

Woodrow Wilson's Battlefield of Gender and Language: The Usage of Gender by the Wilson Presidency and US Newspapers in discussing World War I Involvement

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Introduction

- The Wilson Presidency and publications of the time utilized images and language that invoked ideas of gender roles in order to advocate for or against involvement in World War I in what can be considered a war behind the scenes

'Wilson and the Kaiser'



From the New York World; Cartoon by Rollin Kirby, 1916
Pictured: Wilson confidently disarms the Kaiser of the sword of "U Boat Murder"

Methods

- Primarily researching:
 - ❖ *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*
 - ❖ Archived issues of *The San Francisco Examiner*, *The New York Evening Journal*, and the *Chicago Tribune*

Results/Discussion

- Newspapers used ideas of manliness and femininity to shift public opinion for political ends
- Wilson depicted in traditionally feminine roles or body language construing uncertainty or lack of sureness
- Strong portrayals flipped these depictions but adhered to the same depiction of manhood while shifting the ideological foundations
- Wilson subverted traditional ideas of manhood by attaching "feminine" tasks such as 'healing' and 'elevating'

“ America 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. There is such a thing as a man being too proud to fight. ” - Woodrow Wilson

Acknowledgements

This would not have been possible without the help of the Aresty Research Center and Professor David Foglesong of Rutgers History Department

Background

May 1915

- RMS *Lusitania* sunk by German U-boats

January 1917

- Germany rescinds Sussex pledge regarding naval warfare restrictions

January 1917

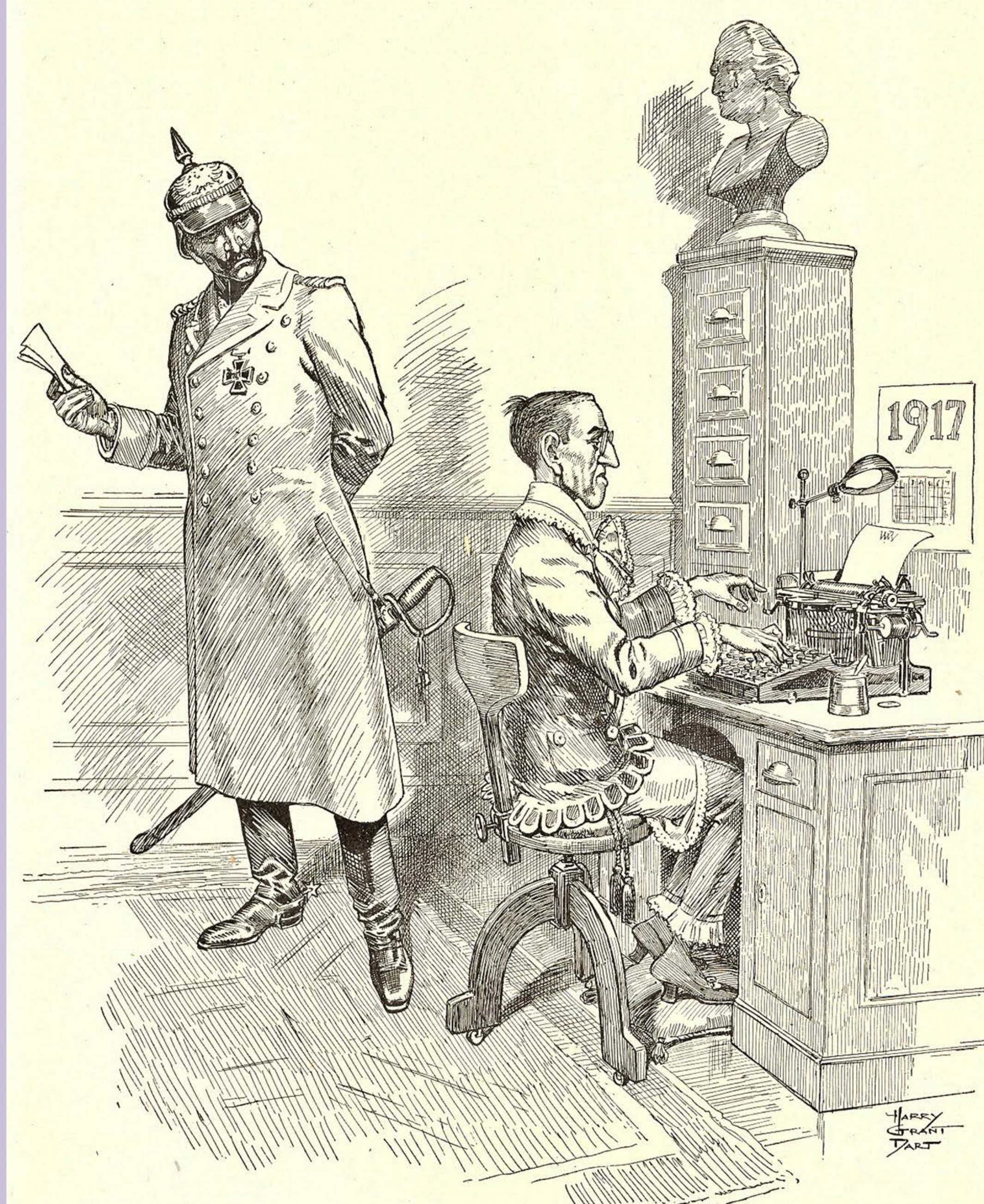
- Zimmerman telegram asking for Mexico to enter war against U.S intercepted

April 1917

- Wilson goes before Congress to request official declaration of war

170

LIFE



"NOW TAKE THIS DOWN AS I GIVE IT TO YOU"