

A Time for Necessary Change: FDR's First Inaugural Address

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A Time for Necessary Change: FDR's First Inaugural Address

“The only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance. In every dark hour of our national life, a leadership of frankness and of vigor has met with that understanding and support of the people themselves which is essential to victory.” These simple words from the First Inaugural Address of Franklin Delano Roosevelt inspired a nation that was fighting through a time of great economic and emotional hardship. These troubled times, also known as the Great Depression, contributed to a lack of confidence that the American people had in their Federal Government. With the delivery of his First Inaugural Address, Franklin Delano Roosevelt attempted to pacify those worried citizens and help them to restore faith in the United States Federal Government.

The First Inaugural Address of Franklin Delano Roosevelt was one of the most influential and proactive speeches ever given by a President of the United States. Within his speech, Roosevelt called for a change immediately, outlining his policy for his future term and also ensuring that he was the leader for a struggling nation in the middle of a Depression. His tall stature, strong and powerful voice, kind but iron heart, all contributed to the effectiveness of his presentation. Roosevelt also outlined his genius plan to jump start the economy and get the country out of such a harsh depression, the New Deal. This plan was the backbone of his speech, giving the citizens hope in such troubling times.

Criticisms on Roosevelt's First Inaugural seem to be limited to writings on Roosevelt's style and delivery, close textual analysis of the speech itself, the President's ideas being incorporated into the speech, and the use of metaphors. For example, Halford Ryan discusses the persuasiveness and effectiveness of Roosevelt's public speaking skills in his essay, “Roosevelt's

First Inaugural: A Study of Technique”. Historians such as Lane Crothers also have overlooked discussing the effect of the speech on the audience. Scholars such as Suzanne Daughton and Michael Osborn have written articles discussing the effectiveness of the use of metaphors in Roosevelt’s speech. However, scholars have overlooked discussing the ideologies and moral principles that are present in the speech. These constraints on the number of topics have left a gap in how to understand the importance of the speech that could be further discussed.

With times so sensitive during the moment of the delivery of this speech, citizen’s moral and social beliefs were taken highly into account, both by the speech writers and Roosevelt himself. In this essay, I will offer a new study of ideological criticism to look at what constrained Roosevelt to use the words and content of his speech to appeal to his audience. Studying the audience and the moral and social beliefs at the time I will attempt to comprehend Roosevelt’s rhetoric, and how he himself, became a more trustworthy and powerful leader using such ideological appeals in his speech. When we are listening to leaders and people of power, we are more inclined to comprehend and agree with them if we can associate with what they are trying to say to us. Thus, moral and ideological values highly constrain the audience when being spoken to. In this essay, I will show how Roosevelt related directly to the Christian ideology, how Roosevelt was attempting to move the people of the United States away from materialism, and by doing so, emerged as a Jesus like leader of this a struggling nation, and how with his leadership he would pull them out of the Great Depression.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was born on January 30, 1882 in Hyde Park, New York. His parents, who were extremely wealthy, along with tutors, gave him most of his formal education. Roosevelt eventually went on to graduate from Harvard with a degree in history after only three

years. For graduate school, he attended Columbia University, where he wished to receive a degree in law. However, he left without a degree because he passed the state law bar examination prior to graduation (FDR Library Website). After leaving Columbia early, he was employed at a renowned New York City Law firm, which helped him gain confidence and a sense of comfort with the subject. This background in law encouraged him to join the world of politics in 1910. Ironically, though he was raised in a Republican dominated area, he was elected as a Democratic Senator of New York. While vacationing in Campobello Island, New Brunswick Canada in 1921, Roosevelt unfortunately contracted poliomyelitis, or polio. He fought long and hard to stop the disease, but regrettably was left crippled and never regained the use of his legs (FDR Library Website).

In 1930, Franklin Delano Roosevelt decided to run for the presidency under the Democratic ticket. Roosevelt based his campaign “on promoting real progress, real justice, and real equality to all citizens” (Crothers, 796). He argued repeatedly that he could create and manage programs that would guarantee people “work and security....the values that this program is intended to gain” (Crothers, 796). After accepting the Democratic nomination for the presidency, “he broke with tradition and flew to Chicago to accept the nomination in person. He then campaigned energetically calling for government intervention in the economy to provide relief, recovery, and reform.

During the presidential election year of 1932, Roosevelt cruised to victory over his opponent, Herbert Hoover. President Hoover was very unpopular in the eyes of American citizens by 1932. National Democratic Party leaders criticized Hoover for being a “profligate spender” (Leuchtenburg, 3). His wasteful spending made him an easy target for allowing the country to collapse into a depression. On election day, Roosevelt defeated Hoover with “a 472-

59 margin in the electoral college, and captured every state south and west of Pennsylvania. Roosevelt carried more counties than a presidential candidate had ever won before, including 282 that had never gone democratic” (Leuchtenburg, 17). Although obviously pleased with the outcome of the election, Roosevelt knew work had to be done in order to get the country out of the Great Depression.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s First Inaugural was delivered on Saturday, March 4, 1933 on the steps of Capitol Hill in Washington D.C. This inauguration was especially unique because this speech was both recorded visually by film and also by sound. This occasion marked one of the first major presidential inaugurations that held all types of press coverage, with almost instantaneous video recordings released to the public. The oath of office was administered by Charles E. Hughes, the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. Roosevelt and his wife Eleanor started a presidential tradition by attending a church service the morning before the inauguration. Roosevelt also used a very old and family cherished bible, that he ended up using for all four of his presidential inaugurations. This bible, which was written in Dutch, was printed in 1686, and was the oldest bible that was ever used for a presidential inauguration.

The streets of Washington D.C. were full to capacity for the inauguration of President Roosevelt. It was a brisk cool morning, with a temperature of 42 degrees. The news coverage for Roosevelt’s Presidential Inauguration set an all time record, with over 150 radio and television broadcast stations delivering the speech to the citizens of the United States. This marked a very important event, because for the first time, every single person could not only hear the speech, but also watch it on television hours after the speech was delivered. This allowed Roosevelt to use his rhetorical skills of public speaking to connect directly with his audience. The video footage shot from the scene of the address was shot directly below the podium at an

upward angle which seems to give Roosevelt a tall and strong physique. It almost seems to have given him a powerful view on camera, which could have contributed to the effectiveness and overwhelming reception of the speech.

In the aftermath of the Address, it had been reported that the audience was left stunned with the power and content of the speech. According to Davis Houck, the emotions that were felt by the audience after the speech included, hope, confidence, optimism, and faith. Roosevelt received numerous comments on how heroic the speech was. As reported from journalists at the scene, the crowd was left silent. Traveling all the way from Cleveland to see the address, ordinary citizen Raymond Hummel said, “I seen those worried looks replaced by smiles and confidence, eyes fill up with tears of gratitude, shoulders lifted and chests out” (Houck,11). Another spectator in the crowd that morning, Harry Hopkins, was quoted saying that “with that one speech, and in those few minutes, the appalling anxiety and fears were lifted, and the people of the United States knew that they were going to safe harbor under the leadership of a man who knew the meaning of fear” (Ryan, 137).

Inaugural addresses are forced to discuss the policies and problems at the current time. Karlyn Campbell and Kathleen Jamieson state in their essay “Inaugurating the Presidency” that the inaugurals of the President serve the following functions: “unifies the audience by reconstructing its members as ‘the people’ who can witness and ratify this ceremony, rehearses communal values drawn from the past, demonstrates that the President appreciates the requirements and limitations of his executive functions, and achieves these ends through means appropriate to epideictic address” (Ryan, 76). Roosevelt did just this in his First Inaugural Address. He was constrained in his rhetoric to talk directly about the Great Depression and how he planned to get the country out of the crisis it was currently in. Something needed to be said

about the current problem and Roosevelt not only touched on it, but also established himself as the leader of the army of the people of the United States of America and how he was going to lead them out of a time of trouble and into a successful future. Within these constraints, he connected with his audience through ideological appeals, and further understanding of the ideas within the speech could help us appreciate the value of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's First Inaugural Address.

The Great Depression caused lots of psychological and emotional damage to the American people. When people are in distress and in a time of crisis, one seems to turn back to their moral and religious beliefs. It has been known that when crisis happens, people turn to that of a higher power, such as God or Jesus, and pray for help through these struggling times. Turning to family or God gives one a sense of brief relief from the current troubled times.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ideological criticism can be based on a broad range of beliefs. According to Sonya Foss, "an ideology is a pattern of beliefs that determines a group's interpretations of some aspect of the world. It is a system of beliefs that reflects a group's fundamental social, economic, political or cultural interests. It represents who we are, what values are, and what our relationships are with other groups" (Foss, 240). She also argues how individuals outside of the ideology belief can relate to most popular ideologies such as Christianity. "Individuals are adopting, to a greater or lesser degree, the ideas of an ideology and are using fragments of that ideology to help organize their own knowledge, attitudes, and actions. They enact the ideology in various ways in their everyday social practices" (Foss, 240). This is proving that not everyone has to believe specifically in a particular ideology, one just has to have some sort of background in the belief, and they can relate to the group or the subject.

Ideologies can also be considered hegemonic, in which one particular ideology dominates over another. Foss also addresses this type of ideology, “Hegemony is the privileging of the ideology of one group over that of other groups. It thus constitutes a kind of social control, a means of symbolic coercion, or a form of domination of the more powerful groups over the ideologies of those with less power” (Foss, 242). A higher authority, such as a president of a powerful nation, may take this into considerations when writing speeches. They may need to use a particular dominant ideology to reach out and specifically target that audience to get a specific point across.

It is also necessary to discuss the importance of materialism as a form of an ideology for this essay. In Michael McGee’s essay titled “The Ideograph: A Link Between Rhetoric and Ideology” he discusses the idea of materialism specifically. “Materialists maintain that the trick is an insidious reified form of ‘lie,’ a self-perpetuating system of beliefs and the interpretations foisted on all members of the community by the ruling class” (McGee, 452). McGee also references Kenneth Burke, a renowned contemporary rhetorical theorist. Burke “emphasizes on individuals who are tricked, concerns himself more with the structure of the “motive” than with the objective conditions that impinge on and restrict the individual’s freedom to develop a political consciousness” (McGee, 452). This argument is extremely relevant to this essay and this idea of materialism will be referenced again later.

In the 1993 article, “Metaphorical Transcendence: Images of the Holy War in Franklin Roosevelt’s First Inaugural”, Suzanne Daughton introduced the idea of blending military and holy images in rhetoric to promote a sense of obedience from the citizens of the United States. She argued that the metaphors used in Roosevelt’s First Inaugural Address were both military and religious. “Not only did Roosevelt use military metaphors frequently in his address-

metaphors which typically connote destructive activity: aggression, violence, savagery, bloodshed, division, death and conquering—but also employed a great deal of religious imagery as well, imagery that is often associated with peace, passiveness, an inward rather than an outward focus, non-violence, and unity” (Daughton, 430). She also states that the “blending of military and religious voices into a holy war combines qualities of both concepts and asks listeners for unquestioning obedience and inspired, committed action for a morally satisfying victory over evil, which ultimately results in peace, both spiritual and physical (Daughton, 436). Promoting this sense of balance between spirituality and physically living is exactly what Roosevelt is attempting to do in his First Inaugural Address. Daughton also argues that he did not initiate a religious up calling or war, but he did effectively “call upon two potent metaphorical clusters that were already in the public consciousness and, with the power of the presidency and its connotations of Commander-and-Chief and civil-religious leader behind him, he used those two sets of images (religious and military) together as a powerful motivating force (Daughton, 436). The use of religious and military metaphors helps contribute to pushing the Christian ideology in Roosevelt’s First Inaugural.

Roosevelt also used several rhetorical techniques that contributed to the success of his First Inaugural. Halford Ryan discussed three specific rhetorical techniques Roosevelt used in his article, “Roosevelts First Inaugural: A Study of Technique.” These three techniques included the scapegoat technique, the military metaphor, and the carrot-and-stick method. Although contrary to speculation, Ryan made it a priority in his essay to emphasize that these techniques were indeed Roosevelt’s and not those of his speechwriters.

Knowing that the blame of the economic depression needed to be pointed at another group rather than the Federal Government, Roosevelt used the scapegoat technique to point the

finger at the selfish moneychangers. Ryan states that Roosevelt “unflinchingly proclaimed what was believed by the average American—the moneychangers were culpable for the Depression” (Ryan, 141). Ryan also discloses several quotes from national media sources about the effectiveness of the scapegoat technique. “The *Christian Century* noted, “the ‘false moneychangers’ deserve all the condemnation that can be heaped upon them”. *The Nation* observed that Roosevelt dealt the moneychangers a ‘verbal scourging.’ *News-Week* stated, ‘it was an assault on the bankers, against whom the voices of the distressed are raised in an ever-swelling chorus as the depression endures’” (Ryan, 142).

The next technique that Ryan discusses is the use of the military metaphor, in which Roosevelt utilized in order to gain mass support from the people of the United States. Ryan states that the use of the military metaphor “urged support for the acceptance of his New Deal leadership” and “to create a symbol of a great American Army” (Ryan 143). Although Ryan claims the use of the military metaphor a success due to the overwhelming media support, he warned that “FDR’s military metaphor facilitated Americans’ surrender of power and liberty, much as one does in the real Army, to their Commander-in-Chief” (Ryan, 144). This ‘power’ that Roosevelt was requesting was argued by some as his attempt at creating a dictatorship. However, Ryan rejects the idea of a dictatorship, stating that the use of the metaphor was simply Roosevelt’s tactic in gaining support of the American People by declaring war on the Great Depression.

The carrot-and-stick technique is the most important according to Ryan because it synthesized the power relations between Congress and the Executive branch. Ryan states that Roosevelt’s carrot in his First Inaugural was “a clever cajoling of Congress to act either on its own or in tandem with him” (Ryan, 146). In his speech Roosevelt states this synthesis, “And it

is to be hoped that the normal balance may be wholly equal, wholly adequate, to meet the unprecedented task before us.” Ryan then states that using this “carrot” of balance, Roosevelt sticks the true purpose, giving himself sole power by requesting that Congress give him full executive power if in fact that The United States were “invaded by a foreign foe.” This rhetorical technique, Ryan argued, was necessary in order for Roosevelt to “demonstrate his ability to act and lead” and if he had not succeeded, “he might have failed on inauguration day” (Ryan 146).

It is also necessary to discuss the roles of ideologies in political rhetoric. In Michael Freedon’s book titled Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach, Freedon expresses the importance of ideologies in the political realm. He first states that ideologies “can fruitfully be approached as a major genre of political thought rather than—at least within the discipline of political theory—as poor relations of political through political philosophies” (Freedon, 13). Freedon states that through this approach of ideologies and viewing through this type of lens, allows the reader to “comprehend political thought—those fundamental political concepts that create the political argument” (Freedon, 14). Furthermore, Freedon writes about the human understanding about ideologies is obtained in a “threefold process: (1) employing the conceptual analysis that political theorists have been trained to handle; (2) utilizing the type of empirical and contextual inquiry in which historians are versed; and (3) appreciating the morphological patterns which contribute to the determination of the ideological meaning” (Freedon, 14). Once a human understands these concepts of the ideology, they can finally “study the political ideas within frameworks of cultural, temporal, spatial and logical constraints, frameworks that optimize the richness of information and depth of understanding that can be elicited from political thought” (Freedon, 14). In other words, in order for a political leader to

fully express their political thought, they must shape their political message in a way that is comprehensible and valued by the receiver. Freedon also expresses the functioning purpose of ideologies in political rhetoric is to “join together with other mechanisms in imposing, unconsciously from the perspective of the participants, significant forms of content” (Freedon, 20).

Furthering his discussion on ideologies, Freedon offers five specific implications that are associated between ideologies and political rhetoric. He first states that it is important to understand that “ideologies are attached to social groups, not necessarily the classes. Ideologies are produced by, directed at, and consumed by groups” (Freedon, 22). Secondly, “ideologies perform a range of services,...and without which societies would not function” (Freedon 22). That then means that ideologies “are ubiquitous forms of political thinking, reflecting as they do about perceptions about the existing or imagined social worlds” (Freedon, 22). Fourthly ideologies actually drive political decisions and thoughts. Freedon also states that ideologies actually “are inevitably associated with power though not invariably with the threatening or exploitation of power” (Freedon, 23). Finally, while discussing and studying ideologies, we are in itself “directing our analysis at the actual arrangements of political thought” (Freedon, 23).

ANALYSIS

After reviewing the literature related to ideological criticism, content analysis, and the collaboration of Roosevelt’s speech, I decided on a simple method to interpret the content within Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s First Inaugural Address. Following the choosing of the artifact (FDR’s First Inaugural), I analyzed the artifact to determine the ideologies driving the speech. After analyzing the artifact, I pulled out two specific ideologies that were integrated into the speech. These ideologies were materialism and the basic moral ideas that come from

Christianity. Finally, after examining the context of the ideologies, I will view which ideology emerged as the dominant force in the speech. Using this method allows me to properly interpret the speech and discover the dominant ideology in the speech, which ends up being the basic moral ideas that come from Christianity.

The First Inaugural Address of Franklin Delano Roosevelt outlines the President's plan for the New Deal as well as establishing himself as a great leader of the United States. In the introduction, Roosevelt attempts to establish himself as a trustful President of the United States people. The second paragraph of the speech establishes that trust: "This is preeminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly. Nor need we shrink from honestly facing conditions in our country today. This great Nation will endure, as it endured, will revive and prosper." With times so critical, like those in the Great Depression, it was extremely important the Roosevelt establish trust in the citizens of the United States. Establishing this trust allowed him to connect with every single citizen, empathizing with the current economic situation, and allowed the citizens to have faith in him as a President.

Roosevelt uses this newly established trust to switch the blame of the Great Depression from the Federal Government to the big businessmen of America. Roosevelt argues that one of the main foundations of the Depression came from the higher class businessmen recognizing that there was a problem with the idea of credit, and instead of realizing their own fault, they kept lending out money. He states the following about the big businessmen of America: "through their own stubbornness and their own incompetence, have admitted their failure, and abdicated. Practices of the unscrupulous money changers stand indicted in the court of public opinion, rejected by the hearts and minds of men." This line has been referred to as a turning point in the speech, in which Roosevelt effectively used the scapegoat technique. "The efficacy of using the

scapegoat technique ensued from his ability to channel the American people's anxieties from themselves to the moneychangers" (Ryan, 141). Lowering the citizen's anxieties allowed for Roosevelt to further establish himself as a trustful leader of the United States.

Having to deliver his First Inaugural during the height of the Great Depression, Franklin Delano Roosevelt attempted to calm the fears of the citizen's of The United States . This was a time of great economic disparity, where citizens lost fortunes in the stock market and saw their bank accounts disappear as there was not enough money in the Federal Reserve as people rushed to their banks and tried to retrieve the money from their checking accounts. Within the First Inaugural, Roosevelt attempts to show the American people that they were attached to materialistic things:

They concern, thank God, only material things. Values have shrunk to frantic levels; taxes have risen; our ability to pay has fallen; government of all kinds is faced by serious curtailment of income; the means of exchange are frozen in the currents of trade; the withered leaves of industrial enterprise lie on every side; farmers find no markets for their produce; and the savings of many years in thousands of families are gone.

Within the same section of the speech, however, Roosevelt shows that there are more important things in life than just material goods. By starting the section of the speech with, "They concern, thank God, only material things" seems to make the subsequent listed materials unimportant. One also has to notice that Roosevelt thanks God it was only material goods that were lost. This is specifically attached to the Christian ideology and since God precedes the following items, makes God almost seem like he is powerfully towering over these goods, which makes God a dominant force.

The paragraph immediately following the previous quote extends the Christian morality ideology. Roosevelt states, “We are stricken by no plague of locusts. Compared with the perils which our forefathers conquered, because they believed and were not afraid, we have still much to be thankful for.” The plague of locusts is a metaphor coming directly from the bible, where God released this plague over Egypt to urge the Pharaoh to release the Israelites from his custody. Also, by referencing “we still have much to be thankful for” Roosevelt is pleading to the American people to shift their minds away from those materialistic goods and to refer back to ideas such as Thanksgiving, an idea that emphasizes the importance of family.

Roosevelt then directly applies the Christian moral ideology as a dominant force to the speech and addresses it directly instead of indirectly in the previous lines. “The measure of that restoration lies to the extent to which we apply social values more noble than mere monetary profit.” Here, Roosevelt is stating that in order for the country to reform, we must realize that our social and moral values are much more significant than the capitalistic, materialistic, and selfish society that America was before the Great Depression. He furthers this argument that the country needs to base their values on morals rather than material wealth:

Happiness lies not in the mere possession of money; it lies in the joy of achievement, in the thrill of creative effort. The joy, the moral stimulation of work no longer must be forgotten in the mad chase of evanescent profits. These dark days, my friends, will be worth all they cost us if they teach us that our true destiny is not to be ministered unto but to minister ourselves, to our fellow men.

These lines of Roosevelt’s speech emphasize the importance that the American People should not rely on material wealth for a sense of happiness. By underlining the idea that happiness should be valued on a level of “achievement, in the thrill of creative effort”, Roosevelt is

attempting to show citizens that work should be viewed from an intellectual standpoint rather than by the amount of money that one has in their checking account. However, Roosevelt is still attempting to restore the faith in the Federal Government. Having a materialistic viewpoint during the Great Depression is only going to distance yourself from the government because one would believe that a politician is only in office for the purpose of monetary gain.

As quoted earlier in this paper, Burke argues on the behalf of the idea of a materialistic ideology, that “individuals are tricked, and concerns himself more with the structure of ‘motive’ than with the objective conditions that impinge on and restrict the individual’s freedom” (McGee, 452). This is evident in this First Inaugural, as Roosevelt attempts not only proves that the “motive” is the falsification of material wealth, but also shows that he is establishing himself as the leader of this movement of a changing government.

Recognition of that falsity material wealth as the standard of success goes hand in hand with the abandonment of the false belief that public office and high political position are to be valued only by the standards of pride of place and personal profit; and there must be an end to a conduct in banking and in business which too often has given to a sacred trust the likeness of callous and selfish wrongdoing.

Not only is Roosevelt trying to diminish materialism from citizen’s minds, but attempting to reduce the selfishness of the working person by disowning the idea that work is only for “pride of place and personal profit.” One of the bases of morality is supported by idea of being non-selfish. Not only is Roosevelt emphasizing to the people of the United States that we need to abolish the idea of success based on financial gain, but also expressing that personal interest is in no way the policy of his presidency. This can be associated trust is the most sacred quality in which people seek in a friend or acquaintance.

In the concluding part of this materialism section of the speech, Roosevelt re-emphasizes this need for an ethical change while also formally outlining his plan for domestic change. Realizing the country is in a state of crisis, Roosevelt understands that “this Nation asks for action, and action now.” This “action” is his plan for the New Deal, in which aid would be coming from the Federal Government to areas such as the agricultural sectors, transportation, and other utilities. However, Roosevelt understands that the greatest task at hand is to put people back to work. He states that:

This is no unsolvable problem if we face it wisely and courageously. It can be accomplished in part by direct recruiting by the government itself, treating the task as we would treat the emergency of war, but at the same time, through this employment, accomplishing greatly needed projects to stimulate and reorganize the use of our natural resources.

One must notice that it seems through the context of this section that Roosevelt seems to emphasize this idea of people working hand in hand with the government in order to solve this “problem.” By emphasizing the value of teamwork and working together, Roosevelt is setting a foundation for unity. Unifying the country brings forth a sense of community, just like neighborhoods, local churches, and parishes.

Roosevelt even bases his entire foreign policy on the good neighbor principle, an idea directly coming from the Ten Commandments of the Christian ideology.

In the field of world policy, I would dedicate the Nation to the policy of the good neighbor: the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others; the neighbor who respects obligations and the respects the sanctity of his agreements in and with a world of neighbors.

This is an example of the moral idea that you have to give respect to gain respect. During the 1930's, small countries, especially in South and Central America, were being dominated by capitalistic countries with special interests. This example is extremely similar to the events on domestic soil, where the "unscrupulous money changers" managed to manipulate the economy for only reasons of self-interest and personal profit. Roosevelt seems to be expressing that in order to obtain a sound economy once again, we must have solid international trade relations but must not lose trust in the production of goods and services on the national grounds. He is attempting to promote trust not only in the American economy, but also trusting the system that is democracy. I do not think that Roosevelt was aiming this idea of the "good neighbor policy" directly at foreign countries, but also indirectly featuring as a type of philosophy for the people of the United States to practice. This basic moral idea of treating others the way you would like to be treated is one of the backbones of respect and was one that Roosevelt aimed to drive into the minds of the people.

After Roosevelt establishes the "good neighbor principle," he begins to set up an idea that cements himself as a great leader of his people. However while establishing his leadership, he once again returns to his idea of morality.

We now realize, as we have never realized before, our interdependence on each other; that we can not merely take, but must give as well; that if we are to go forward, we must move as a trained and loyal army willing to sacrifice for the good of common discipline, because without such discipline no progress can be made, no leadership becomes effective.

Here Roosevelt incorporates the moral idea that in order to move forward successfully in life, one must sacrifice certain things. Also, he is stressing in the idea that here in America we are all

dependent on each other for success, and can not rely on one single person for national achievement. Furthermore, one has to notice that Roosevelt is referencing the biblical stories of the son of God, Jesus Christ. The “sacrifice” that Roosevelt is describing is also the sacrifice that Jesus for the good of the common people. Jesus gave his life for the love of God and for the proof that God could also come to earth in mortal form. Christ gave his life so that we (human beings) all could survive, arguably the greatest sacrifice ever made. From Christ’s sacrifice, he became the idol and leader of the people, just as Roosevelt is attempting to do.

It is also important to note the significance of Roosevelt cementing how “we [the people] must move as a trained and loyal army willing to sacrifice for the good of common discipline, because without such discipline no progress can be made.” Here, he is declaring his leadership of this so called “loyal army.”

Following the sacrifice and Roosevelt beginning to attempt to prove his power, he really cements his purpose for leadership. He clearly states his purpose:

This, I propose to offer, pledging that the larger purposes will bind upon us, bind upon us all as a sacred obligation with a unity of duty hitherto evoked only in times of armed strife. With this pledge taken, I assume unhesitatingly the leadership of this great army of our people dedicated to a disciplined attack upon our common problems.

Roosevelt is clearly reinforcing his idea that he is the new leader of the people of the United States of America, who refuse to give up and will attack the enemy (our common problems). It is interesting that he references the people of the United States as an “army” in which to attack the national problems. Here it seems that he is referring to a militaristic view, while also continuing his idea that he is the new Jesus Christ. By referring to the people as an army,

Roosevelt is stirring ideas where they must defeat the enemy, almost creating a strong idea of nationalism in the saying.

In the concluding sections of his First Inaugural Address, Roosevelt reinstates that there are troubled times ahead, but if the people can unify and continue their belief in morals, our country will come out of the horrible depression. “We face the arduous days that lie before us in the warm courage of national unity; with the clear consciousness of seeking old and precious moral values; with the clean satisfaction that comes from the stern performance of duty by old and young alike.” Roosevelt specifically refers to the importance of moral values in this section, and also seems to emphasize the idea of a capitalistic society. One of the bases of a moral ideology is that everyone on earth has a specific purpose, and it is a struggle in life to find that specific purpose. We all have different jobs that make up America, an idea that makes America so unique and diverse.

The final section of the speech Roosevelt connects himself with God, the higher power that is going to guide him in the days to come. He reassures the citizens that they have not failed; they just need proper and discrete leadership, a type of leadership that he could only provide.

The people of the United States have not failed. In their need they have registered a mandate that they want direct vigorous action. They have asked for discipline and direction under leadership. They have made me the instrument of their wishes. In the spirit of the gift I take it.

Here Roosevelt is using this metaphorical idea the “spirit” and the “gift.” Using these metaphors he is relating to God by the reception of this “gift,” or the blessing of leading the American

people. It also relates to the basic moral idea of giving gifts supports the soul and promotes happiness on both ends.

Roosevelt then completely compares and connects himself to God, truly establishing himself as the ultimate icon and leader of the American People. He is also expresses that he too is a mortal and needs guidance from a higher power. “In this dedication of a Nation, we humbly ask the blessing of God. May he protect each and every one of us. May He guide me in the days to come.” Christian’s believe in prayer to help them through struggling times. Roosevelt in a way is proving that he too is human and needs guidance and support in dissatisfying times. He is re-establishing himself with the struggling lower class and proving to the people that he sympathizes with their situation. By referencing God in this concluding section, Roosevelt in a sense is promoting a sense of symmetry between the government and the everyday citizen. Roosevelt is establishing himself as godlike, while also showing that he really is just an average everyday citizen of the United States of America.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s First Inaugural Address, we can see that he clearly took into account the sensitivity of his audience, since most of them had completely lost trust in the Federal Government. By first connecting with the people through ideological appeals and cementing the idea that morals are more important than monetary and personal profit, he changed the outlook of many of the people. Also, by metaphorically connecting himself with Jesus and as a leader of a greater cause was just purely genius. Roosevelt truly showed that there are more important things in life than just materialistic things, and family and purpose in life are much more valuable.

We can see that the Christian moral ideology emerged as a dominant force by the conclusion of the speech. In the opening of the speech, Roosevelt talked about the materialism at the time. But, through the analysis, we can see that it was mainly a strategic approach to reassure the audience that it was not the end of the world if they had lost all of their material possessions. During a time of crisis, it is best to reflect on what you are truly thankful for in life: good health, family, friends, and life. By referring to the Christian moral ideology, Roosevelt was able to emphasize the idea of trust, one of the main beliefs of Christianity. Through appealing through trust, he was able to gain power, and thus emerge as a leader through his rhetoric.

The Great Depression dampened the hearts of many Americans as they lost everything of value. As our current economy continues this unfortunate recession, it may be believed that more and more people are realizing that there are more important things in their lives than just expensive gadgets and goods. I believe that Roosevelt's speech and ideas should be taken into account by all United States citizens, as the content is very appealing to the audience of the current time. The stock market may continue to be down, credit card debts may be on the rise, and families may be losing their houses, but friends, family, health and more importantly living life to the fullest should be the cornerstone of every person's life.

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