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Introduction to "Too Proud to Fight"

"There is such a thing as a man being too proud to fight" ("Citizens of Foreign Birth" 89)[1], these words resonated throughout America in the speech given by Woodrow Wilson May 11, 1915 at the Philadelphia Convention Hall. Woodrow Wilson may not be the most commonly recognized of all the presidents, but his presidency was the model of the future presidents to come. His presidency was an uncertain time for the American people; they were isolated from the rest of the world, and thousands of miles of away from the pressing issues of blood being shed in Europe. To this day, Woodrow Wilson still stands as an ever-shining beacon that avoided war at all costs, and defended American neutrality until he was left with no choice.

Woodrow Wilson's speech "Too Proud to Fight" was delivered in the Philadelphia Convention Hall in honor of 4,000 newly naturalized American citizens. Nearly 15,000 people had gathered around the hall to hear the president speak on that balmy May Day. This speech redefined the American ideal by encouraging immigrants to take on the American dream, and to become a people who strive for liberty and justice. This speech was also just days after the sinking of the *USS Lusitania*, and although he did not directly address the attack, "The audience did not hesitate to read the application of the statement" (APR 295). Woodrow Wilson excited the audience with his ability to be the leader of the masses, and to be a defender of the American neutrality. He felt that is was America's job to be the leading and guiding example for human rights and defender

[1] Please note that all references from the speech are taken from, Woodrow Wilson. "Citizens of Foreign Birth: Address to Naturalized Citizens at Convention Hall, Philadelphia." *Selected Addresses and Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*. Ed. Albert Bushnell-Hart. Honolulu: University of the Pacific, 2002. 85-89. Print.

of democracy across the world (Levin 35). The basis of Wilsonian idealism is that America was to be the moral leader of the world, and must take it upon their shoulders to protect and make the world a better place. Through rhetoric and persuasion, Wilson convinced the masses that America was the shining light in a world of darkness.

Woodrow Wilson was best known for his rhetoric through his uplifting ideals and moral convictions (Waller 423). Growing up with strict Presbyterian background was one of the main foundations of his moral and optimistic speaking style. Optimism is one of the main components in "Too Proud to Fight." Wilson's speech was not only effective, but was exactly the type of uplifting ideals that helped keep the angers of the nation at bay. By encouraging immigrants to assimilate into American society, he was setting the example as to how immigrants should be treated. This speech helped shape the American opinion on the treatment of immigrants at the time. After the attack on the *Lusitania*, Wilson was in a critical position to give a speech to set the attitude of the nation toward the German attack. Instead of letting the pressure get the best of him, he delivered a positive speech which encouraged Americans to turn the other cheek to the attack, and spurred the immigrants to take up the American ideal, and become a part of society.

Significance of "Too Proud to Fight"

Woodrow Wilson is significantly known to be able to use his rhetorical presidency to sway the American masses. According to Tulis, "Woodrow Wilson gave much greater weight to the role of the public opinion as the ordinary conduct of the representative government than did his founders" (Tulis 124). He took pride in the people of the country, by holding them to a higher standard of moral convictions. He was known for his idealistic policies and had a gift of turning his

moral convictions into platforms and policies (Waller 475). Wilson was bent on incorporating the American public into his presidency, and used their popular opinion to go over Congress' head for approval in his policies (Tulis 56). This of course brings up the problem of demagoguery. Wilson walked the fine line between being a popular leader and a demagogue. He swayed the public masses with his sharp intellect and encompassing rhetorical style, while still keeping in mind the moral compass, which guided him through his presidency. According to Jeffrey A. Tulis who wrote The Rhetorical Presidency, "Wilson tried to act according to the dictates of his reinterpretation of American politics. I show through the analysis of twentieth-century presidential rhetoric, presidents have continued to follow his example" (Tulis 20). His rhetorical presidency was modeled for many presidents to come. Wilson gave one of the shortest inaugural speeches ever recorded with only 1526 words, his predecessor's inaugural speeches averaged around the 10,000-12,000 word-range. Wilson was best known for his speaking style that encompassed intellectual and concise word choices. His style enabled him to offer the most comprehensive theory in support of his practices. In Ryan Teten's book, Evolution of the Modern Rhetorical Presidency, he states, "Wilson was more of transitional figure, a president with rhetorical features before his time" (Teten 1). He charted the waters of a weak foreign policy, into a strong set of ideals that are still prevalent today (Ikenberry 26).

American idealism: to always be right, and to set the example for other countries around the world, sets the groundwork for the speech; as a country that is too proud to fight. Wilsonian idealism is how America should be the leader and

defender of all. With the war raging abroad, Wilson took it upon his shoulders to act as a buffer between the European nations. Wilson posed that America was a defender of democracy in a world being taken over by an aggressive autocracy. According to Gordon Levin who wrote the book, Woodrow Wilson and World Politics, states, "The autocracy vs. democracy concept also gave an ethical finality to the schism in Western unity which Wilson was hesitant to accept irrevocably until March 1917" (Levin 36). Because of Wilson's religious background, he held ridged moral principles that dictated his presidency, and his outlook of the American people.

Woodrow Wilson's speech "Too Proud to Fight" also served as a strong indication of immigrant tolerance at the time. With the war pressing America into action, he was able to remain neutral and encourage the immigrants to become a part of "A great body of ideals" (86). Why was it so important that he gave a speech to welcome 4,000 newly naturalized citizens? Because he knew that if he encouraged the immigrants to take part in American ideals, that they might be less likely of sabotage or pose a threat to American security. Wilson said that America was a large melting pot of different nationalities, but he insisted: "A man who thinks of himself as belonging to a particular national group in America has not yet become an American" (88).

Historical Background

Woodrow Wilson was the 28th President of America and served two terms from 1913-1921. Wilson was born in Staunton, Virginia; he was the third of four children. Growing up, Wilson never attended a public school, but was privately tutored by his father. His father was a Presbyterian minister, which is what gave the basis for Wilson's

emphasis of moral idealism, which became a large part of his presidency. According to Robert A. Waller, President Wilson reminisced about the early teachings of his father, "His fathers early advice was to stress simplicity in both speaking and writing, 'Don't shoot at your meaning with a bird shot and hit the whole countryside; shoot the rifle at the thing you want to say'" (Waller 421). He first attended Davidson College in North Carolina before transferring to Princeton University after his freshman year. During his time at Princeton he became very widely read and took an interest in political philosophy and history. After he obtained his degree from Princeton, he attended law school at the University of Virginia; from which he did not finish. He withdrew and continued his studies back in North Carolina. After passing the bar exam, Wilson attended John Hopkins University to get his doctorate in history and political science, becoming the first president to have obtained a Ph.D. (Nardini 25). While at John Hopkins University he joined literary societies and participated in their debates (Waller 421). By participating in these debates this allowed him to sharpen his rhetorical skills when it came to organization and logic this later became the basis of his speeches in his political career. Wilson wrote in the Public Papers about his thoughts of speaking eloquently, "Eloquence consists not in sonorous sound or brilliant phrases. Thought is in the fibre, thought is the pith of eloquence. Eloquence lies in the thought, not in the throat…it is persuasion inspired by conviction" (Waller 421). Wilson utilized his persuasion and rhetoric while he was a student, and continued to grown throughout his political career.

Wilson started his political career as the president of Princeton University in 1902. He served the school until 1910, when he chose to leave and pursue New Jersey politics. He served as New Jersey Governor for only two years before deciding to run for

the Democratic Presidential party in 1912. Wilson defeated William Howard Taft in the 1912 election and took office in 1913. During the election, Wilson "Swayed his listeners with the strength of his convictions, the high purpose of his message, the logic of his argument, and the religious correctness of his position" (Waller 422). Through his impromptu rhetoric and scholarly speaking style he persuaded the hearts of thousands. He also spurred the masses to demand changes in the government during his term in office. Focusing on domestic affairs, and domestic reform was what helped coin the term, "New Freedom" for his campaign slogan. During his first term, Wilson worked on strengthening the Federal Reserve and enacted the Federal Trade Commission that prohibited unfair trade acts; the act also ended union liability antitrust laws (Brands 5). Unfortunately, with the war erupting in Europe, this forced Wilson to shift his focus from domestic affairs to international policy.

With the Great War raging in Europe, Wilson was forced to present more concrete international policies. In the summer of 1914, the Austro-Hungarian Empire invaded Serbia, which was followed by a German invasion of Belgium, Luxembourg and France. When the nation was faced with the news of war, and the pressure from the Allies for American aid, all eyes turned toward the president for answers. Even though Wilson was being pulled in two directions between neutrality, and war, he promoted neutrality in his foreign policies. From 1914 through 1917 Wilson did his best to keep the nation out of war. He offered to be the mediator between the warring powers in Europe, but many did not take his offers seriously. Many of the European nations whom were a part of the Allies were frustrated with America's neutrality. The Republican Party criticized him for not advocating the buildup of United States Army in anticipation of war. Again in1916,

Wilson tried to advocate peace between the Central Powers and the Allies; his attempts were futile.

During his first term as President he did the best he could to keep America out of war. He ran again in 1916 for his second term, with the slogan “He kept us out of war”. While running, he was proud of the fact that he has confidently avoided conflict with both Germany and Mexico. When speaking of the German attack of the *Lusitania* in 1915 he stated this, “The nation that violates these essential rights must expect to be checked and called to account by direct challenge and resistance. It at once makes the quarrel in part our own" (Second Inaugural). Wilson was the leading example of American neutrality and encouraged the citizens to do the same (Wilson 24). America remained neutral to WWI until April 2, 1917 where Wilson spoke to the joint session of Congress and requested permission to go to war with Germany.

The Speech and Rhetorical Methods Used

To analyze Woodrow Wilson’s Speech “Too Proud to Fight,” one must address the five cannons of rhetoric: invention, organization, style, delivery and memory. All of the cannons are utilized in the speech. Invention of rhetoric is the area of the speech that addresses the topics of the argument, how those arguments are formulated, and the motive behind the speech. Invention of a speech also addressed how the speaker uses the three artistic proofs, ethos, pathos and logos. In “Too Proud to Fight,” Wilson’s main argument is that human nature is highly moralistic and that he created an American ideal in which he encouraged people to follow. He encouraged people to assimilate into: “The great ideal, to a great body of principles, to a great hope of the human race” (89). Because of Wilson’s Presbyterian Christian background, Wilson created his view of the American

people's role in the world, "We came to America, either ourselves or in the persons of our ancestors, to better the ideals of men" (88). In the book The American Ideology: Reflections of the Revolution in American Rhetoric, written by Kurt W. Ritter and James R. Andrews, they state how American people create an ideal in which they believe three main things:

> They welded together three defining ideas into an ideology, which set the new land apart. They came to believe that America had been chosen by God as the land promised to His people, that is was destined to become a great republican empire, and that it was endowed with the unique and sacred trust of providing the home for liberty. (Ritter and Andrews 50)

This idea continues to be true, and this idea is the main argument presented in the speech. All Americans should feel as though they took on the burden of promoting and encompassing this great American ideal. Wilson's motive was to persuade the immigrants to help work toward a better America, and addressing those who were already citizens that it is their civil duty to uphold these ideals, "You dreamed dreams of what America was to be, and I hope you brought the dreams with you. No man that does not see visions will ever realize any high hope or undertake any high enterprise" (89). Wilson is able to present his argument for a better ideal to encompass the new immigrants and to show that America was different than all other countries in the world, "It means that Americans must have a consciousness different from the consciousness of every other nation in the world" (89).

While looking at any speech, it is important to take into account the ethics or the character of the speaker, and how he uses ethos pathos and logos to support his argument.

Ethos is the perceived credibility of the speaker from the view of the audience. According to Aristotle, ethos is the most important element that a speaker must have in order for an audience to listen (Aristotle 34). Wilson establishes his credibility by being the president of the United States, his religious background, and his insistence upon moral uprightness which shape his character. Because Wilson was a platform speaker he was able to make the audience comfortable, and feel as though he was talking to them in an intimate setting. He builds his credibility by welcoming the immigrants into his nation, "That is the reason that I, for one, make you welcome. If I have in any degree forgotten what America was intended for, I thank God if you will remind me" (88). By making the audience seem as though they have replenished his faith, he gives them credit to build toward the American spirit. He also talks to the audience in a very personal intimate way, calling them "my friends" (86). He reminds them that they are all equals who strive for "The great enterprises of the human spirit" (85). Wilson also uses inclusive language such as "we" and "us" to show that, although he is the president, he wants the audience to regard him as a father-like figure who keeps their best interests at heart.

The artistic proof pathos is an important component of any speech. Pathos is defined as the emotional appeal to the audience. Wilson was known for his "aloofness", and sometimes what could be called, "coldness to those around him" (Devlin 29). His rhetorical style was straightforward and somewhat distant like that of a professor to student. Before his brief occupancy as the Governor of New Jersey, Wilson served as the president of Princeton University where he was well liked by students and teachers alike (Devlin 35). His involvement in debate at Princeton University is where he was able to sharpen his abilities to be clear and concise about his argument. (Waller 478). Theodore

Roosevelt was the 26th President of the United States, was one of Wilson's largest critics. He was known for powerful emotional speeches and boisterous hand gestures; offset Wilson's straightforward rhetorical style (Devlin 45). "Too Proud to Fight" was one of the most emotional speeches that Wilson ever gave. He appealed to the audience's emotions by thanking them for renewing his spirit, "I ought not to be away from Washington, and yet I feel that it has renewed my spirit as an American to be here" (89). He spoke about the importance of every American to feel as though they are all united and not to think of themselves in groups, "The man who seeks to divide man from man, group from group, interest from interest in this great Union is striking at its very heart" (88). Wilson appealed to the people through emotional words and strong phrases such as, "That you were drawn across the ocean by some beckoning finger of hope, by some belief, by some vision of a new kind of justice, by some expectation of a better kind of life" (88). Having emotion in an iconic speech such as "Too Proud to Fight" was one of the best ways to get the audience to hold American ideals in their hearts.

The last of the three artistic proofs is logos, or the "logic." The logic of the speech is one of the most important parts of the speech; it is where the argument is found, and how much logical sense the argument makes. Wilson is very logical in his speech, where he presents his straightforward intention of telling the immigrants how he welcomes them into the nation. He presents the idea that all Americans must work for the common good of America and that they should, "Not think of themselves in groups" (88). This is a logical argument that implies that the immigrants should assimilate into American society, and help work toward the "The great body of principles." (87) The logical appeal to the audience made Wilson a great leader who welcomed immigrants into the country.

The organization of the speech is essential to how the delivery affects the audience. The organization of the speech is very straightforward. At the beginning of the speech, Wilson immediately affirms what the topic of the speech will be, "But it is not of myself that I wish to think to-night; but of those who have just become citizens of the United States" (86). Wilson utilizes the rhetorical device karios, since he used the opportune moment to give the speech. After the sinking of the *Lusitania* the nation was angry, and needed confirmation of their neutrality. Wilson chose the location of Philadelphia since it was home to a large German population, and the mayor at the time was Rudolph Blankenburg, was German immigrant himself. By giving the speech at Philadelphia, Wilson was able to placate the American people, and encourage the immigrants to find their loyalty to America. This is strategic to show the immigrants that they are welcomed into the country despite the attack. Wilson also used prepon, which is using the fitting speaking style to fit the audience. According to Robert Kraig in his book, Woodrow Wilson and the Lost World of an Oratorical Statesman, believed that, "Wilson needed to be spontaneous and impassioned, playing off his audience to build excitement to fever pitch" (Kraig 113). The speech was exciting and passionate, an excitement that the audience caught. The speech is short and easy to understand, which is perfect for newly naturalized citizens. Since the speech is short, it does not follow the normal chronological time frame. The speech hits its climax two stanzas away from the conclusion; "There is such a thinking as a nation being so right that it does not need to convince others by force that it is right" (89). This line was in response to the sinking of the *Lusitania* and reinforcing that America was still to remain neutral to the war. Wilson finished off the speech in the conclusion reinforcing one last time how the ideals of

America set it apart from the rest of the world, "The sense of your support and of the living vitality in your hearts of the great ideals which have made America the hope of the world" (89).

Wilson used many rhetorical devices in his speech. Wilson uses rhetorical devices to persuade his audience to feel as though they should assimilate into American society. Wilson is very fond of using antithesis to compare and contrast two opposing ideas. In the second paragraph of the speech, Wilson says, "And while you bring all countries with you, you come with a purpose of leaving all other countries behind you" (87). In this antithesis Wilson is comparing bringing and leaving; by bringing only the best qualities of the old country into America, we can be sure they will leave the other bad qualities behind. Wilson continues to compare bringing and leaving in the next two lines, "Bringing what is best of their spirit, but not looking over your shoulders and seeking to perpetuate what you intend to leave behind in them" (87). These four lines are a chiasmus where Wilson reversed the order of the words bring and leaving, to the next line in which he says first, bringing then leave. The use of chiasmi in rhetoric helps create a sense of parallelism in the structure of the speech. It also creates unity that ties the speech together. Wilson later addresses that he encourages the immigrants to dedicate themselves to America, "But it is one thing to love the place where you were born and it is another thing to dedicate yourself to a place to which you will go" (88). In this antithesis Wilson is acknowledging that the immigrants will always be loyal to their homeland, but it is important to dedicate themselves to America. Wilson conveys the importance of the immigrant's loyalty to America during pre-wartime. In the book, The Inaugural Addresses of the Twentieth-Century American Presidents, James K. Andrews

comments on Wilson's uses of antithesis, "Antithetical mode was one that Wilson had often put to use to compare ideals and action" (Ryan 32). Throughout the rest of the speech, antithetical remarks appear constantly, "You do not love humanity if you seek to divide humanity", and that humanity is only held together, "By love, by sympathy, by justice, not by jealousy and hatred" (88). Wilson paints the speech with colorful contrasts to help the audience see his point, "America was created to unite mankind by those passions which lift and not by the passions which separate and debase" (88). By using antithesis, Wilson's speaking style eludes eloquence that is only achieved through practiced rhetoric.

Woodrow Wilson was best known for his eloquent speaking style, he was a master at engaging his immediate audience. Throughout his speeches Wilson used rhetorical syllogisms to sharpen his point. He starts with a major premise, then a minor premise, and a conclusion. In the speech "Too Proud to Fight", Wilson states, "You can not dedicate yourself to America unless you become in every respect and with every purpose of your will thorough Americans" (86). The major premise is that all men want to dedicate themselves to American. The minor premise is that you (the immigrants) want to dedicate yourself to America. The conclusion is that to be a thorough American one must dedicate themselves completely to America. Later in the speech Wilson states, "A man does not go out to seek the thing that is not in him. A man does not hope for the thing he does not believe in" (88). The major premise is that all men seek for something they believe in. The minor premise is that the immigrants seek for something in America. The conclusion is that to find what they believe in, they must seek it out in America. His use of enthymemes helps him to include all of his listeners through his speech.

Wilson's "Too Proud to Fight" is a celebratory speech which encompasses American ideals and uplifts the morals of the American people. The delivery style of the speech is epidictic with a deliberative undertone. An epidictic style speech is a speech of praise or blame. In this case, Wilson is giving a speech of praise and recognition of the newly naturalized citizens; 4,000 new immigrants were crowded into the Conventional Hall to hear the president speak. The tone of the delivery was strong and patriotic to help promote unity in the community. Epideictic speeches aim to, "Simply promote values that are shared in the community" (Rosenfield 95). Wilson helped promote the ideals of the community by reinforcing American ideals. Wilson begins the speech with his expression of excitement to be giving the speech to welcome the new citizens "It warms my heart that you should give me such a reception; but it is not myself that I wish to think of to-night; but of those who have just become citizens of the United States" (86). According to Lawrence W. Rosenfield, "Epideictic's understanding calls upon us to join our community in giving thought to what we witness, and such thoughtful beholding in commemoration constitutes memorializing" (Rosenfield 95). Wilson put emphasis on persuasion and eloquence in his speeches, he believed that, "The true orator was a person of deep learning, penetrating genius, almost magical powers of persuasion" (Kraig 20). Wilson had to persuade the crowd to buy into his American ideals. To Wilson, true eloquence, "Also required the emotive charge that could come only from speakers who advocate passionately held convictions" (Kraig 21). Persuasion was necessary, as well as being a passionate and eloquent speaker to produce a speech which asked people to put up their old country and take on "the great ideals" of America. This speech came at a significant time to commemorate the newly naturalized citizens, and show what values

make up America. Wilson's rhetorical habit was to rely heavily on extemporaneous speaking. Charles Swem, his stenographer, commented to a journalist about Wilson's extemporaneous style, "He disliked preparing an address in advance, 'in cold blood' as he called it. The presence of an audience stimulated him into making a better statement than he could in a dictated address" (Kraig 124). Wilson relied heavily impromptu speaking, and extemporaneous phrases like, "too proud to fight." This phrase is what drove the entire speech and was later eradicated from the printed versions. Because he relied on impromptu phrases in his speeches, many of the speeches given in public were much more passionate than those which were printed. Since "Too Proud to Fight" was an epideictic speech, he eluded a passion and emotion that were uncommon in his rhetorical style (Ikenberry 56). Epideictic speeches are a declaration of praise of the personal, and trying to unify the commonality of the audience. While at first glance the speech assumes the shape of a completely epideictic speech, but when reading deeper, Wilson gives it subtle deliberative undertone. Deliberative rhetoric is defined as a policy speech that is given so the audience knows where the speaker stands in regards to a specific issue. Wilson does not directly address the sinking of the *Lusitania* but he is setting an example as to how the people should respond to the German immigrants. He uses the emphasis of a nation being too proud to fight to show his stance on neutrality even through the German attack. For this reason, the speech is a celebration and praise of what it means to be an American, but deliberative for the reason Wilson takes a stance on his neutral policies.

The speech "Too Proud to Fight" will be forever stand as a great American idealistic speech. The speech may not be the most commonly recognized, but the content

of uplifting American ideals will always be everlasting in the realm of political addresses. The public memory of this address may reside mostly in the Philadelphian school systems that still read this speech today. The speech represents optimism in the American people, and how Wilson believed that they were the hope of the world. This speech helped shaped American idealism today. We to this day still believe that we are a defender of democracy, and defender of any unjust actions. America believes in a great ideal that still lives within our hearts. In the last line of the speech, Wilson leaves the audience with this, "The sense of your support and of the living vitality in you hearts of the great ideals which have made America the hope of the world" (89).

Woodrow Wilson was a deeply spiritual man whose Presbyterian background was one of the core principles of his being. While discussing Wilson's faith Devlin writes, "The faith remained with him unquestioned all his life and gave him the deep religious sense from which principles of his conduct sprang" (Devlin 10). His Christian upbringing is where his optimism stemmed from. Throughout his presidency and political career, Biblical messages and imagery were strong and constant (Link 4). His presidency was dictated through his morals and religious background:

> The foundations of Wilson's political thinking were the beliefs and ethical values that he inherited from the Christian tradition in general and from Presbyterianism in particular. Indeed, it is not too much to say that his Christian faith informed and influenced his every action and policy. (Link 5)

In "Too Proud to Fight," Wilson continually uses Biblical imagery to explain what it is to be American. He uses words such as: rebirth, great bodies, oath,

hope, believe, peace, human spirit, scared, worthy son, carry the burden, body, pure, spirit, and pure of heart. All of these words repeat continuously throughout the speech. "Spirit" is repeated seven times in the course of the speech, believe appears three times, and peace appears three different times. He refers to America as the "great body of principles." The idea of a body comes from the book of 1 Corinthians 12:12 where it says, "Just as a body, through one, has many parts, but all of its main parts form one body, so it is with Christ" (Bible). He sees America as one body that must function and work together to create unity. In the middle of the speech Wilson regards a man who does not strive to create unity, but attempts to break apart society, " [A man] seeks to trade upon your nationality is no worthy son to live under the Stars and Stripes" (87). The illusion to the "worthy son" is a reference to the prodigal's son who came home to his father after spending all of his inheritance, and repented to his father saying, "I am no more worthy to be called your son" (Luke 15:17).

Wilson uses Biblical illusions and references in his rhetoric that legitimizes the moral compass of America doing the right thing and staying out of war. Wilsonian idealism stemmed from Wilson's deep religious convictions; it helped shape his ideal of the roll the American people had in the world: "He believed that the American people had a peculiar role in the play of history, precisely because they were in many ways unique among the peoples of the world" (Link 6). His religious thoughts and convictions helped shaped foreign policy and the plight to remain neutral to a world at war.

The *Lusitania* and Immigration Policy

On May 7th 1915 there was a report that morning that a German Submarine had sunk a British liner, which resulted in 128 American deaths. The British liner that had been carrying Americans was torpedoed and sunk, off the coast of Ireland. Wilson was infuriated by the attack of the ship, and at the violation of neutral rights and international law (Levin 34). Levin states in his book Woodrow Wilson World Politics: America's reaction to War and Revolution, "After the torpedoing of the *Lusitania*, it was clear that Wilson was prepared, if pressed, to go to war with Germany that he saw as involving basic principles of neutral rights and international law (Levin 35). The American reaction was that of pure outrage at the violation of America's neutrality. The former German Colonial Secretary, Bernhard Dernburg, made a statement that defended the German attack on the liner. He stated that since the *Lusitania* had such items as guns and other war contraband, that Germany had the right to attack the ship (Snyder 85). Americans were angered at the attack of the Americans, which raised a strong anti-sentiment of German immigrants, and of Germany in general. Wilson gave the speech, "Too Proud to Fight" in Philadelphia, which is the "The City of Brotherly Love," which he felt would be suiting for a speech of peace.

Philadelphia at the time held a large number of German immigrants, which would be the ideal location to help prevent German anti-sentiment. The attack of the *Lusitania* was the main cause of Woodrow Wilson's speech; he wanted to calm the anxieties and angers of the American people. Wilson did not directly address the attack in his speech, but he again defended America's neutrality, "American must be the example not merely of peace because it will not fight, but of peace because peace is the healing and elevating influence of the world and strife is not" (88). His speech also incorporated the recognition

of the large immigrant population in the U.S. Since the immigrant population was so large it was very strategic for Wilson to address them, and to help them feel welcome in the country; and not to be tempted to take up arms against America. This speech is very well renowned for its strong American ideals and encouragement of the immigrants to take part in American society (Snyder 63).

The sinking of the *Lusitania* was not the only trigger for the beginning of strong anti-German sentiments. To better understand the American feelings toward immigration, one must look back into history. Immigration from 1915-1930's was one of the largest waves of immigration America has ever seen. From 1847 till 1930 the average number of immigrants was at a steady rate of 434,000 people each year. U.S. immigration peaked between the years of 1900-1914; where the average amount of immigrants per year came out to around 900,000 each year. Between the years 1900-1914 only 4% of the immigrants were German, whereas most of the populations came from central and eastern Europe. Since the population of German immigrants was so small at the time they, as well as the Irish (which made up only 4% as well), were targets for discrimination. With the onset of World War I in 1914, the sources of U.S. immigration again changed. According to the Economic History Association, there are five main reasons for immigration: (a) the difference in real wages between the country and the United States; (b) the rate of population growth in the country 20 or 30 years before; (c) the degree of industrialization and urbanization in the home country; (d) the volume of previous immigrants from that country or region; and (e) economic and political conditions in the United States (Cohn 3). Once the War started in 1914, many Germans fled Germany in fear for their families, and of fear of the destruction of war.

The historical trend of immigration in the United States shows that the largest influxes of migrations happen when the economic and political conditions are prosperous. The desire to restrict immigration became more prevalent in the early 1900's due to the high rate of migration. Americans began to become more upset at Germans, Irish or Italians because they would work at lower wages than Americans. In 1917, despite Wilson's veto, Congress passed a mandatory literacy test for immigrants; most were from central and eastern Europe, whom were deemed incompetent and blamed for economic problems. Later in 1921, the U.S. laid the groundwork for the first major restrictions of immigration. The act only permitted 350,000 immigrants from Europe annually. In 1924 they enacted the Nation Origins Act, which stated that a visa must be obtained for residency in the U.S. The number of immigrants drastically declined from 500,000 to 164,000 in a matter of three years. One of the largest causes in the decline of immigrants was the start of World War I (Cohn 6).

After the sinking of the *Lusitania* Germans were the target of discrimination and hatred. The National German-American Alliance was founded in 1914, and it was one of the, "Most influential, respected, and best organized minority groups in the United States" (App 30). Before the war had been declared on Germany in 1917, the German-Americans lead a somewhat normal life. The NGAA supported representative government and maintenance of civil and political rights the protection and naturalization of German immigrants, the study of US history and institutions, cultivation of German language and literature, and memory of German-American pioneers (App 31-32). The NGAA produced powerful propaganda to support the neutrality between Germany and America. The German-Americans were strong political

supporters of the Allies in their struggle, and encouraged Wilson to live up to his proclamations of neutrality. According to Austin App in his section, "The Germans," in the book, The Immigrants' Influence on Wilson's Peace Politics he states, "With the declaration of war on Germany on April 6, 1917, the German-Americans lost in their bid for public opinion, and so was the great reaction against all things German that they were virtually eliminated as a political and social force" (App 30).

As the relations with Germany became more strenuous, America's attitude toward the German immigrants began to sour. Wilson was aware of the American feelings toward the German immigrants, and which is one of the reasons he gave the speech "Too Proud to Fight." He knew that if the immigrants felt isolated they might feel more inclined to betray America. There was a constant fear of sabotage and spies from the German Government. Two months after America joined the war, Congress passed the Espionage Act of 1917, which prohibited any attempts to interfere with military operations, to support the United States enemies, and any planning to sabotage or spy for another country (Gupta 1). Wilson originally incriminated publication that could harm national defense, but Congress cast it down on infringement of the freedom of speech (Gupta 2). Throughout WWI over 700 people were charged with the Espionage Act, but many were recounted due to the violation of the First Amendment (Gupta 7).

As the discrimination continued to get worse, the NGAA's power began to deteriorate (App 35). They were forced to stop producing the Allies' propaganda, and began to incriminate the German language. The German language was banned in schools, and German literature was being burned in the streets. Previous President Theodore Roosevelt was a strong supporter against "Hyphenated Americans" and insisted that dual

loyalties were impossible during wartime, "We can have no 'fifty-fifty' allegiances in this country, either a man is an American with nothing else, or he is not an American at all" (Schlesinger 41). Later while speaking about immigrants who came to America he stated that he, "Condemns Americans who saw the world from the standpoint of another nation" (Schlesinger 41). In the speech "Too Proud to Fight" Wilson told the immigrants to put off their old country and take on America as their new native land, "You cannot dedicate yourself to America unless you become in every respect and with every purpose of your will thorough Americans" (87). Wilson knew that the way to help make the immigrants feel welcome was to incorporate them into the "Great American ideal" (86).

In Arthur Schlesinger's book, The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society, he talks about how Wilson is proud of the melting pot of America, "We are the great melting pot of America" (Schlesinger 20). In the speech, Wilson wants the immigrants to assimilate completely into American society and take up the American cause. Schlesinger agrees with Wilson's point of view, he argues that, "This heterogeneity makes the quest for unifying ideals and common culture all the more urgent" (Schlesinger 4). Since America is made up of so many different nationalities it is important to be able to unite under one common cause. This is one of the main ideas in the speech that all the immigrants should assimilate into American society:

> You come with a purpose of leaving all other countries behind you-bringing what is best of their spirit, but not looking over your shoulders and seeking to perpetuate what you intend to leave behind in them. (87)

This is a famous antithesis, which compares the bringing the best of the spirit, but do not perpetuate what you want to leave behind. This antithesis creates a strong emphasis on Wilson's point that to be true Americans, the immigrants should only bring to America the ideals and actions that makes it stronger, and not what takes from it.

Neutrality and Democracy

In the face of German submarine aggression, Wilson had to deliver a speech on his stance of whether or not the sinking of the *Lusitania* changed the policy of neutrality. In the speech, the word "peace" occurs three separate times in regards to how American should be the example of peace because it will not fight. American neutrality was one of the largest platforms Wilson took on as his first term as president. He believed in the moral conscious of America who should remain neutral: "Thus America's mission in the world was not to attain wealth and power, but to serve mankind through leadership in moral purposes and in advancing peace and world unity" (Link 7). His religious background was the main component in his optimistic view of America. Wilson believed that America was to be the leader of a revolutionary new society of the future, "American national values were identical with universal progressive liberal values, and an exceptionalist America had a mission to head mankind toward the orderly international society of the future" (Levin 3). In the beginning of the address, Wilson says that his country experiences a constant rebirth by, "Constantly drinking in strength out of new sources by the voluntary associate with it the great bodies of strong men and forward looking women out of other lands" (87). By having the immigrants assimilate into society, they take on American ideals, creates a sense of unity within the country.

A main theme in Wilson's political thinking was his belief and trust in a democratic system. He believed that America was unique in its political system, believing that, "Democracy was the most advanced, humane, and, in the long run, most effective form of government" (Link 5). Wilson address his view of democracy by stating, "You have just taken an oath of allegiance to the United States…an oath of allegiance to a great ideal, to a body of principles, to a great hope of the human race" (88). The body of ideals represents a democratic government, which he puts his total and complete faith into. He then says that immigrants come to America to "Help forward the great enterprises of the human spirit" (89). He believed that America was the great vanguard of the movement toward a democratic foreign policy and that America has a special responsibility to lead, direct and inspire the world toward enlightened leadership (Ikenberry 7). His philosophy of democracy helped shape his policies in foreign affairs.

In Arthur Link's book, Woodrow Wilson: Revoultion, War and Peace, Link comments on Wilson's view of democracy, "He believed that all peoples were capable of self-government because they were all endowed with inherent character and capacity for growth" (Link 5). The sinking of the *Lusitania* was the turning point where Wilson alluded that the war was a war of American democracy against German autocracy. It was the first time where Wilson concluded that there was an attack on the American people and on democracy. At that point Wilson named America, "Global champions of democracy," and would attempt from there on out to promote democracy throughout the world. Wilson believed that democratic governments hardly fought, but instead would discuss their problems until they have come to an agreement (Link 57). This idea was the cause of Wilson's change of thought toward autocratic governments. Wilson took it upon

himself to help implement democratic ideals through the world; with America being the shining and self-sacrificing beacon of hope.

Significance of the Rhetorical Presidency

Wilson changed the rhetorical style of America. To understand how Wilson was able to influence the masses, one must understand how his rhetorical style changed the presidency forever. In Jeffrey K. Tulis' book, The Rhetorical Presidency Tulis address why Wilson stood apart from his predecessors, "Woodrow Wilson gave much greater weight to the role of the public opinion as the ordinary conduct of representative government than did the founders" (Tulis 124). Wilson's concern was to have the heart of the masses. The presidents before him all appealed to Congress before they would go to the people, Wilson was the first to go to the masses first, "This process differed, at least in theory, from older attempts to 'form' public opinion: it did not begin in the minds of the elite but in the hearts of the mass" (Tulis 125). Wilson made politics available to the common man; politics were no longer just for the upper crust of society. In Teten's article, "Evolution of the Rhetorical Presidency," he states that Wilson used more inclusive language than his predecessors. Through this technique, Wilson was seen as the social leader and well as the president. He urged Congress to allow more of an "excited" executive power, in which the president would have a heavier pull on executive decision-making (Tulis 128). Through Wilson's rhetoric, he was able to capture the hearts and minds of the masses.

With any popular social leader, the question always arises as to whether or not the leader is a demagogue. Most of the speeches given by a demagogue are a mix between emotional and logical appeals, "The key characteristic of a demagogue seems to be an

excess of passionate appeals" (Tulis 28). The main attempt of a demagogue is to sway the masses to gain a sense of leadership among the people to create a rise to power. The fear of a demagogue rising to power has always been an issue the Founders of the country feared; and with Wilson's emphasis of popular rhetoric with the masses, he became a target of question. Wilson was the target of skepticism of trying to gain the hearts of the masses off public opinion alone. Wilson argues against these accusations by saying that demagogues only argue in the direction of the masses opinion; he states on this account that he does what is absolutely morally right, "The demagogue appeals to the 'momentary and whimsical popular mood, and the transitory or popular passion,' whereas the leader appeals to 'true' sentiment" (Tulis 130). He also believe that people will not believe all information that is given to them, but they should be able to sift through it to find the truth, "Men are not led by being told what they don't know. Persuasion is a force, but not information; and persuasion is accomplished by creeping into the confidence of those you would lead" (Tulis 129). Wilson believes he is not a demagogue because he is a true leader who is concerned with, "Fostering the permanent interests of the community" (Tulis 130). Wilson walked the fine line between being a true leader and a demagogue; but revealed through his uplifting rhetoric that he kept the American people's well being close at heart.

Wilson believed that, "America was born so that men might be free" (Link 6). Within America lives the spirit of liberty and justice, and that men all around the world strive to become apart of a nation founded for the benefit of humanity. The spirit of humanity is an ideal that Wilson encouraged all Americans to take up, "My urgent advice to you would be, not only always think of America, but always, also, to think of

humanity" (86). By thinking first of humanity and then of America, he can be sure that the people of the United States desire to create an environment of justice and peace. Along with his emphasis of justice and peace, he philosophizes about the meaning of humanity. Wilson attempts to show the characteristics of what humanity is, "Humanity can only be welded together by love, sympathy, by justice, not by jealousy and hatred" (88). Wilson then moves onto saying that humanity, "Will not divide its people into jealous camps, but strive to unite mankind" (87). This is a reminder to the immigrants to not separate into their own national groups, but to integrate into America.

In the second half of the speech, Wilson's focuses on the ideal which draws people across the world into this nation, "That you were drawn across the ocean by some beckoning finger of hope, by some belief, by some vision of a new kind of justice, by some expectation of a better kind of life" (89). He address the idea of a man who may be disappointed in what he finds in America, but he reassures them, "No doubt you have found that justice in the United States goes only with a pure heart and a right purpose as it does everywhere else in the world" (86). This line represents the basis of America's foreign policy of neutrality at the time. Wilson sought to remain neutral to the world raging at war; he makes it seem as though America is better than any other country: "It means that Americans must have a consciousness different from the consciousness of every other nation in the world" (89). He was showing that America stands out in its neutrality, and that it will not fall into the pits of war.

American stands as the example to the world, "There is such a thing as a man being too proud to fight, there is such a nation being so right that it does not need to convince other by force that it is right" (89). This is the most famous line in the entire

speech; it is a direct comment as to how the sinking of the *Lusitania* was inhumane and wrong. He believes that the American people will see the attack as a wrong doing against the will of humanity, that they will not have to fight to prove they are right. Wilson encouraged the people to remain "Impartial in though as well as in action", and that they will do anything that is, "Fit and free to do what is honest and disinterested and truly serviceable for the peace of the world" (Flanagan 119).

At the end of the speech, Woodrow Wilson concludes his speech by reiterating his credibility, by letting the audience know that he should be away in Washington, but he would rather be here with the people; who renew his spirit. This helps give the audience a feeling of inclusiveness when he speaks to them saying, "And drink as it were, out of the common fountains with them and go back feeling what you have so generously given me" (89). This tactic of building up the audience is a way to ensure them that he sees the audience, including the immigrants, as equals. He encourages the audience to walk away from the speech with, "Vitality in your hearts of the great ideals which has made America the hope of the world" (89). Wilson encourages the nation to buy into his ideal of America being the leader and the "hope" of the world.

Conclusion

When addressing the American public, Wilson places such an importance on immigrants and their role in American. I believe that this speech truly transcends time. We are all immigrants in some point of our past, and this is a speech we can all relate to. We at one time all had a distant relative standing on Ellis Island holding in their hearts a dream; a dream of a better life, of something in America that cannot be found in their native land. Perhaps one of your family members was lucky enough to hear this infamous

speech in person. We all need a form of idealism, which keeps our dreams and hopes afloat. We all need an American idealism that keeps us united under one banner. Peace, justice, equality, and liberty are all ideals which Wilson gave precedence in in his speech. These ideals are the foundation of our nation. Through this speech Wilson gave the immigrants and the nation a common ground. To be united under the stars and stripes, not to stand in separated groups, but as a nation united through common ideals.

The impact of this speech reaches far beyond the bound of its time. This speech redefined the American ideal into what it is today. We are a nation of immigrants; who brought our dreams and hopes to be fulfilled in this great country. This was the main purpose of the speech, to let the people know that we all must work together to create the great American ideal. It seems as though the "Great body of principles" lives on today. We are still a great nation with optimistic ideals to be the healing power in a world of strife. In the last part of the speech, Wilson stateed that everyman in this country must carry the burden of work in order to survive, but revives them with uplifting words, "We can only make them light by the spirit in which they are carried. That is the spirit of hope, it is the spirit of liberty, it is the spirit of justice." This is a speech can be looked toward as an enduring political discourse; which stands the test of time and stands in the hearts of all Americans alike.

> I like to come and stand in the presence of a great body of my fellow-citizens, whether they have been my fellow-citizens a long time or a short time, and drink, as it were, out of the common fountains with them and go back feeling what you have so generously given me-the sense of your support and of the living vitality in your hearts of the great ideals which have made America the hope of the world.

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