out ideas and they united men in the Kennedy cause. From these policy essays came a foundation of ideas on which John F. Kennedy built his first year's legislative program. 101

99 Sorensen, p. 265.
100 Ibid., p. 266.
101 Sidey, p. 30.
Conclusion

As John Fitzgerald Kennedy faced the nation on January 20, 1961 he saw his countrymen deeply troubled by international and national crises. He must have sensed also their hope that with his intelligence, sophisticated knowledge of political realities, immense personal charm, and warm generous humanitarianism he would prove to be an effective spokesman for a new frontier in American government.

It would seem the Kennedy administration brought a new era of political thought as well as of political personalities, to this country. The first President to be born in the twentieth century, and the youngest ever to be elected to the presidency, Kennedy was not only a spokesman for a new generation but a symbol as well.\(^\text{102}\)

\(^{102}\)Nevins and Commager, p. 623.
CHAPTER IV

IMMEDIATE SETTING OF THE JANUARY 20, 1961 INAUGURAL ADDRESS

In order to analyze the January 20, 1961 speech in its proper setting it is necessary to reconstruct the speech situation. According to Thonssen and Baird there are four requirements of any speaking situation: the occasion, the audience, the speaker, and the subject. Since the speaker has already been discussed in Chapter II and the subject matter will be included in Chapter V, the purpose of this chapter will be to study the occasion and audience.

The Occasion

The relevant facts concerning the occasion of this speech are these: (1) It was delivered at 12:51 on Friday afternoon, January 20, 1961; (2) It was given by President John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the thirty-fifth President of the United States; (3) It was delivered on the east front of the Capitol Plaza on an inaugural stand or platform, temporarily constructed for this occasion.

In analyzing the speech occasion there are four basic questions which should be answered: (1) What was the purpose of the gathering? (2) What rules or customs prevailed? (3) What preceded and followed the speech? (4) What physical

103 Thonssen and Baird, p. 292.
The purpose of the January 20, 1961 gathering was to inaugurate the thirty-fifth President and the new Vice-President of the United States.

The next question which must be asked concerns the rules or customs of the meeting. The inauguration of an American President is now held at noon on January 20 after election. If January 20 is a Sunday, the ceremony may be held privately that day and again in public on January 21. With his left hand on an open Bible and his right hand upraised, the President-elect takes the presidential oath of office from the Chief Justice of the United States.

President Kennedy faced east from the Capitol steps toward the grounds that have known inaugural crowds since 1817 and he followed the tradition of all Presidents at such ceremonies. Although the inaugural address is custom, it has no legal basis. Observing the Constitutional provisions, Henry S. Commager concludes that the inaugural address itself is but "a product of custom and tradition."

The third question inquires into the nature of the program. The ceremony ran behind schedule and Kennedy did not walk out

106 Ibid.
108 Henry Commager, "To Preserve, Protect and Defend," Senior Scholastic, LIII (January 19, 1949), 11.
on the platform until 12:13 o'clock and even though he had not yet taken his oath of office officially he had been President of the United States since the stroke of noon. Almost a half-hour late, Senator Sparkman finally began the proceedings with the Marine Band playing "America the Beautiful." This was followed by contralto Marian Anderson who sang the "Star Spangled Banner." Then, Boston's Richard Cardinal Cushing delivered his long invocation. He was followed by Archbishop Lakvos of New York, who heads the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America. Further prayer was offered by the Rev. Dr. John Barclay, of the Central Christian Church of the Disciples of Christ in Austin, Texas which Vice-President Johnson attended. Sparkman introduced Robert Frost as a distinguished American poet "who will recite an original composition." The hatless old man, who had been especially invited by Kennedy to grace the inauguration with his poem, "The Gift Outright," stepped to the lectern. But the bright sun blinded the eighty-six year old man and he was forced to recite from memory. Frost's comment on the New Frontier was made in lyrical prose:

We've decided to go the length, decided to go the length, and lead from our strength, not from our timidity or weakness, but lead like fighting, you know, lead from our strength. Sum it all up in saying: an Augustan age of poetry and power. That belongs to my poetry, and it belongs to politics all the time.

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110 Markmann and Sherwin, p. 34.
111 Ibid., p. 7.
It is rather interesting to know why John F. Kennedy asked the New England poet to participate at his inaugural. He said:

I asked Robert Frost to come and speak at the inauguration not merely because I was desirous of according a recognition to his trade but also because I felt that he had something important to say to those of us who were occupied with the business of government; that he would remind us that we were dealing with life, the hopes and fears of millions of people, and also tell us that our own deep convictions must be the ultimate guide to all of our actions.\textsuperscript{112}

Speaker Sam Rayburn, at Johnson’s request, administered the oath of office to Lyndon Baines Johnson. Then the Chief Justice of the United States, Earl Warren, stepped forward, and John Kennedy, without hat or coat, stepped forward, and with his hand over a family Douay Bible, gave his responses in firm tones.\textsuperscript{113}

I, John F. Kennedy, do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of the President of the United States and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. . . so help me God.\textsuperscript{114}

With that simple statement, the reins for control of the world’s most powerful nation changed hands. A moment later, in an inaugural address, Mr. Kennedy spoke his first words with the full power of a President. Kennedy’s inaugural speech, destined to be fame within minutes of its delivery, was about the last solemn occasion of the day.\textsuperscript{115}

\textsuperscript{112}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{113}Schlesinger, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{114}U. S. News and World Report, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{115}Time, p. 12.
The final question concerns the physical conditions of this meeting. The meeting was held Friday noon, January 20, 1961, on a constructed platform on the east steps of the Capitol building. Stately Corinthian columns and pilasters decorate the east front of the Capitol. The big inaugural platform on the steps of the Capitol's east portico was also studded with eight Corinthian columns matching those of the Capitol itself. U. S. flags whipped in the stiff wind above the great marble office buildings and the Library of Congress. For more than a month, workers on double shifts had worked at constructing the stands in front of the Capitol. The National Park Service spread green dye on the lawn. Trees along the inaugural route received a light coating of Roost-No-More, a compound guaranteed to put starlings to flight.116

Inauguration morning was clear and cold. Three thousand servicemen stationed in the Washington area had worked throughout the night with seven hundred plows and trucks to remove almost eight inches of snow.117 The sun was glaring but the 20° temperatures made the wind seem sharp to those spectators standing or sitting in the temporary wooden grandstands. They stamped their feet to keep out the chill; they huddled and shivered; they enveloped themselves in sweaters and mufflers, blankets and sleeping bags.118 Ted Sorensen wrote:

We bore some resemblance to "frontiersmen," wearing sweaters beneath our formal togs and woolen gloves.

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116 Ibid., p. 8.
117 Sorensen, p. 273.
118 Schlesinger, p. 2.
along with top hats. As we greeted each other gaily
the chill in the air merely added a certain warmth
to the spirit of youth and vigor.119

Since the weather conditions of the Inaugural setting
left much to be desired, it would appear that the audience
was a determined one, present because of their own choice
and eager to witness a moment in the history of America.

The Audience

The last concern of this chapter is an analysis of the
audience which had assembled in the Capitol Plaza to hear the
address of President-elect John F. Kennedy. Time magazine
estimated the audiences to be in "tens of thousands".120 It
must also be remembered that one hundred million Americans
watched the Inauguration ceremonies on television.121

The platform audience was composed of the Justices of
the Supreme Court, the members of the U.S. Senate and House
of Representatives, the diplomatic corps, the new Cabinet
officers, and the Kennedy family.122 Visitors from every
state, foreign diplomats and dignitaries, outgoing and incoming
officials, a specially invited group of 155 writers, artists
and scholars, and thousands of ordinary citizens of every age
and background, all crowded Capitol Hill.123

Several generalizations can be made from the above sources:

119 Sorensen, p. 274.
120 Time, p. 11.
121 Morrison and Commager, p. 978.
122 Time, p. 11.
123 Sorensen, p. 274.
(1) The audience was composed of people of all ages; (2) The audience contained both men and women, probably more men than women; (3) Various religious affiliations, race, occupations and social status were represented. It is probable that the intellectual level of the audience was above average due to the nature of the occasion and the participants.

The attitudes of this particular audience toward President Kennedy would also have been varied. On the surface, people probably appeared friendly but it must be remembered that there had not been time for political beliefs and rifts to be healed.

It would not be possible to determine their attitudes toward President Kennedy's speech. On the whole, however, this writer feels that John F. Kennedy faced a friendly, determined, enthusiastic and cosmopolitan audience on January 20, 1961 on the Capitol plaza.

Conclusion

President-elect John F. Kennedy faced a predominately friendly audience when he delivered his "Inaugural Address" on January 20, 1961 before tens of thousands of spectators and an estimated one hundred million American television viewers. This audience was comprised of men and women of all ages, social stratas, races and creeds and of varying degrees of educational and intellectual achievement.

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. best summed up the Inaugural when he said:
The Kennedy Presidency began with incomparable dash. The young President, the old poet, the splendid speech, the triumphant parade, the brilliant sky and the shining snow; it was one of the most glorious of inaugurals.\textsuperscript{124}

\textsuperscript{124}Schlesinger, p. 165.
CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF THE JANUARY 20, 1961 INAUGURAL ADDRESS

The purpose of this chapter is to make a rhetorical analysis of John F. Kennedy's January 20, 1961 "Inaugural Address."

The procedure to be used in making this analysis is to examine the speech in terms of the writer's knowledge of John Kennedy as a person, the rhetorical atmosphere and immediate setting in which he spoke, and the rhetorical criteria established in Chapter I.

Authenticity of the Text

It is customary in a research study such as this to establish the authenticity of the text; in this particular instance, all of the numerous copies of the speech which the writer has viewed (including books, newspapers and pamphlets) are the same. The text also appears in a collection of Inaugural Addresses of the United States which was printed by the U. S. Government Printing Office in Washington, D. C. and was obtained through the Superintendent of Public Documents. So the writer submits that the text analyzed here is valid.

Content (Invention)

An examination of the January 20, 1961 "Inaugural Address"
reveals that President Kennedy analyzed well the nature of his subject and the purpose of his speech.

Early in January, he began to work on this speech. Prior to this date, he had asked Ted Sorensen to read all of the past Inaugural Addresses and to study the secret of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Actual drafting of the speech did not start until a week before it was delivered. Solicited and unsolicited material was obtained from Galbraith, Stevenson, Bowles, newsmen and total strangers. Biblical quotations were obtained from Billy Graham and the Washington's Jewish Community Council. The final text included several phrases, sentences and themes suggested by these sources but many of the most memorable passages came from earlier Kennedy speeches and writings. No Kennedy speech underwent so many drafts with every paragraph being reworded and reworked many times as he wanted it to be the shortest in the twentieth century.

"It's more effective that way and I don't want people to think I'm a windbag." The speech was finished on January 19 and the "principal architect of the Inaugural Address" was John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

When Kennedy had first started planning his "Inaugural Address," he decided that he wanted it focused on foreign policy

\[125\] Sorensen, p. 240.
\[126\] Ibid.
\[127\] Ibid.
\[128\] Ibid., p. 242.
\[129\] Ibid., p. 270.
He did not want it to sound partisan, pessimistic or critical of his predecessor. He wanted it to be short, and most of all, he wanted to set a tone for the era about to begin.\footnote{Schlesinger, p. 162.}

Schlesinger related that Kennedy hoped to strike a series of distinctive notes, to express the spirit of the postwar generation in politics, to summon Americans to new exertions and new initiatives and to summon the world to a new mood beyond the cliches of the cold war.\footnote{Thonssen and Baird, p. 334.}

It must also be remembered that Kennedy was delivering an Inaugural Address and that he was probably very concerned with creating a feeling of trust and cooperation for his administration rather than in presenting detailed and specific arguments. This idea is suggested by Thonssen and Baird when they said:

> The great demonstrative orations proclaim broad principles of human conduct which are closely associated with purely deliberative affairs. They deal with noble themes, universal doctrines, expressions of Man's higher aspirations. The truly fine demonstrative speeches grow out of and derive their genuine substance from the practical matter-of-fact doings of men and women.\footnote{Thonssen and Baird, p. 334.}

In this speech President Kennedy developed the central thesis: Whether we are able to recognize it or not, the American people are heirs of revolutionary beliefs that the rights of men come from the hand of God and that these beliefs have been passed on to a new generation of Americans who shall pay...

\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 240.}
any price to assure the survival and success of liberty at home and around the world.

His analysis of this proposition was developed by these main ideas: (1) His hopes and resolves; (2) His pledges to our friends and allies, old and new; (3) His request to the Communists for a new quest for peace; and (4) His summons to his fellow American citizens to bear with him the burdens of freedom.

When the new President stood before his inaugural audience and spoke words of wisdom not only to his own countrymen but to the peoples of the world, he reached out to everyone with a sobering appraisal of the deep international trouble that faced this nation. It is true that this was an Inaugural ceremony, with a ritual which had been fairly well established by the other Presidential predecessors. Kennedy had been made keenly aware of the doubts and skepticism that prevailed regarding his ability to lead his party and nation because of his youth, religious affiliations and his extreme wealth. Principles were emphasized rather than details of either domestic or world policies and the spirit and tone of the speech were in keeping with the solemn occasion. To try to interpret the American purpose, the American ideal and American concept of justice would be a challenge for any statesman or diplomat. Hence, it was particularly gratifying to the American people to hear President Kennedy expressing so forthrightly his own dedication to the traditional beliefs of this nation.133

Thonssen and Baird said that "oratory to be great must deal with ideas which make a difference in the affairs of men and states."\textsuperscript{134} The ideas which President Kennedy developed in his "Inaugural Address" were of utmost importance to people all over the world since they dealt with the basic problems of mankind—life, death, war, peace, poverty, etc.

The speech was a compact summary of the new President's hopes and resolves; his pledges to our friends and allies, old and new; his request to the Communists for a new quest for peace; and his summons to his fellow citizens to bear with him the burdens of freedom. In reality the speech was addressed to the American people of the early 1960's but it conveys meaning for all American people for all times as Kennedy skillfully combined the "best of our heritage from the past and the best of our hopes for the future."\textsuperscript{135}

Logic (Logical Proof)

John Kennedy employed causal argument, argument by example, argument by explanation and argument by analogy in his "Inaugural Address" on January 20, 1961. The basic argument in this speech by which President Kennedy attempts to support the main thesis or proposition is an inductive manner of argument from causal relation. The structure of this argument is cause to effect reasoning. Briefly, the argument is thus:

(Cause) I. We will pay any price in order to assure the survival and success of liberty (for)

\textsuperscript{134}Thonssen and Baird, p. 332.

\textsuperscript{135}Sorensen, p. 275.
(Effect) A. To those allies, we pledge the loyalty of faithful friends, (and)

(Effect) B. To those new and free states, we pledge our word that one form of colonial control shall not be replaced by a far more iron tyranny, (and)

(Effect) C. To the suppressed and underprivileged, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, (and)

(Effect) D. To the South American Countries, we pledge a new alliance for progress, (and)

(Effect) E. To the adversary nations, we offer not a pledge, but a request.

The next type of support that Kennedy used is a proposition developed by explanation:

(Proposition) II. We request: that both sides begin anew the quest for peace (for)

(Explanation) A. Both sides must explore the problems that unite us, (and)

(Explanation) B. Both sides should formulate serious proposals for the inspection and control of arms, (and

(Explanation) C. Both sides should explore the wonders of science.

The third type of support used by Kennedy to support his main thesis is generalization developed by specific examples:

(Generalization) III. A challenge to Americans: in your
hands will rest the final success or failure of our course (for)

(Specific Example) A. This program will take time, (and)
(Specific Example) B. People must help do their part, (and)
(Specific Example) C. People must fight against the common enemies of man.

Another instance of causal argument: "We renew our pledge of support (cause) to prevent the United Nations from becoming merely a forum for invective (effect), to strengthen its shield of the new and the weak (effect), and to enlarge the area in which its writ may run (effect)."

Another instance of argument by example:

Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

Argument by explanation is one that President Kennedy used often. Perhaps this is best illustrated when he explains the characteristics and qualities of the new generation of Americans: (1) they were born in this country; (2) they've witnessed the folly of unpreparedness and appeasement; (4) they're proud of our ancient heritage; (5) they're not willing to permit the slow undoing of their human rights to which this nation has always been committed; and (6) they are a generation who are still committed to those same basic rights at home and around the world.

Argument by analogy is found when Kennedy says that "the world is different now" in comparison to the world of one
hundred seventy-five years ago. He then proceeds to explain why the world is different today.

In summary, then, President Kennedy used several different types of reasoning in this speech. His main arguments were cast in the inductive manner of argument from causal relation, argument by explanation and argument by examples; they appeared to this critic to be valid. Thus, his use of logical proofs was acceptable and convincing.

Character (Ethical Proof)

Since Kennedy had just been elected as the thirty-fifth President of the United States, his "ethos" was at its height. Realizing this, Kennedy successfully displayed his sincerity, knowledge of the subject and devotion to his position as leader of this nation. His sincerity is felt in his opening remarks:

We observe today not a victory of party, but a celebration of freedom--symbolizing renewal, as well as change. For I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forebears prescribed nearly a century and three-quarters ago.

Thus, the entire world knew the significance of the situation and immediately warmed to Kennedy's understanding and explanation of the oath that he had just taken. The world also became immediately aware of Kennedy's intellectual integrity when he said "that the rights of men come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God."

This writer feels that John F. Kennedy viewed the Presidency as a mission. He believed that the American concept of freedom and opportunity should be made available to all
those to whom it is denied—that is, if they so choose. "Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe in order to assure the survival and success of liberty."

He felt that the American concept of freedom should be flawless as possible if it is to be held up to other nations as a goal when he said, "Ask of us here the same high standards of strength and sacrifice we ask of you." Kennedy counted on the good sense and the bonds of self-preservation of the American people to help him carry forward his social planning. He also counted on the traditional idealism of the American people to help him overcome poverty and bondage in other countries. It was in these intangible beliefs, rather than in a border-line electoral victory, that John Kennedy based his strong conviction and recognition of responsibility. He illustrated this when he stated:

In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility; I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it, and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

The conclusion of the speech is a heavily charged passage and contains elements of pathetic proof, but in the main, its purpose is to convey a favorable impression of the speaker's good will and character.

With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go
forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing
and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's
work must truly be our own.

Kennedy used ethical proof to strike the keynote of the
first part of the speech and also in the conclusion of his
speech. It appears that he made conscious, purposeful use
of this method of persuasion throughout the speech. As a
speaker, Kennedy was a superb actor and craftsman who understood the nature of communication as an interplay between the
speaker and his audience. As a speaker, he focussed attention
upon his character virtues by creating the impression of being completely sincere and by maintaining an elevated level of
ideas and principles. As a speaker, he conveyed the impression
of intellectual integrity and wisdom by his tact and good taste.
Perhaps as a result of his task reports he showed a thorough
knowledge of the foreign and domestic problems that confronted
this nation. As a speaker, his good will was revealed through
his ability to capture the proper balance of praise to his
audience and by speaking of the international problems and of
possible solutions to these problems which confronted this
nation and the world. Thus, John F. Kennedy probably appealed
strongly to the inaugural audience as a person of wisdom,
strong character, good will towards mankind, and high ethical
standards. An interesting sideline here is a quote made by
Rowland Evans Jr. of the New York Herald Tribune on August
9, 1959:

Kennedy's secret weapon is really no secret at all
to anyone who has brushed elbows with him. His
personality is simply the most magnetic, the most
appealing of any politician in business today with
the single exception of Dwight Eisenhower. And
Senator Kennedy's secret weapon is his personality.
He exudes charm without half trying and it bathes
his audience in a warm glow.\textsuperscript{136}

Motivation (Emotional Proof)

The "Inaugural Address" of John F. Kennedy ranks above
the average inaugural in emotional color.\textsuperscript{137} President Kennedy
used sixteen of the eighteen motive appeals which are listed
by Monroe.\textsuperscript{138} The appeals used were: adventure, companionship,
creating, curiosity, fear, imitation, independence, loyalty,
personal enjoyment, power and authority, pride, revulsion,
reverence or worship, sympathy, destruction and fighting.
The ones used most often were reverence and loyalty. The
two motive appeals which he did not include were acquisition
or saving and sex appeal. An example of his usage of the
appeal to reverence of Deity is shown in these phrases: "... asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on
earth God's work must truly be our own," and "I have sworn
before you and Almighty God. ..." To appeal to audience sympathy
he said, "To those peoples in the huts and villages of half the
globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery." Loyalty
appeal is shown when he stated, "To those old allies whose
cultural and spiritual origins we share, we pledge the loyalty

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{136}Lasky, p. 217.
\textsuperscript{137}Donald L. Wolforth, "John F. Kennedy in the Tradition
of Inaugural Speeches," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXXVII
(April, 1961), 126.
\textsuperscript{138}Monroe, pp. 168-180.
\end{footnotesize}
of faithful friends."

Not only did Kennedy use motive appeals, but he also employed emotionally stimulating words and phrases such as "chains of poverty, jungle of suspicion, prey of hostile powers, beachhead of cooperation, revolutionary beliefs, tempered by war, oppose any foe and alliance for progress."

Vital motives underlie the entire address as Kennedy speaks of those issues with which the American people are concerned. That is, their love of freedom and desire for peace and security in America and for the world. Thus, Kennedy sought to reach his audience not only through reason and through the force of his own ethical ideals, but through the use of pathetic materials.

Arrangement

Kennedy's "Inaugural Address" follows the modern tripartite division: introduction, discussion or body and conclusion. Both the introduction and conclusion were each about two minutes long which seems rather brief until you consider that it only took fourteen minutes for Kennedy to deliver the entire address.139

In the introduction, Kennedy called attention to the fact that he had just taken a traditional and solemn oath before the audience and God. He attempted to conciliate his audience by assuring them that he and they (the audience) were not celebrating a Democratic campaign victory but that

139 Wolforth, p. 126.
they were observing a celebration of freedom—the ceremony "symbolizing an end as well as a beginning, signifying renewal as well as change." He went on to say that the world had changed in the last one hundred and seventy-five years because of the invention of the atomic bomb which can abolish "all forms of human life." He reminded his audience that the same revolutionary beliefs which motivated their ancestors to fight in the Revolutionary War are still "at issue" around the world. This belief being "that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God." Kennedy reiterates to his audience that they must not forget "that we are heirs of that first revolution." The concluding sentence of the introduction is the keynote of the whole address:

Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans, born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage, and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world.

Certainly President Kennedy must have had in mind that his audience would react favorably to his honest, straightforward and sincere opening remarks. How could any loyal and patriotic American do otherwise?

In moving from the opening remarks to the body of the speech, Kennedy then forcefully announced to the world in general that Americans "shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe in order to assure the survival and success of liberty."
The body of the speech is composed of three main divisions: (1) the pledges which Kennedy makes for the American people and himself, (2) the proposals or measures which he feels will assure the survival and success or liberty all over the world, and (3) a challenge or summons to American citizens. The arrangement in the body of the speech was clear and orderly. Kennedy simply presented the undesirable conditions and problems present in the world; he suggested proposals to help solve or try to help solve these problems; and then pointed out how each individual person could play a role in helping to solve these problems. The arrangement of materials is such as to strengthen his ideas and arguments because the materials are put in such a way that the listener must make the connection between the proposition and each argument for himself and thus, probably will think the idea his own and accept it more readily. This method combined with patriotic reminders and a few selected religious quotes makes the listener ready to march anywhere! The arrangement pattern followed by President Kennedy in the body of the speech was a problem-solution arrangement.

The conclusion of the speech was a final praising and an appeal to the American people including both a challenge and a declaration of faith. Kennedy told them that they should feel honored to be in this generation of Americans as "only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger." Again he referred to the presidential oath which he had just taken when he
said "I do not shrink from this responsibility; I welcome it." He then went on to visualize the marvelous things that could happen to the Americans who led the way to a better world and that other nations would follow in this pattern.

Kennedy also highlighted the conclusion of his address with two rhetorical questions: "And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man." Kennedy's concluding line and final appeal was to feeling more than to reason. Undoubtedly he was aware of the fact that when men seem unable to achieve common ground through reason, they may achieve it through the medium of religious feeling. "With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own."

**Style**

In a clear, grave voice he (Kennedy) pledged himself to the duties of his office and then, without resuming his coat, he began his inaugural address—the second shortest in history, it was or fewer than 1,400 words, elegantly austere in its rhetoric, simple, direct and forceful in its content.¹⁴⁰

Since the speech was delivered to the nation as a whole, Kennedy used a middle style of speaking which was geared to

¹⁴⁰Markmann and Sherwin, p. 85.
fit the ceremonial occasion and thus, was rather formal in its presentation. The style of President Kennedy added to the desired effect of his speech. The humanitarian concern implied by his direct and straightforward style no doubt had some influence on the desired effect. The simplicity of his style and his choice of poly-syllable words are powerful and emotional. As the writer mentioned earlier in this paper, Kennedy and his aides had spent a long time in rewriting the speech and all of the words were carefully selected to correspond to the occasion and to produce the desired effect upon the audience. Actually, the "Inaugural Address" contained 1355 words whereas George Washington had only used 1300 words.  

Kennedy used fifty-two sentences with an average sentence length of twenty-six words which puts him in the same stylistic league as Woodrow Wilson.  

The sentences range from the very short six words of "This much we pledge--and more." to the very lengthy eighty word sentence of "Let the word go forth... committed today at home and around the world." Kennedy's sentence structure is balanced and the antithetical construction gives emphasis and a rhythmic effect. For example, "Let both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belaboring those problems which divide us."

In this speech President Kennedy used compact, correct language and displayed a large vocabulary. This added to the impression of simplicity and grace in his style. He also

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141 Wolforth, p. 126.

142 Ibid., p. 128.
used several rhetorical devices easily and effectively. Two rhetorical questions near the end of the speech emphasize a challenge for cooperation toward a more fruitful life and provide a transition for the conclusion. "Can we forge against these enemies a grand and global alliance, north and south, east and west, that can assure a more fruitful life for all mankind? Will you join in that historic effort?"

Kennedy also used a picturesque metaphor with these words, "those who foolishly sought power by riding the back of the tiger ended up inside." Imagery was an important device in the speech and is exemplified in phrases like these—"iron tyranny" and "man holds in his mortal hands." Kennedy employs the use of repetition in his proposals for a better world when the phrase, "Let us begin," is utilized six times.

There are several particularly moving and beautiful passages in this speech. The concluding paragraph is one which has already been quoted earlier in this paper. Another passage of beauty which appeals to this writer is as follows:

Now the trumpet summons us again—not as a call to bear arms, tho arms we need—not as a call to battle, tho embattled we are; but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation," a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself.

Probably John Kennedy deliberately selected his words for beauty, dignity and conciseness because he was very conscious of these matters and he always wrote and rewrote carefully everything that he presented. John Gardiner said:

The President has an extraordinary capacity to express himself in speech and in writing. Rarely has an
American President stated the nation's problems with such clarity, or voiced its aspirations so movingly. 143

**Delivery**

The historic spectacle of the inaugural of the thirty-fifth President of the United States found John F. Kennedy surely and steadily delivering his "Inaugural Address" while a host of dignitaries listened with rapt attention. Kennedy was bronzed by the Florida sun during his pre-inauguration holiday and his brown hair was neatly brushed back. 144 He stood without hat or coat to read his "Inaugural Address" and knew his text so well that he hardly had to refer to it. 145

Mrs. Evelyn Lincoln, the President's long-time Secretary gives her version of the practicing of the "Inaugural Address."

I was awakened about eight o'clock by a rustling outside my door. Then I heard a knock and the President's voice. "Mrs. Lincoln, can I have the reading copy or my Inauguration speech?" While I was eating my breakfast in my room the President was in the bathroom, next to my bedroom, taking a bath, and reading his Inaugural speech out loud. I thought, the entire world will be listening to him give that address at noon today, but here I am getting a private preview. In his bedroom he continued to read it aloud as he walked down to the living room, and in between bites of his breakfast. The speech meant a lot to him, and he wanted it to be exactly right in sense and sound. 146

It has often been said that Kennedy learned campaigning and speechmaking as he campaigned. At first, his speaking

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143John Gardiner (ed.), To Turn The Tide, Editors note.
146Lincoln, pp. 224-225.
was nervous and hesitant; he showed little poise or magnetism. But he slowly developed a style of direct, informal, simple speaking which was a happy contrast to the oratory of the old fashioned politicians.\textsuperscript{147} His voice grew stronger and slower as the campaign ended, and as his manner of delivery grew slower, his public language grew more elegant. Theodore White said that his (Kennedy's) style finally began to capture even the newsmen, who heard all that he had to say long before, but they continued to listen as one continues to return to a favorite movie.\textsuperscript{148} Kennedy normally spoke from the platform in a high, resonant almost melancholy tone of voice. Yet in private, he was considered to have been one of the more gifted conversationalists of politics, second only to Hubert Humphrey in the ease, simplicity and color with which he talked.\textsuperscript{149}

Very few people knew, according to William Manchester, that Kennedy had studied very hard at Boston's Staley School of Oratory to help him achieve naturalness in his speaking. Manchester goes on to say that on a rostrum, the illusion of spontaneity seemed unstudied; only Kennedy's trembling hands would have betrayed him, and he was careful to keep them out of sight.\textsuperscript{150} It is interesting to note that this is the only reference that even remotely hinted that Kennedy had had any speech training whatsoever. The writer wrote

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{147}Burns, p. 65.
  \item \textsuperscript{148}White, p. 326.
  \item \textsuperscript{149}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 54.
  \item \textsuperscript{150}William Manchester, "Death of a President," \textit{Look} (January 24, 1967), p. 48.
\end{itemize}
to the school but the letter was returned with Address Unknown stamped on it.

On the podium, Kennedy used two gestures: (1) the common "chop" which is a short downward right jab with the finger extended; and (2) the rarer "swoop" in which he brought his right hand from behind and pointed his finger at the platform in front of him. The "chop" was used for underlining points and the "swoop" was reserved for major emphasis. The "swoop" was used by President Kennedy in his "Inaugural Address" when he doubled his left hand into a fist and swooped his right hand thru the air ending with his right forefinger upon the rostrum.

In delivering his address, Kennedy probably spoke more slowly and deliberately than he did during the campaign but his delivery showed restrained force and enthusiasm as well as dignity. His delivery was vigorous and his clear voice with his Bostonian accent conveyed his effectiveness as a speaker.

Effectiveness

The Louisville Courier-Journal said that his (Kennedy's) words lost none of their effectiveness because he delivered them with little flourish, little gesture and with hardly even an awareness of the applause that burst at moments from a rapt audience. There were fourteen interruptions, created by the applause of the crowd, in which even Eisenhower frequently joined.

151Newsweek, LVI (October 3, 1960), 24.
153Markmann and Sherwin, p. 89.
Those twelve or thirteen minutes he (Kennedy) required to deliver his Inaugural brought excitement and optimism not just to America but to the world. When John Fitzgerald Kennedy turned away from the lectern and walked as President of the United States up the stairs into the Capitol, there was no one in that gathering who didn't sense a new vigor and strength flow into a government and its people.\textsuperscript{154}

The immediate effect of this speech in terms of the audience and their reactions was almost universally favorable and enthusiastically accepted.

Congressmen of both parties vied with each other in grasping for superlatives. Everett Dirksen, the Republican Senate minority leader, described the speech as "inspiring and a very compact message of hope."\textsuperscript{155} Charles A. Halieck, the House Republican leader, said: "I was much impressed."\textsuperscript{156} Senator A. S. Mike Monroney of Oklahoma called the speech "the best Inaugural Address I have heard in my lifetime."\textsuperscript{157} He said that he had heard twelve in all, starting with Woodrow Wilson's second Inaugural Address in 1917.

At the United Nations there was general approval among the few top level diplomats who had beaten New York's snowstorm. The dean of the diplomatic corps, Am. Guillermo Serville-Sacasa of Nicaragua, called the address, "extraordinary and magnificent."\textsuperscript{158} The Japanese Ambassador, Koichiro Asaevi,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{154}Fay\textsuperscript{a}, p. 91.
  \item \textsuperscript{155}New York Times, p. 8.
  \item \textsuperscript{156}Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{157}Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{158}Ibid.
\end{itemize}
said it was "a good start, a strong and powerful speech, reflecting his youth and vigor; it was impressive indeed.\textsuperscript{159} "Magnificent--a hopeful message for the whole world," Ambassador M. C. Chagla of India said.\textsuperscript{160}

Premier Fidel Castro said that the Cuban Government would "begin anew" in its relations with the U. S.' the new Kennedy Administration signifies a little hope of humanity for peace.\textsuperscript{161} Chancellor Adenauer expressed his full approval of the address and lauded the decisiveness with which Mr. Kennedy had delivered it.\textsuperscript{162} Premier Khrushchev and President Brezhnev cabled President Kennedy their hopes for a "radical improvement" in Soviet-American relations.\textsuperscript{163}

\textit{The Cleveland Plains Dealer} printed the following:

\begin{quote}
We start the New Administration with a young President who is bold, courageous and confident. If his Inaugural Address sets the tone of his Administration, he could become one of our great Presidents.\textsuperscript{164}
\end{quote}

\textit{The Chicago Tribune} said that rhetorically, the speech was very good; and if those who heard it will now read it, they will find that it reads even better than it sounded.\textsuperscript{165}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{159}\textit{Ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{160}\textit{Ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{161}\textit{New York Times}, p. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{162}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 10.
\item \textsuperscript{163}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 23.
\item \textsuperscript{164}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 12.
\item \textsuperscript{165}\textit{Ibid.}
\end{itemize}
Thus, the immediate effect of John F. Kennedy's "Inaugural Address" was one of enthusiastic acceptance. Perhaps Life Magazine best summed it up by saying:

Above the sounds and ceremonies of Inauguration Day, President Kennedy's speech rose with an eloquence and force that made it a great inauguration address. It revealed an attention to history and a unity of thought, and it rang with a rhetoric rarely found in modern political statement. Its impact on American citizens of both parties and on people everywhere in the world was immediate and impressive. 166

As far as the long range effect of this speech is concerned, it is too soon to arrive at any definite conclusions. Only time can determine this, along with history to be the final judge of his deeds. However, a prejudiced witness believes:

That future generations of Americans will rank him as one of our greatest Presidents—not because of his specific accomplishments, and there were many, but because he brought to a world, cynical after almost two decades of cold war, the hope that a better life was possible. Perhaps it was his youth, his eloquence, or his undeniable commitment to life and excellence. But whatever it was, it lit a new hope in the hearts of people everywhere in the world that the force of reason, not the force or arms, might finally prevail in the councils of man. 167

Conclusions

There are several conclusions which can be drawn after this analysis of the "Inaugural Address" of John F. Kennedy given in Washington, D. C. on January 20, 1961.

First, John Kennedy was a person of considerable learning and education, speaking to his fellow countrymen on the

166Life, pp. 24-26.

167Salinger, p. 364.
occasion of his inauguration as the thirty-fifth President of the United States.

Second, his use of the parts of rhetoric was acceptable, consisting of a studied analysis of the problem, adequate use of evidence and reasoning to support his main propositions, and the use of pathetic and ethical appeals to support the main ideas.

Third, the arrangement in his speech was clear and logical, employing the problem-solution method of arrangement within the three divisions of his speech (introduction, body and conclusion).

Fourth, his direct but elegant style was well suited to his audience, subject and occasion.

Fifth, his memory was apparently sufficient as he knew his text so well that he hardly had to refer to it.

Sixth, his delivery was vigorous but it showed restrained force and enthusiasm as well as dignity which suited the nature and occasion of the speech.

Seventh, the immediate effect of his speech was favorably accepted and enthusiastically received.

Eighth, it is probable that John F. Kennedy was a good speaker and an influential and courageous man.

In the opinion of this critic, John Fitzgerald Kennedy used the available means of persuasion in his "Inaugural Address" and he used them well.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Introduction

It is the purpose of this chapter to draw the general conclusions resulting from this study and to give some indication as to the direction which further research might take.

1. The Problem

It was the stated purpose of this study to formulate a conclusion as to John F. Kennedy's capabilities and effectiveness as a public speaker in his "Inaugural Address."

2. The Method

The method chosen to accomplish the stated purpose of this study was the historical-critical method. Included in this method are six steps: (1) isolation of a problem; (2) formulation of a working hypothesis; (3) development of a research design; (4) collection of evidence; (5) analysis of interpretation of evidence; and (6) generalization of causations and probabilities.

3. The Working Hypothesis

The working hypothesis in this study is that the speech-making of John F. Kennedy on the occasion analyzed probably was highly effective.
4. The Research Design

In order to solve the problem of this study it appeared advisable to: (1) formulate carefully and clearly the nature and purpose of the thesis, (2) piece together those events and experiences which constitute the rhetorical biography of John Kennedy, (3) determine the rhetorical atmosphere in America from November, 1960 to January 20, 1961, (4) reconstruct the immediate setting of the speech of January 20, 1961, (5) make a comprehensive analysis of that speech in terms of the rhetorical criteria specified in Chapter I, and (6) draw such conclusions as appear to be justified by the evidence.

5. The Main Conclusions

Rhetorical Biography of John F. Kennedy

An examination of the life of John Kennedy provides an insight into the sources of his attitudes; his reasons for selecting particular topics for discussion; his capacity for reasoning; his stylistic techniques; and his mode of delivery. More specifically: (1) He had a happy childhood and was greatly influenced by his father; (2) He had an excellent formal education and was a well-read person; (3) His observations from his numerous travels were significant and were reflected in his later writings and speeches; (4) The main issues which he concerned himself were for the betterment of some of the problems of mankind; and (5) His life was of significance to history.
The Rhetorical Atmosphere

As John Fitzgerald Kennedy faced the nation on January 20, 1961 he saw his countrymen deeply troubled by international and national crises. He must have sensed also their hope that with his intelligence, sophisticated knowledge of political realities, immense personal charm, and warm generous humanitarianism he would prove to be an effective spokesman for a new frontier in American government.

Immediate Setting of the Chosen Speech

The speech chosen for analysis was delivered on the Capitol Plaza, in Washington, D. C., on January 20, 1961, by President Kennedy. He faced a predominantly friendly audience when he delivered his "Inaugural Address" before tens of thousands of spectators and an estimated one hundred million American television viewers. This audience was comprised of men and women of all ages, social stratas, races and creeds and of varying degrees of educational and intellectual achievement.

The January 20, 1961 Speech

It appears safe to assume that the copy of the speech which appears in Inaugural Addresses of the President of the United States is authentic.

John F. Kennedy was a person of considerable learning and education and spoke to his fellow countrymen on the occasion of his inauguration as the thirty-firth President of the United States.
His use of the parts of rhetoric was acceptable. He made a studied analysis of the problem, supported his main propositions with an adequate use of reasoning and evidence, and by the use of pathetic and emotional appeals.

The arrangement of his speech was clear and logical. He employed the problem-solution method of arrangement within the three divisions of his speech—introduction, body and conclusion.

His direct but elegant style was well suited to the particular audience and occasion.

His memory was sufficient to permit him to give the speech he planned to give in the way he planned to give it.

His delivery was vigorous but it showed restrained force and enthusiasm as well as dignity which suited the nature and occasion of the speech.

The immediate effect of the speech was significant in that his speech was favorably accepted and enthusiastically received. The long range effect can not be determined at this time.

The purpose of this study was to formulate a conclusion as to John F. Kennedy's ability and effectiveness in his "Inaugural Address." He gained favorable results from this speech and his capabilities as a speaker in the speech are shown to be good. He may or may not some day be considered as an outstanding orator but will probably always be considered a good one, very capable of organizing and presenting a good speech. President Kennedy dealt with ideas that were important to men and states which made the subject matter significant
and would lead one to conclude that to the extent that President Kennedy made excellent choices, he was a good orator.

The working hypothesis of the study was that John F. Kennedy probably presented a highly effective "Inaugural Address." From all the evidence and data which this writer has analyzed and studied, this would appear to be true.

Should further research on the speech-making of John Kennedy be done? The reasons for continuing such studies are these: (1) More studies of Kennedy's speaking, after he became President, could further determine his effectiveness as a speaker; (2) "The understanding of the methods, style, and other attributes of Kennedy's speech-making could be beneficial educationally for those who study them; and (3) Further study is needed to know whether John F. Kennedy is a really important speaker who will achieve the rank of a great orator, or whether he will continue to be just a good orator. These are among the possibilities which should, in the future, be explored.
"INAUGURAL ADDRESS" OF JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY,
Delivered in Washington, D. C., Friday, January 20, 1961

My Fellow Citizens: We observe today not a victory of party but a celebration of freedom, symbolizing an end as well as a beginning, signifying renewal as well as change. For I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forebears prescribed nearly a century and three-quarters ago.

The world is very different now. For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life. And yet the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe, the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God.

We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution. Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans, born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage, and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world.

Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship,
support any friend, oppose any foe in order to assure the survival and success of liberty.

This much we pledge—-and more.

To those old allies whose cultural and spiritual origins we share, we pledge the loyalty of faithful friends. United, there is little we cannot do in a host of cooperative ventures. Divided, there is little we can do, for we dare not meet a powerful challenge at odds and split asunder.

To those new states whom we welcome to the ranks of the free, we pledge our word that one form of colonial control shall not have passed away merely to be replaced by a far more iron tyranny. We shall not always expect to find them supporting our view. But we shall always hope to find them strongly supporting their own freedom—and to remember that, in the past, those who foolishly sought power by riding the back of the tiger ended up inside.

To those peoples in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required, not because the communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right. If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.

To our sister republics south of our border, we offer a special pledge: to convert our good words into good deeds, in a new alliance for progress, to assist free men and free governments in casting off the chains of poverty. But this
peaceful revolution of hope cannot become the prey of hostile powers. Let all our neighbors know that we shall join with them to oppose aggression or subversion anywhere in the Americas. And let every other power know that this hemisphere intends to remain the master of its own house.

To that world assembly of sovereign states, the United Nations, our last best hope in an age where the instruments of war have far outpaced the instruments of peace, we renew our pledge of support: to prevent it from becoming merely a forum for invective, to strengthen its shield of the new and the weak; and to enlarge the area in which its writ may run.

Finally, to those nations who would make themselves our adversary, we offer not a pledge but a request: that both sides begin anew the quest for peace, before the dark powers of destruction unleashed by science engulf all humanity in planned or accidental self-destruction.

We dare not tempt them with weakness. For only when our arms are sufficient beyond doubt can we be certain beyond doubt that they will never be employed.

But neither can two great and powerful groups of nations take comfort from our present course—both sides overburdened by the cost of modern weapons, both rightly alarmed by the steady spread of the deadly atom, yet both racing to alter that uncertain balance of terror that stays the hand of mankind's final war.

So let us begin anew, remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always
subject to proof. Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate.

Let both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belaboring those problems which divide us.

Let both sides, for the first time, formulate serious and precise proposals for the inspection and control of arms, and bring the absolute power to destroy other nations under the absolute control of all nations.

Let both sides join to invoke the wonders of science instead of its terrors. Together let us explore the stars, conquer the deserts, eradicate disease, tap the ocean depths, and encourage the arts and commerce.

Let both sides unite to heed in all corners of the earth the command of Isaiah—to "undo the heavy burdens. ...(and) let the oppressed go free."

And if a beach-head of cooperation may push back the jungles of suspicion, let both sides join in creating a new endeavor, not a new balance of power, but a new world of law, where the strong are just and the weak secure and the peace preserved.

All this will not be finished in the first one hundred days. Nor will it be finished in the first one thousand days, nor in the life of the Administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin.

In your hands, my fellow citizens, more than mine, will rest the final success or failure of our course. Since this country was founded, each generation of Americans has been
summoned to give testimony to its national loyalty. The graves of young Americans who answered the call to service surround the globe.

Now the trumpet summons us again—not as a call to bear arms, tho arms we need—not as a call to battle, tho embattled we are; but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation," a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself.

Can we forge against these enemies a grand and global alliance, North and South, East and West, that can assure a more fruitful life for all mankind? Will you join in that historic effort?

In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility; I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, and the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it, and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.

My fellow citizens of the world, ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.

Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens
of the world, ask of us here the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own.
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