

Rhetoric of Repairs: Pathos Analysis of Joe Biden's Victory Speech

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Abstract

This paper aims to explore pathos, the prominent emotional appeal, in Joe Biden's presidential victory speech delivered on 7 November 2020 at Wilmington in the United States of America. The speech was delivered upon the conclusion of the presidential race between Donald Trump and Joe Biden, wherein Biden led the election with 306 electoral votes against Trump's 232. The paper is informed by three objectives: how Biden's speech seeks to arouse certain emotions in the audience, what emotions in the audience are triggered, and how those emotions assist Biden in successfully delivering his intent of repair and reconciliation by persuading his audience, the American people. To fulfill these objectives, employing the method of a rhetorical analysis, the paper explicates the speech investigating how the lexical choices in the victory speech appeal to specific feelings and emotions of the audience. The analysis concludes that Biden, the orator, warrants reconstruction and reconciliation by appealing to seven dominant emotions: confidence, trust, optimism, (in)gratitude, empathy, camaraderie, and American pride. Hence, the paper demonstrates the fundamentals of doing a rhetorical analysis and further motivates some aspirants seeking a career in script writing and oratory.

Keywords: Rhetoric, Pathos, Victory Speech, Oratory, Joe Biden

Introduction

The victory speech of Joseph Robinette Biden Jr., popularly known as Joe Biden, was delivered in a context when the American people had opposing and diverse emotional responses to the election results (BBC News, 2020a; BBC News, 2020b; BBC News, 2020c; The New York Times, 2020 November 1). The forty-sixth (46th) presidential election of the United States took place on 3 November 2020. There was fierce competition between the Democratic candidate Joseph R. Biden and Republican candidate Donald John Trump. The American people, along with the world, were anxiously awaiting the result. There were various narratives regarding the presidential election 2020. At one end, it was regarded as a turning point: "On Nov 3, 2020, the US will again choose whether to continue to look backward or to take brave steps towards a new future" (The Lancet, 2020, p. 1373). It means the election was taken either as a point of progression or of regression. At the other end, Trump was reported to have declared his victory in front of his supporters in numerous instances before the results were out (BBC News, 2020d; CNN, 2020; Timberg et al., 2020; Bennett, 2020). The social media, TV shows, and newspapers were busy reporting what Trump and Biden said on different occasions. In the news updates, the US map was intensely polarized; all the states were described as either 'red'/Republican or 'blue'/Democratic (CNN, 2020; Sky News, 2020a); there was the blue-red polarity.

Moreover, the election was characterized by the polarity of not only blue-red political ideologies but also of emotions and sentiments. The context of the US presidential election has been rightly remarked as "a trifecta of crises a pandemic, a racial justice crisis, and a democratic" (Bitecofer, 2020, p. 507). Despite such a crossroads of crises, American citizens were looking for the president as an icon of guidance and comfort (Neville-Shephard, 2021). At such a critical juncture, the American people cast their votes to choose their leader. Therefore, the election results aroused a sense of triumph in the Biden-led voters whereas there was a sense of defeat in Trump-led voters. Assimilating and addressing those opposing emotions was the only choice for Biden. Notably, in the presidential election, one of the significant achievements of both Democrats and Republicans was that they appealed to the nearly 45%

of voters who did not vote in 2016, and in the 2020 election, the voter turnout reached 66.7%, the highest in 120 years (Duffin, 2021).

Finally, the result came out on 7 November 2020: Biden won the election with 306 electoral votes against Trump's 232. Then, it was Hobson's choice for Biden to address this exigence through his victory speech. At this juncture, Biden sounds very articulate about his purpose and intent in the victory speech. Biden, in the speech, locates himself at what he calls "an inflection point" which, he claims, corresponds to the historic victory of Abraham Lincoln (1860), Franklin D. Roosevelt (1932), John F. Kennedy (1960), and Barack Obama (2008). "And if we can decide not to cooperate, then we can decide to cooperate.", says Biden in his speech (Stevens, 2020). The very 'we' is inclusive here. It means Biden makes a call for cooperation and coordination among all the American people, especially between the Democrats and Republicans. He iterates and re-iterates that his presidency is "to restore the soul of America" and "to rebuild the backbone of America". To fulfill all those deferred dreams, Biden, in his victory speech, makes a call for a unified effort from everyone. Hence, his pledge to repair and to unite America is the central message in the speech.

Literature Review

There exist many scholarly observations and analyses of Biden's victory speech. Analyses are working with both the form and content of the victory speech. This paper reviews a corpus of six existing literature that actively aligns with the objective of this paper. The six texts were purposefully selected to trace and track some scholarly conversations that align with the rhetorical criticism or textual analysis of the victory speech. The review shows that the six different texts and authors anchor six different meanings of speech, namely, optimistic takeaways, a call for unity, enhancing rhetorical devices, a good purpose, modality, and use of encouraging metaphors.

Nagourney (2020, November 8) positively analyses both the content and the context of the victory speech throwing light on Biden's "trotting up the runway to an explosion of car horns and cheers, beaming and looking almost surprised by the ovation". Nagourney's meticulous analysis of the victory speech extracts five takeaways: a new tone from the top, legitimacy of the

victory, prioritizing the pandemic, building confidence, and names in light. Cillizza (2020, November 9) observes Biden's victory speech by explicating the dominant emotion it entails. The critic contrasts Biden's victory speech to Trump's speeches made before the election result was out. Cillizza writes that Biden's rhetoric, unlike that of Trump, empathically captures the existing emotion of defeat in the opponents' hearts, thereby making some comforting and uniting attempts. Similarly, the rhetorical devices used in the speech are also points of interest for some critics. Kerr (2020, November 19), for example, analyses Biden's victory speech highlighting the major rhetorical devices such as repetition ("ahead to an America"), emotive language ("grim era of demonization"), reverse word order or chiasmus ("not by the example of our power, but by the power of our example"). Kerr stresses that these figures of speech used in the victory speech enhance the positive emotional appeals in the audience.

In addition, Pattison (2020, November 12), on the other hand, concentrated on the use of refrain in the victory speech. In the speech, Biden recites the refrain of the song "On Eagle's Wing" composed by Father Michael Joncas. In this context, Pattison explores that the composer felt honoured while listening to the refrain: "I pray that the song can serve in some way to help the healing of our nation." Here, the analyst holds that Biden's rhetoric of reciting the lines from a song drew the attention not only of the analyst but also the composer. They—the analyst and the composer—agree that the speech, along with the refrain, elicits the emotion of healing and recovery. Furthermore, Khalaf & Hiyali (2023), interpret Biden's victory speech from the concept of modality exposing "speaker judgments toward certain topics" (p. 376). Their study reveals that Biden's speech used three types of modalities: inclination, probability, and obligation. In the same vein, Pilyarchuk (2023), explicating the conceptual metaphors in the victory speech, concludes that Biden presents himself as a constructor, warrior, healer, author, and traveler wherein "his values are inherently good, and the imagery he creates is vivid – the positive, light, hopeful democracy against the backdrop of the current dark times" (p. 44). Hence, hope and optimism have been created metaphorically in the victory speech.

In sum, the language of Biden’s victory speech has been analysed and explicated from multiple perspectives: a legitimate victory speech, a uniting speech, a speech charged with rhetorical devices, a speech for healing and recovery, a speech with the use of modality, and speech with an abundance of metaphors. The paper partially aligns with the reviewed pieces of literature; this paper strives to analyse how Biden’s speech disseminates the message of repair and reconciliation. However, there exists a potential researchable space: how Biden’s victory speech seeks to arouse certain emotions in the audience, what emotions are triggered in the audience, and how those emotions assist Biden in delivering his repairing and reconciling intent by moving his audience, the American people. This paper revolves around the same research space.

Methodology

This paper is exclusively a rhetorical analysis—more specifically a pathos analysis—of Biden’s victory speech. Pathos, in rhetoric, means an act of appealing to the feelings and emotions of the audience by the speaker or writer. As Aristotle (n.d) writes, “persuasion may come through the hearers, when the speech stirs their emotions” (p. 4). That is, persuasion in a speech depends on how successful the speaker is in appealing to some emotions in the audience. Thus, pathos is the art of making “the audience well-disposed towards yourself and ill-disposed towards your opponent” by exciting “the required state of emotion in your hearers” (p. 92). Therefore, a pathos analysis in rhetorical criticism, is to explicate the emotional bond between the speaker and the audience evident in a text because “an audience’s emotional orientation in a situation plays a critical role in determining how an audience sees and understands a particular situation” (Kastely, 2004, p. 225). Seen in this light, the success of an oratory depends on “exploring the emotions appropriate to audiences in particular situations” that compels them to “incorporate those emotions into the structure of the judgment offered to the audience” (p. 235). This paper is grounded on the analysis of the way the speaker (Biden) addresses the dominant emotional puddles in the audience (American people) in the given exigence. In this analysis, I neither support nor criticize the victory speech; I merely analyse the speech exploring how it appeals to the audience by triggering some emotions. The analysis of pathos in the victory speech was

carried out by explicating some dominant emotional appeals throughout the speech. While doing so, keywords, phrases, images, symbols, and expressions evoking some emotions in the speech were underscored, coded, and thematized. Then, based on the recurring emotional appeals, seven thematic categories—confidence, trust, optimism, (in)gratitude, empathy, camaraderie, and American pride—were generated.

Results and Discussion

This section is the core analysis of Biden's emotional appeals that he made in his victory speech. The section is divided into seven sub-sections which extract Biden's rhetoric of making emotional appeals. Structurally, the sub-sections first present the dominant feelings infused in the speech which trigger the heart of the audience. Then, we observe the possible emotional reactions of the American audience. After that, the analysis sheds light on how the emotional appeals enhance the central message, that is, a call for unity, reconciliation, and mutual understanding. Therefore, this section explicates the victory speech and analyses seven emotional appeals: confidence, trust, optimism, (in)gratitude, empathy, camaraderie, and American pride.

Confidence and Acquiescence: "A convincing victory".

The opening of the victory speech is utterly striking in terms of emotional appeals. Biden, in the speech, speaks with force and conviction through his opening salvo "the people of this nation have spoken" (Stevens, 2020). Here, Biden could say 'the final result is out'; but he picks probably the best alternative—the people of this nation have spoken—that is further followed by "They have delivered us a clear victory. A convincing victory". Then, in succession, Biden says out: "We have won with the most votes ever cast for a presidential ticket in the history of this nation — 74 million". These series of expressions appeal to the emotions such as confidence and acquiescence.

The opening expressions of the victory speech arouse confidence in Biden's supporters, whereas acquiescence in his opponents. His emphasis on 'people' who have 'spoken' merits the victory, thereby elating the Biden supporters. At the same time, it emotionally connects with the opponents (Trump supporters) by compelling them to accept that they have been

vanquished; they must acknowledge the people's voice. In addition, the record-breaking number of voters—74 million—heightens the confidence and felicity of supporters. On the other hand, such data overwhelm the opponents and generate acquiescence in them. In the speech, Biden's greeting with 'my fellow Americans' infuses a very friendly tone arousing the fellow feeling in the audience. Then, Biden embraces his opponents making a call to be 'convinced' of Biden's victory and Trump's defeat. Biden proclaims that the victory is that of the American people ('we the people'), rather than that of any outsider. Hence, Biden's appeals to confidence and acquiescence are effective in binding the victorious and the defeated hearts together which supports Biden's purpose, that is unity and reconciliation.

Trust, but do not Doubt: "I pledge to unite".

Biden's victory speech can build trust and mutual attachment in the audience. His commitment to unifying American society is truly engaging: "I pledge to be a president who seeks not to divide, but to unify" (Stevens, 2020). Similarly, Biden's self-declaration as a president who "does not see Red and Blue states, but a United States" taps the audience's feeling of confidence, hope, and reconciliation. Biden further accentuates his plans and promises with an onrush of similar expressions: "And who will work with all my heart to win the confidence of the whole people. For that is what America is about: The people". If he highlighted the voice of 'the people' at the very beginning, he prioritizes the aspirations of 'the people' here.

At this crossroad, Biden's pledge prompts confidence by allaying fears, doubts, and worries. Strongly enough, Biden's assurance to the 'whole people by 'restoring the soul of America' provokes nationalistic feelings in all American people, the feeling which is necessarily the binding principle. The use of the term 'soul' also personifies the nation and ignites patriotic feelings. His commitment to work with 'all my heart' is also no less striking to assuage doubts and uncertainties. Hence, Biden's purpose of unity and reconciliation gets accelerated when Biden pledges to work for 'the people' and 'the soul of America'. In the sequence of commitments, Biden tries to win the hearts of his supporters as well as opponents eliciting mutual trust.

Optimism, but not Pessimism: “We must rebuild the backbone of America”.

Biden's speech attempts to create favorable emotional responses from the audience by characterizing the immediate moment as a transitional point, a transition from despair to hope. His prioritized plans and policies are to “restore the soul of America”, “rebuild the backbone of the nation” and “restore decency” (Stevens, 2020). The statements presuppose that America is undergoing a crisis in the ‘soul’, ‘backbone’ and the ‘decency’. However, Biden declares himself as a president who can ‘re-store’ them. By making promises to revive these ideals, therefore, Biden calls forth hope and optimism in his audience. The use of the terms ‘soul’ and ‘backbone’ metaphorically elevate the speech to a higher level: they stand for the core American values that Biden promises to restore and rebuild.

Moreover, Biden's victory speech induces solace at the midst of the pandemic anxiety (COVID-19). In his speech, Biden claims that his battle is directed against the prevailing hopelessness in America. At the same time, he also mentions the occasions with “most precious moments— hugging a grandchild, birthdays, weddings, graduations, all the moments that matter most to us” (Sky News, 2020b). Here, he draws the emotion of the audience based on the shared painful experiences of social distancing and self-isolation which were/are common during the COVID-19 pandemic. After stirring up such a piercing pain of the pandemic, Biden says, “We cannot repair the economy, restore our vitality, or relish life . . . until we get this virus under control”. Then, Biden takes the pandemic as a battle: “battle to control the virus”, “battle to build prosperity”, and “battle to secure your family's health care”. When Biden reloads the pandemic trauma and metaphorizes it as a battle, the speech brings the audience to the gravity of the situation. Now, everyone wants to hear something healing and relieving.

Kairologically, Biden catches the momentum and creates a ray of hope by sharing the Biden-Harris COVID plan of including “a group of leading scientists and experts which starts working as an action blueprint from January 20th, 2021”. Highlighting the plan, Biden says “That plan will be built on a bedrock of science. It will be constructed out of compassion, empathy, and concern. I will spare no effort — or commitment — to turn this pandemic

around”. Compassion, empathy, and concern are the ideals of Christian preaching. Biden’s commitment to those emotions along with a concrete plan to fight the pandemic evokes relief and reassurance in the audience.

Moreover, Biden’s speech showers a sense of hope in the victims of racial injustice. Biden says that his aim is “to achieve racial justice and root out systemic racism in this country”. If there is racial injustice in America which is ‘systematic’, it obviously triggers despair and dejection in the audience, especially in non-Whites or immigrants. However, when Biden says that he is there to work against it, it undoubtedly arouses vigour and buoyancy in those suffering minorities. Right at the moment, he makes an urgent call for the end of those hardships and difficulties under his presidency: “Let this grim era of demonization in America begin to end, here and now”. Here, Biden tries to reflect on the then scenario of America with the phrase ‘grim era of demonization’. It, again, necessarily creates distrust and dreadfulness. However, he tries to soothe those negative feelings with the expressions “We have the opportunity to defeat despair and to build a nation of prosperity and purpose” and “We must restore the soul of America”. Here, he calls on everyone to seize the opportunity under his presidency.

Hence, Biden’s call to make a journey from despair to prosperity by restoring the soul of America enhances his call for unity and cooperation. His promise of restoration and reconstruction of American core values such as people, science, decency, compassion, empathy, and concern necessarily arouse a sense of unity and reconciliation among the American people. Besides, his commitment to racial harmony and mutual understanding inspires the healing emotions that exert unity and racial equality.

(In)Gratitude: “I owe you”.

One of the striking expressions of Biden which makes a victorious polarity between Republicans and Democrats is “I ran as a proud Democrat” (Stevens, 2020). We can notice a prevailing succession of ‘I’, ‘we’, ‘my’ ‘us’ in the speech: “delivered us a clear victory”, “victory for we the People”; “We have won”; “I am humbled”; “trust and confidence you have placed in me”; “It is the honor of my lifetime”; “to my campaign team”; “I owe you”; “I am proud of the campaign”; “I am proud of the coalition”. These expressions

strengthen the sense of victory, celebration, joy, and happiness among his supporters. In addition, Biden's 'I' and 'we' stretch ahead when he acknowledges the contribution of the past heroic figures. He echoes "It's long overdue, and we're reminded tonight of all those who fought so hard for so many years to make this happen" (Sky News, 2020b).

Here, Biden's speech seems lacking in generating the reconciling emotions in the opponents. In fact, the expressions 'I', 'we', 'my', 'those who fought' sound unilateral. Biden sounds grateful to his supporters; but his expressions "we have won" and "I owe you" only bind his supporters (you) with him (I). Thinking alternatively, what does he owe to the Trump supporters, then? We cannot find the answer to this question in his speech. Hence, in this occasion, the reconciling tempo of Biden's speech does not sound very high.

Empathy: "I have lost my son and lost a couple of elections myself".

Biden's speech attempts to create unity and cooperation by appealing the emotion of the opponents, the Democrats. Firstly, he says that he understands the feelings—the feeling which is followed by defeat—of those who supported Donald Trump during the election. He says, "And to those who voted for President Trump, I understand your disappointment tonight. I've lost a couple of elections myself" (Stevens, 2020). Here, Biden reaches the heart of the followers of Donald Trump by convincing them that he understands how people feel when they lose an election. Since he shares that he has undergone those experiences of defeat in "a couple of elections", he is trying to avoid the possible hostility between The Democrats and The Republicans.

Biden attempts to convince the American people responding to the context of the pandemic in his victory speech. "My heart goes out to each and every one of you", Biden strikes against the pain and pang of the pandemic trying to convince his audience (Sky News, 2020b). It is a given fact that America was bitten hard by the Pandemic. The death tolls were rising high day by day; people who lost their dears and dears were in tears. Biden assimilates himself with those people bringing reference of his son who died in 2015. He remarks, "In the last days of the campaign, I've been thinking about a hymn

that means a lot to me and to my family, particularly my deceased son Beau”. Then he recites a refrain from the hymn “On Eagle’s Wings”:

*‘And He will raise you up on eagle’s wings
Bear you on the breath of dawn,
Make you to shine like the sun,
And hold you in the palm of His Hand.’* (Stevens, 2020)

Here, he gives solace to the people who lost their nears and dears during the pandemic. In this way, Biden communicates with the suffering souls, and further seeks to calm them down picking the topic of faith: “It captures the faith that sustains me and which I believe sustains America”. This very faith, Biden believes, “can provide some comfort and solace to the more than 230,000 families who have lost a loved one to this terrible virus this year”. His emphasis on faith elicits a spiritual solace in the audience.

Biden’s victory speech, with his empathic expressions upon the victims of the pandemic and his opponents, unites him with the audience. He mentions that the Trump supporters must be disappointed, but he claims he understands: it is not a big deal for Biden to lose the election. Likewise, when he recites the refrain for solace, many American people—be his supporters or opponents—must have been touched by it. Indeed, emotionally, Biden visits their heart and vice-versa. Therefore, Biden’s appeals to empathy give a message of reconciliation and reconstruction of America.

We Have Camaraderie: “We are not enemies”.

*It’s time to put away the harsh rhetoric.
To lower the temperature.
To see each other again.
To listen to each other again.
To make progress, we must stop treating our opponents as our enemy.
We are not enemies. We are Americans.* (Stevens, 2020).

The anaphoric expressions are charged with the pacifying appeals making a call for coordination and cooperation between The Democrats and The Republicans. Biden says that it is not the time for ‘the harsh rhetoric’ which

means he appeals to his supporters and the defeated opponents to remain calm and cool, thereby accepting the victory of Biden and the defeat of Trump. Then, Biden delivers what he expects from his supporters and Trump supporters. In his expression, 'to lower temperature' curbs the feeling of hostility caused due to anger, revenge, and fury created during the election campaigns. Likewise, 'to see' and 'to listen' to each other target any hasty emotions of violence and destruction; it offers a way to look at each other in a much friendly manner which results in peace and harmony in society. At the same time, Biden further says that the possible destructive drives are to be used "to make progress" in America (Sky News, 2020b). Here, Biden seeks to positivize (progress) the negative emotions (harsh rhetoric) by making an emotional bond of nation and nationhood: "We are not enemies. We are Americans". Contrasting with opponents and enemies, Biden evokes a sense of unity. The sense of unity has been supported by the powerful expression 'we are Americans'. Here, Biden tries to eliminate the sense of enmity by triggering the feeling of unity as Americans.

Moreover, he further seeks to reconcile The Democrats and The Republicans by bringing reference from the Holy Bible (Ecclesiastes 3): "The Bible tells us that to everything there is a season — a time to build, a time to reap, a time to sow. And a time to heal. This is the time to heal in America". Bringing a reference from the Holy Bible creates feelings and emotions for unity and cooperation. Here, Biden calls for building America and to heal America, but not to fight each other as enemies. So, Biden further states they need to "marshal the forces of decency and the forces of fairness" along with "the forces of science and the forces of hope" (Stevens, 2020). In these expressions, Biden appeals to decency, fairness, and hope. For Biden, all these positive feelings are possible only if the Republicans or Trump supporters 'lower their temperature' and accept his appeals for cooperation.

Moreover, Biden's address gets accelerated when he attempts to incorporate people from different walks of life. After introducing his wife Jill as "a military mom and an educator", Biden attempts to include the educators of America in his line of thought. At this point, he directly addresses the educators "You're going to have one of your own in the White House, and Jill is going to make a great First Lady", and further claims "For America's

educators, this is a great day”. Biden, most importantly, presents Kamala Harris as “a fantastic vice president — Kamala Harris — who will make history as the first woman, first Black woman, the first woman of South Asian descent, and first daughter of immigrants ever elected to national office in this country”. This is one of the most significant points in his speech which addresses the largest portion of the American population.

Therefore, Biden’s speech successfully delivers a message that makes a call for unity and reconciliation. When Biden makes a call ‘to lower the temperature’, it tranquilizes the intensity of the feeling of rage and revenge. When Biden makes a call to work together to make ‘progress’ in America, the sense of hostility that exists between Trump supporters and Biden supporters is likely to calm down. Biden emphatically says that the Democrats and Republicans are just the opponents during the election; they are no more enemies. When Biden highlights the very difference between opponents and enemies, it generates friendly feelings in both sides which is also fundamental to unity and reconciliation. Moreover, the uniting emotional illocution which Biden creates in his speech is that both The Democrats and The Republicans are ‘Americans’. It means when they are ‘Americans’; their feelings, sentiments, aspirations, and dreams are similar. Hence, unity and reconciliation are possible. Besides, when Biden brings reference to the scripture, it also creates a sense of respect and reverence. It is, in a sense, one of the strongest authorities Biden could cite to beg unity and reconciliation. In sum, Biden looks successful in generating the necessary emotions in his audience making a call for unity and reconciliation.

An American Pride: “America is a beacon for the globe”.

Biden iterates and reiterates the discourse of ‘The United States of America’ to create nationalistic feelings to make a clarion call for national unity. He presents Vice-President Kamala Harris as a figure who generates the uniting principle in America. Biden further creates pride and glory in his audience for being Americans.

Biden creates a discourse of inclusiveness in America which makes American people feel proud and progressive. Firstly, Biden describes Kamala Harris as “a fantastic vice president” carving out history as “the first woman, first Black

woman, first woman of South Asian descent, and first daughter of immigrants ever elected to national office in this country.” Here, he sounds very inclusive in addressing the people living in the United States. Secondly, Biden highlights American pride in its diversity:

Democrats, Republicans and Independents.

Progressives, moderates and conservatives.

Young and old.

Urban, suburban and rural.

Gay, straight, transgender.

White. Latino. Asian. Native American. (Stevens, 2020).

Here Biden's speech addresses the audience from diverse backgrounds which touches their heart. Here, the speech incorporates people of varying political backgrounds, diverse age groups, sexual orientations, demographic distributions, and ethnicity. The audience, here, is likely to feel that they have been addressed individually by the president-elect.

In addition, Biden's speech creates a feeling of being proud of American leadership and opportunities. Biden emphatically iterates and re-iterates that the United States of America is a 'Great' nation and American people are 'good'. "Tonight, the whole world is watching America. I believe at our best America is a beacon for the globe.", says Biden in his speech. It creates an American confidence of becoming a leader in the world. The term 'beacon' accurately metaphorizes American leadership. Biden further synonymizes America with the terms 'possibilities' and 'opportunities'. Biden proudly announces, "I've always believed we can define America in one word: Possibilities". The very term possibility triggers confidence in the audience to make individual progress which has been further strengthened by Biden "That in America everyone should be allowed to go as far as their dreams and God-given ability will take them". Biden also appeals to people to walk together to march ahead. His anaphoric expression goes: "Ahead to an America that's freer and more just. Ahead to an America that creates jobs with dignity and respect". It evokes a sense of optimism in the audience for being Americans: "This is a great nation. And we are a good people. This is the United States of America."

Hence, Biden seeks to make his audience more enthusiastic and optimistic about the future of America under his presidency.

Thus, Biden's proud announcement of American pride coupled with possibilities and opportunities reinforces his call for reconstruction and recovery of America from the trauma of the pandemic which seriously affected the American socio-economy. The "best America", for Biden, needs cooperation and coordination among the American people. He further believes that it is possible since America is 'great' and American people are 'good'. Hence, Biden's triggering of American pride and confidence directs his audience not to divide but to unite.

Conclusion

Biden's victory speech arouses emotions in the audience to communicate the message of unity and reconciliation effectively; it strives to create repairs within ruptures. In the speech, Biden strives to gain acceptance or approval from the audience—the audience who were deeply bifurcated during the presidential election campaigns. There were burning emotions of fear, doubt, conflicts, and contradictions which were mainly caused by the intensity of ideological polarity between Trump supporters and Biden supporters. Therefore, it was a challenge for Biden to amplify the premises and promises of re-uniting America.

Biden, in his speech, endeavors to positivise those negative emotions of tension and turmoil by eliciting hope, optimism, confidence, and cordiality among the American people. As a result, the friendly feelings that Biden successfully generates through his speech bind the audience together irrespective of the political, racial, geographical, (dis)ability, and sexual demarcations. Moreover, Biden instils hope and confidence in American history defining his victory as a transitional point, a transition from pessimism to optimism.

Moreover, Biden empathizes with the defeated Trump supporters and the victims of the pandemic as well. He frankly announces that he can feel what his opponents (Trump supporters) have felt since he has undergone the same experience of defeat in the past. Then, he pledges to unify America in fighting against the pandemic and racism. Those commitments that Biden

creates during his speech prepare the audience for national unity, cooperation, and coordination. Hence, Biden's victory speech, to a greater extent, delivers his presidential pledge of uniting and reconciling American society by invoking positive feelings: confidence, trust, optimism, empathy, camaraderie, and American pride.

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