

ENGL 4670  
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Sep 04, 2014

#### LINCOLN'S "GETTYSBURG ADDRESS": THREE VERSIONS

Now that we have given some attention to rhetorical aspects of memorial addresses by President Clinton and President Bush, we turn to the best known memorial address in American history, President Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address." In addition to the "standard version" of Lincoln's famous speech, let's give some attention to the differences between this version and two other versions, which most historians regard as earlier drafts. On the other side of this handout, you'll find these three versions, which I've placed in adjoining columns for easier comparison. The texts come from the Library of Congress website, which has marked in **bold** those portions of the drafts that differ from the standard version (though I've noticed that not all of the differences were marked). In addition to considering the address from the rhetorical perspective outlined in Donovan Ochs's chapter (with his use of Bitzer's theory of rhetorical situation), we might consider possible rhetorical reasons for the stylistic changes Lincoln made to his final draft.

Here is the URL for the Library of Congress online exhibition of the speech:

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/gettysburg-address/exhibition-items.html>

First Draft (Nicolay Copy)	Second Draft (Hay Draft)	Standard Version (Bliss Copy)
<p>Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that "all men are created equal."</p> <p>Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of it, as a final resting place for those who <b>died here, that the</b> nation might live. <b>This we may, in all propriety do.</b> But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can not hallow, this ground—The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have <b>hallowed</b> it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here; <b>while it</b> can never forget what they <b>did</b> here.</p> <p>It is rather for us, <b>the living, we here be</b><sup>1</sup> dedicated to the great task remaining before us —that, from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here, gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve these dead shall not have died in vain; that <b>the</b> nation, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people by the people for the people, shall not perish from the earth.</p>	<p>Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.</p> <p>Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation, so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met <b>here</b> on a great <b>battlefield</b> of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of it as a final resting place for those who <b>here gave their lives that</b> that nation might live. <b>It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.</b></p> <p>But in a larger sense we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can not hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled, here, have <b>consecrated</b> it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, <b>but</b> can never forget what they <b>did</b> here. <b>It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they have, thus far, so nobly carried on.</b> It is rather for us <b>to be here</b> dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve <b>that</b> these dead shall not have died in vain; that <b>this</b> nation shall have a new birth of freedom; and that <b>this</b> government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.</p>	<p>Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal<sup>4</sup>.</p> <p>Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.</p> <p>But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us -- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.</p>

1. What appears to be an ungrammatical construction, here, is actually the result of transcribing an incompleated change that Lincoln had written after crossing out a previously written sentence.