Introduction

On Tuesday, November 4, 2008, millions of viewers witnessed history in the making when it was announced that the charismatic and charming Senator from Illinois would become the 44th President. Barack Hussein Obama's dream finally became a reality. It was a day that changed the lives of millions and will forever be remembered. The forty-seven year old "shattered more than [two hundred] years of history by winning [the] election as the first African American president of the United States" (Johnson 2008). He was a unique candidate, and everyone became invested in his story—who exactly is Barack Obama and why is he a man that became the face for change and hope? There was excitement and faith instilled in the people of America when he was sworn into office on Tuesday, January 20, 2009. Men and women of all ages shared an euphoria of positive emotions and there was a sense of revitalization in trust—something Americans had lost during this decade. Through his descriptive rhetoric, Obama promotes an optimistic future similar to that propounded by John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Address, but he also shares the fatherly qualities similar to Franklin D. Roosevelt's rhetoric as they both support a country in troubling times. Obama establishes himself as a credible speaker with the use of different rhetorical devices, to promote his goal of restoring a broken Nation's hope and optimism back.

Obama's leadership qualities were exemplified when he spoke at the Democratic National Convention (DNC) in 2004. Through his rhetorical delivery, he shaped a positive image of himself and symbolized the significance of national identity (Duffy 1). Although he was not the first African American to speak at the convention, he left a lasting impression in the minds and hearts of millions.

His Inaugural Address rivaled his speech at the Democratic National Convention speech. Obama gave his first speech as President of the United States on January 20, 2009, in Washington D.C. There was an unprecedented 1.8 million people in attendance, and more than 38 million viewers nationwide, all waiting to hear what this man had to say. The Inaugural Address also became very relevant to the nation's status at that moment, calling for "a new generation of Americans" (Duffy 4).

His speech, which was filled with powerful rhetorical devices, reinforced his credibility as a speaker. His twenty-minute discourse incorporated persuasive and compelling proposals to support his main goals—unify a broken country and help the people regain their optimism. Interwoven in his address are moving illusions and illustrative statements, which highlight the different issues going on in such a way that had not been addressed since John Fitzgerald Kennedy's Administration. Obama discussed the strengths as a Nation, and what we should do as a country to better the global and domestic issues, such as the economic downturn, and the ongoing war with the Middle East. As a speaker, he exudes charisma, emotional charm, and authenticity, which establishes and builds upon his credibility with the people. Because of his ability to speak effectively and efficiently, Obama engages his listeners and viewers on a more personal level. Through the use of his communicative skills, Obama's Inaugural Address is one that sets him apart from the former forty-three presidents.

Education

Obama was born on August 4, 1961, in Honolulu, Hawaii. His father, Barack Obama Sr. is of Kenyan descent who came to America to pursue his goals in education, and his mother, Anne Dunham is of Caucasian descent born in Kansas. His parents both earned master's degrees, and his mother later earned a Ph. D degree. The two divorced,

leaving Obama Jr. and Dunham alone. His mother later remarried, and the three left Hawaii briefly after and moved to Indonesia. Education was always emphasized, and Obama moved back to Hawaii to attend a private school (Duffy 1-3). At the school, he excelled in academics and was accepted into Occidental College in Los Angeles, California in 1979, on a full scholarship (Gordon 1). His colleagues from Occidental describe him as,

> Alienated- [which] would ultimately set him on a course to public service. He developed a sturdier sense of self and came to life politically, particularly [his] sophomore year, growing increasingly aware of harsh inequities like apartheid and poverty in the third world (Kovaleski).

He became more aware of ongoing issues such as inequality and instability his sophomore year at Occidental College. Early in his academic career, Obama educated himself about ongoing issues domestically and internationally. Furthermore, his eagerness for improving conditions in troubling times is a unique character trait. After his academic career at Occidental, he transferred to the prestigious Columbia University in New York for two years in 1981, and pursued his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science (Kovaleski).

Obama always shared an interest with learning the ways in which economic instabilities were forged in America. His passions and interests helped him achieve a successful academic career. He went on to Harvard Law School in 1988 and graduated in 1991 (Duffy 3). At Harvard, he became the first African American student to become the president of the acclaimed *Harvard Law Review* (Jones 41). Obama always knew he wanted to be involved in politics, and after leaving Boston in 1991, he returned to Chicago, Illinois, where he ran and won the Illinois Senator chair in 1996 (Johnson 2007). He served in the senate for a total of eight years (Baliles 2). As a senator, Obama

supported and brought attention to social issues such as "ethics reform, death penalty process reform, early childhood education, enhanced health care for the poor, and requiring videotaping of interrogations in capital murder cases" (Meet the Candidate). After only having been a senator for eight years and in the senate house for three years, Obama announced his desire to run for the 2008 presidential elections (Duffy 4). This was a pivotal moment in his career and one that would ultimately change American history, as we know it.

Election

Senator Obama and running mate Joe Biden won the election against Senator John McCain and running mate Sarah Palin. Obama consistently advocated for change, and when he won the election, he stated that "It [has] been a long time coming, but tonight, because of what we did on this day, this election, at this defining moment, change has come to America" (Baliles). Millions expected Obama's Inaugural Address to be about the various changes that needed to happen in order for the nation to prosper once again. There was an expectation with his particular candidacy because he became the face for hope. This pressure only instilled more confidence in himself as a speaker, which made for a convincing speech. Even Obama states that "this campaign has been about giving hope since Day 1. […] It is because [of the] people […] that I have this opportunity to run for president today" (Atwater 124). He had a different take on the campaign than previous candidates, and made it very clear as to the ultimate goal of his election: to inspire hope in the people. This theme defines him as a president and is a main focus in his Inaugural Address.

Charisma

What makes Obama so appealing to Americans? He has a mindset and mentality that differentiated him from previous candidates. As he describes the essence of hope, he claims that "[This] was the best of the American spirit, I thought-having the audacity to believe despite all the evidence to the contrary that we could restore a sense of community to a nation torn by conflict" (Obama 356). Obama has a strong vision and because of his optimistic beliefs, he intrigued a younger generation, in contrast with previous elections where older demographics voted in higher numbers. However, this election and victory was unique because it represented the millions of minority citizens and the new generation of voters who participated in the voting. He had the capacity to connect with the American youth—a task that many presidents have been unsuccessful at in previous years (Jones 94).

Obama is considered a very charismatic speaker. Charisma is defined as "someone you [cannot] take your eyes off [of], someone [who is] really interesting, and expresses a wide array of strong emotion" (Morgan 16). Critic John Smith from the *National Review* describes Obama as "[…] A charismatic speaker who promises to change the nation's […] politics. […] Obama is the first African-American candidate with […] an inspirational possibility in a nation with a legacy of racial discrimination" (Smith 23-25). He also expresses passion through the content of his speech. If the President were unable to express his feelings through his discourse, then it would be difficult for the audience to believe and feel the level of passion involved. Also, this speech is considered to be very authentic. From one point of view, authenticity is described as being "true to one's own personality, spirit, or character, [and] worthy of acceptance or belief as conforming to or based on fact." Some scholars argue, "people are authentic when they

show their hearts" (Morgan 18). Obama displayed his sincerity and genuineness through his charisma.

Image

There are many factors that go into a successful speech. First, is the effective use of his body language and voice. Obama presented himself as confident and commanding, but also as a very positive person (Leanne 26). "For Barack Obama, his commanding baritone is a natural asset. It sounds pleasing to the ears and is very authoritative" (Leanne 26). Obama also "knows how to stress important words at the right times, giving them an empathetic feel, he increases his volume when reaching a crescendo, the point when he hits the climax of his talk and underscores a key message" (Leanne 26). Obama employs different types of "vocal color," and in doing so, reinforces his sole purpose, and increases the impact of his speech communication, making it easier for his audience to understand the emotional message of his speech (Leanne 26). In addition to his vocal variety, he also presents himself as a strong iconic figure through the use of his body language. "Barack Obama, in particular, employs gestures in ways that create the feel of a one-to-one conversation, as if he is standing next to you conversing, rather than standing on a podium addressing an audience" (Leanne 29). Audiences feel an interconnection with his speech because Obama makes his speeches personable for his audiences. Audiences are able to feel an interconnection with his speech because Obama puts it in the perspective of his audience and the people of America. His speech skills are also similar to FDR during his Fireside Chats because both men share qualities of charisma. Although he was speaking to millions of listeners, there was always a feeling of the conversation he had with one person and family (Ryan 153).

Aristotelian Proofs

Ethos, pathos and logos are the three Aristotelian proofs that become the foundation of rhetoric. They incorporate one type of communicative technique in order to have a stronger discourse. These different proofs can be used interchangeably in order to bolster or strengthen the rhetoric. Obama effectively uses all three artistic proofs in his speech—which only improves the speech as a whole.

Obama uses *ethos*, which is defined by Philosopher Aristotle in his book, *Rhetoric,* as an art, formally known as "techne." *Ethos* is described as "the way in which the rhetor [is] perceived by the audience" (Connors 285). Aristotle also defines the three constituent parts of *ethos,* which include sagacity, good will and good nature. *Sagacity* means wisdom, *good will* is intended toward the audience; and is defined as the importance of the speaker to be represented in an ethical fashion; and *good nature* encompasses personality and good morals; and this is usually more focused on how a person executes decisions in his personal life (Aristotle). Obama enhances his appeal by using these different aspects of ethos successfully. For example, when he addresses issues in the Middle East, he states

> We are the keepers of this legacy. Guided by these principles once more, we can meet those new threats that demand even greater effort—even greater cooperation and understanding between nations. We will begin to responsibly leave Iraq to its people, and forge a hard-earned peace in Afghanistan. With old friends and former foes, we will work tirelessly to lessen the nuclear threat, and roll back the specter of a warming planet. We will not apologize for our way of life, nor will we waver in its defense, and for those who seek to advance their aims by inducing terror and slaughtering innocents, we say to you now that our spirit is stronger and cannot be broken. You cannot outlast us, and we will defeat you!

When analyzing this excerpt from his speech, Obama uses "we" eight times, and does not use "I" once. He establishes his loyalty with the people, while still reminding why American's should lead. The phrase: "We are keepers of this legacy" is crucial because he positions each person to take a stand and therefore each person feels a sense of importance and responsibility. Obama shares a particular investment with his audience, and by establishing a common ground, there is a stronger argument of persuading his audience to reason and side with him.

Pathos is an appeal to emotion. The goal of the speaker is to stimulate the feelings the speaker has in the audience. Obama uses several different analogies to achieve this goal. For instance, in his address, Obama expresses the historical significance of his African American heritage and states, "[…] And why a man whose father less than sixty years ago might not have been served in a local restaurant can now stand before you to take the most sacred oath" (Inaugural Address). By introducing himself he creates a sympathetic reaction from the audience and becomes more real because of the sincerity and honesty in his dialogue. He incorporates his ethnicity and culture to exemplify how America and the people of America have grown as a nation.

Aristotle's third proof, *logos,* is defined as logical appeal. It is the substance of the speech and the meanings behind the words. *Logos* sparks power and thought in discourse because words have the ability to create deep levels of meaning. Obama wants to share his message as best as he can. It is most important that a person properly conveys their message in their writing to effectively execute it in a speech. It is important to use the rhetorical instruments in order to express the message in a way that is understandable to everyone. Obama provides reasoning and justification concerning America's status during his campaign. He states:

> Nor is the question before us whether the market is a force for good or ill. Its power to generate wealth and expand freedom is unmatched, but this crisis has reminded us that without a watchful eye, the market can spin out of control. The nation cannot prosper long when it favors only the prosperous. The success of our economy has always depended not just on the size of our Gross Domestic Product, but on the reach of our prosperity; on the ability to extend opportunity to every willing heart -- not out of charity, but because it is the surest route to our common good (Inaugural Address).

This part of his speech has to do with America's recession and economic crisis. Obama explicitly explains the issues occurring and also uses vernacular rhetoric—common language used so that the common person can understand the impact of the economy. He manages to speak in the vernacular, but also affectively informs justification and reasoning for change.

For Aristotle, "rhetoric is the ability to see the available means of persuasion" (Aristotle 1). Obama uses different types of rhetorical devices; one that is not based on character or appeal, but instead, something that can be perceived to be true, which introduces a different realm of persuasion. Through the different Aristotelian proofs exemplified in Obama's Inaugural Address, it is apparent as to why this speech became so internationally recognized and why this is such a powerful speech.

Rhetorical Devices

There are many different rhetorical devices and effective oratory Obama displays in his speech. The speech is a *deliberative speech*, with *jeremiad qualities* and is "within the genre of epideictic oratory" (Duffy 8).

This speech is considered *deliberative* (and epideictic) because he calls for a plan of action concerning issues such as health care, energy, education, and the ongoing wars, and thus sets the stage to introduce and implement new policies. Deliberative rhetoric focuses on future fact; how we will benefit individually, and collectively, how these tools will better our future. When Obama exclaims: "Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real. They are serious and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this, America: They will be met" (Inaugural Address). In this statement, Obama is addressing the various issues going in America and implements a plan with the hopes of restoring how the nation was previously. This is an example of deliberative because he is setting the scene for how he plans on executing his duties as the newly elected president.

Epideictic oratory includes praise and blame. Epideictic, the dominant genre of Obama's Inaugural "reveals a shared past in emotionally powerful ways, and by revealing a common bond, a president becomes more than a visiting speaker" (Little 28). Obama attempts to engage his audience and listeners, by identifying himself with the issues millions of Americans have to deal with on a daily basis. He blames the greed of the people for the downturn of the economy, but he also praises them for making changes and taking action. We are reminded by the negligence of others when Obama proclaims: "Now, there are some who question the scale of our ambitions—who suggest that our system cannot tolerate too many big plans. Their memories are short." In turn, we are also praised for our past actions as a people when Obama says, "For they have forgotten what this country has already done; what free men and women can achieve when imagination is joined to common purpose, and necessity to courage" (Inaugural Address).

The goal of epideictic rhetoric is honor and dishonor. Obama uses epideictic

rhetoric throughout his speech. Examples include criticizing the bank systems and lack of health care. Furthermore, he also encourages new methods to better the US, and states:

> What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility—a recognition on the part of every American that we have duties to ourselves, our nation and our world; duties that we do not have grudgingly accept, but rather seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of our character than giving our all to a difficult task.

Through the use of his effective epideictic skills, there is a strong persuasive undercurrent at work. He honors the duties that Americans have to uphold, but also provides a foundation as to why we have to act now.

Obama acknowledges that unfortunate events occur, but we need to go back to tradition. For instance, Obama states:

> Forty-four Americans have now taken the presidential oath. The words have been spoken during rising tides of prosperity and the still waters of peace. Yet, every so often, the oath is taken amidst gathering clouds and raging storms. At these moments, America has carried on not simply because of the skill or vision of those high in office, but because we, the people have remained faithful to the ideals of our forebears and true to our founding documents.

The metaphors he includes his speech are powerful. He acknowledges the previous presidents, and what is spoken about in traditional Inaugural Addresses. After recognizing this convention, he continues on in similar tone, maintaining the tradition in the way of previous presidents that they address their message. A jeremiad notes a falling away from tradition (Gomes 237). To correct the wrongs, the audience is encouraged to move forward and improve them. Obama states:

> On this day, we gather because we have chosen hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord. On this day, we come to proclaim an end to the petty grievances and false promises, the recriminations and worn-out dogmas that for far too long have strangled our politics. […] The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit; to choose our better history; to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness (Inaugural Address).

Jeremiads also thwarts social progress, returns to religious truths, and calls for acknowledgement of our past (Gomes 237). Obama analyzes the problems with politics, and encourages the need to move forward and pursue a "better history," one that goes back to the doctrine of the United States—Declaration of Independence. Furthermore, "the jeremiad does both lamenting the evils that characterized the past and praising ideals and the consequences of these ideals" (Duffy 8). By doing so, there will be an incentive to improve the instituted and conditioned old values. Introducing an importance in redefining the principles that America constructed their policies on, Obama creates a way to reestablish old values, and to have new traditions in order to progressively move forward. He did not go into great detail about the depth of these policies, but mentions "the need for programs to develop the nation's infrastructure, improve health care, develop alternative sources of energy and improve education" (Duffy 8).

Speech Content

Jon Favreau is Obama's speechwriter who drafted his Inaugural Address. However, before writing the address, Obama expressed to his twenty-seven year old chief writer at the time that the best inaugurals describe:

> The moment we're in, how we got there, and the best way out. [...] I'll feel that we [have] succeeded if the speech can do that and leave the audience saying to themselves 'this is

> why I want to go into public service and be a better politician. This is why I want to go home and be a better parent, better worker, [and a] better citizen (Alter 106).

Obama wanted to acknowledge what was going on in America, and move forward on a positive note. There was a sound of hope and optimism in his speech, and he touched upon the ideas that mattered most during that time. The main theme at large was the "era of responsibility" (Alter 107). "Obama becomes a representative of American society and values, for national leaders to inform a nation, and indeed the world, of their shared human condition" (Little 73). Obama acknowledges the various challenges America has faced. Early in his speech, he states "the path is taken amidst gathering clouds and raging storms." This metaphor introduces the economic crisis—the main concern and biggest topic discussed in his speech.

His speech also tackles issues such as being "globally connected" (Duffy 10). There is a call to other nations by offering a helping hand. Notably, this is the first Inaugural Address where Muslims are a topic of discussion. (Alter 107). Obama's new approach on global interconnectedness proved to be unique and assertive. He acknowledges the concerns that many nations have with the Middle East, but does not necessarily blame them; instead, he utters, "We will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist" (Alter 107). This reveals the mutual willingness of the people to challenge racial and religious disparities in order to achieve a hopeful and unified society—on an international level. It has always been apparent that Obama wants the United States to be the leader for other nations: "Upon his election to executive office, Barack Obama sought to repair the global image of American democratic leadership by eliciting cooperation with international institutions" (Little 47).

The Audacity of Hope is an autobiography written while he was still senator. Obama expresses his political motivations and provides a foreshadow of his life thus far. He discloses his beliefs about the importance of the US's involvement with international affairs, in particular, he states:

> As difficult as the work may seem, I believe that we have an obligation to engage efforts to bring about peace in the Middle East, not only for the benefit of the people of the region, but for the safety and security of our own children as well" (Obama 322).

Obama expresses a paternal tone when discussing his believes in his autobiography. He adopts a fatherly role when mentioning all the children and the younger generations affected. Furthermore, there is interdependence between the security entailing with the international affairs and the well-being of American citizens. Obama strongly believes that all nations are connected, and if there is a dispute going on in the Middle East, their problems will impact America. Furthermore, Obama states:

> For we know that our patchwork heritage is a strength, not a weakness. We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus -- and non-believers. We are shaped by every language and culture, drawn from every end of this Earth; and because we have tasted the bitter swill of civil war and segregation, and emerged from that dark chapter stronger and more united, we cannot help but believe that the old hatreds shall someday pass; that the lines of tribe shall soon dissolve; that as the world grows smaller, our common humanity shall reveal itself; and that *America must play its role in ushering in a new era of peace* (Inaugural Address).

Even though there is call for the US to act, there is not a tone of urgency, rather an introduction of what we should do as a good nation. Once again, Obama stresses the importance of having a "globally connected" world. Especially living in a diverse place like America, there will always been an attachment to other nations and cultures.

The speech also focuses on the domestic issues such as economic turmoil and health care. "[By] improving health care, education and turning the nation to alternative sources of energy" (Duffy 4). He molded his address to act as a declaration in order to raise the spirits of the American people. Before the election and presidency, in *The Audacity of Hope*, Obama declares, "It is the language of values that people use to map their world. It is what can inspire them to take action, and move them beyond their isolation" (Obama 52). His Inaugural Address is successful accommodates the values and beliefs of millions of Americans, and billions around the world. Obama is a physical representation of the *American Dream*, and essentially, represents and expresses the example of an American democracy.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy Comparison

The caliber of Obama's charisma can be compared to that of John F. Kennedy. "Among inaugural addresses, John F. Kennedy's speech stands out as a gem of the genre […] Kennedy's address transcended the tired and the trite to reach the exalted plane of eloquence" (Ryan 181). Kennedy created his own image through his rhetoric and voice emerging into Presidency. In his Inaugural Address, Obama shares similar ideals to that of Kennedy's address. For example, Obama speaks about progress and the best possibilities for America, and JFK shared a similar story. Both men geared toward bettering the statuses of the American people and the nation. For example, in Kennedy's Inaugural Address, he opens with, "We observe today not a victory of part by a celebration of freedom" (Ryan 189). Furthermore, "the new president stressed the unity of the American people on this ceremonial occasion" (Ryan 189). He, and Obama stress the importance of connectedness and for the people to feel unified.

In Obama's case, audiences are inspired to listen to him because of his enthusiasm with each subject. He is "confident, and sets the tone with his commanding stance" and Obama also "controls his voice--amplifying it when appropriate. [... He varies] the emotional texture of his tone--making it wistful at times, affectionate at others, and indignant when appropriate" (Leanne 14). Obama's election was more centered on race because he is the first African American president, whereas Kennedy's campaign was more focused on religion because he was the first Catholic president. Both men were not initially thought of to be ideal candidates, but ended up winning the elections. There were similar ideas in their Inaugural Addresses; however, the delivery contrasted with one another. Kennedy is better skilled at giving extemporaneous rather than manuscript readings and prepared speeches. Obama, on the other hand, "delivers speeches with an effortless grace" (Duffy 13). It is important to understand the impact that communication has on our lives. Both men are known for their speech skills and use of dialogue. Their charisma, rhetoric, and discourse proved to be powerhouses in their election and a major factor to their wins.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt Comparison

FDR is another former president with whom Obama shares several commonalities. Their comparisons are more focused on the status of the nation, and less on themselves as speakers. Franklin D. Roosevelt came into office in 1933 during the Great Depression, which was the worst economic time in American history (Harding 22). The cause of the Great Depression was due to the public greed of the people from during 1920s. As a result, unemployment rates skyrocketed and there was a significant amount of credit inflation (Harding 22).

Obama, similarly, came into office during the worst recession in the United States. The term "recession" was coined after the Great Depression (Harding 22). FDR blames the "money changers," while Obama blames the greed of the people (Phillips 37). In contrast to FDR, Obama does not place nearly as much blame on the Wall Street "moneychangers;" however, he does dive into the notion that the economy was a "consequence of greed and irresponsibility on the part of some, but also our collective failure to make hard choices" (Alter 107).

Although unemployment rates during Obama's campaign were not in the twenty to thirty percent range like those of the Great Depression, these rates are at the highest level since the Great Depression. Roosevelt scapegoats the people who were part of the redemption-seeking era while Obama more subtly blames the people as a collective unit. The responsibility is given to different parties as, "FDR had expressly blames 'the principles of the unscrupulous moneychangers' for the nations ills, while Obama less antagonistically blames the 'greed and irresponsibility on the part of some' for the economic collapse" (Duffy 6). Roosevelt predominately blamed those who abused their money, such as the bankers—the "moneychangers"—while Obama blames situation on the greed of the majority of the people.

Obama also wrote, "starting today, we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of remaking America" (Alter 107). He, along with FDR, displays the goal of moving toward a progressive future. Both men challenge this belief from a conservative standpoint and language, but still advocate toward moving forward. Both men are also heavily democratic, and "in democracy, rhetorical power is important to successfully implementing policy initiatives, to addressing exigencies that face the nation and the world, and to improving social and economic standing of domestic and

international citizens" (Little 52). It is essential to use an *ethos* appeal, and by using the credibility and appeal of a president, it becomes a lot easier to implement policy changes and government assistance. Therefore, Obama acknowledged the need of government intervention, and FDR expressed his concern by creating the "New Deal" within the first one hundred days of his presidency (Phillips 37). In addition to this, he also closed all the banks for four days as an attempt to regulate monetary amounts in each bank. Although this is unlikely to happen during Obama's presidency because of the capitalistic society, both men sought to reform the economic conditions through government assistance.

The two Inaugural Addresses of FDR and Obama are parallel. It is rare for a president to ask for self-sacrifice in an inaugural, and both men do this. Obama boldly states in his Inaugural Address:

> A recognition on the part of every American that we have duties to ourselves, our nation and the world; duties that we do not grudgingly accept, but rather seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining our character than giving our all to a difficult task.

Obama calls for the people to reevaluate themselves in order to better their lives in the future. This is an example of *self-sacrifice* because it is a call for change. FDR's speech foreshadows Obama's speech. One example of this is when both men have a call for action, given the economic standstill and the possible outcomes. Roosevelt states in his Inaugural Address that "'this nation is asking for action and action now,'" while Obama declares that "'The state of our economy calls for action, bold and swift'" (Duffy 6). Both men have a call for action and both speeches encompass a strong sense of optimism. Each man adopts a paternal instinct and acknowledges how America will conquer its struggles successfully as a nation.

Wilsonian Perspective

Former President, Woodrow Wilson contrived a "Wilsonian Persoective. This idea comes from notion of Wilson's quest to accomplish world peace (Steigerwal 125). Obama is assuring the people that we will outlast global tensions and explaining why we will outlast this crisis now. In his Inaugural he says, "We will begin to responsibly leave Iraq to its people and forge a hard-earned peace in Afghanistan." He also goes on to say that there will not be a divide between the "Muslim world" and the West, but that there will be new relations "based on mutual interest and mutual respect." To forge a sense of community, Obama used "'we' [...] sixty times, [...] 'our' [...] fifty six times, [...] 'I' [...] only twice, and 'me' not at all" (Duffy 12). Obama truly made it applicable to the people; it was not a speech about him, but a speech for everyone. There is an understanding of tying in the US' goals to those that will have a direct impact such as the Middle East. Because of the media outreach and accessibility with technology, anyone was able to watch the televised event, allowing Obama to have an international speech. Other Inaugural addresses have not discussed what is going on in the Middle East. Obama is trying to build a sense of togetherness internationally. There is an *omniscient* or "all-encompassing" way in which Obama tries to handle the topic of world peace and how to achieve mutual benefit and contentment (Basinger 26).

Weaknesses

Like any speech, there will always be differences of opinions. Obama gives hopeful symbols and messages throughout his speech; however, he does not offer much direction in what he will accomplish these changes. He lists the changes that need to happen—such as health care reform and education—but there is no solid outline or explanation in his speech describing the methodologies he will use to achieve these changes. It was also considered to be a brief speech, with only 2400 words (Duffy 11). In

addition, many people expected Obama to speak upon the issues of race, being an African American, but he refrained. “At least one critic would have liked Obama to seal the occasion with a direct reference to Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights movement that made his ascent possible” (Murphy A19). Instead of focusing on race, Obama focused more on other issues that seemed culturally relevant during the time of his Inaugural Address. “Obama chose a less personal path” (Duffy 12). Although critics argued for a better speech, Obama’s Inaugural Address is one that will always be remembered.

Conclusion

Along with new policies, Obama also mentions many other things that people should be aware of, such as the two ongoing wars. He forms an American identity, which is essential to his image and trust from his audiences. “American identity has a direct impact upon the national security, finance, trade and host of other areas upon which are critical for the future prosperity of the United States” (Little 33). All of this creates a heightened perception of safety for the people. He creates a genuine sense of leadership within America, and states that “we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist” (Alter 107).

“Even many Republicans who loathed Obama’s politics found it in their hearts to say that January 20, 2009, was a good day for Obama” (Alter 100). With the help of his chief writer Jon Favreau, Obama made this speech one of the most inspirational and

pivotal speeches in American history (Alter 106). “William Safire, the Dean of Presidential Speech Writers called the speech, ‘solid, respectable, uplifting, suitably short, and superbly delivered.’” (Alter 107). Obama used his charismatic rhetoric style filled with innovative words to create a speech that impacted everyone. The speech was well written and well delivered. He molded the speech to be personable, and was not only talking as the President of the United States, but also as a friend to all. Obama’s deliberative and epideictic oratory directly impacts the people, and because of its personable tone and development, this speech only builds positively on Barack Obama’s image as a man with hope and optimism on his quest to change the world for the better.

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