

## One Of These Things Is Not Like The Other

In his banal, predictable, and cliché-filled “we need amnesty now” immigration speech of July 1, Obama mentioned the Statue of Liberty and the famous Emma Lazarus poem, *The New Colossus*, which everyone who went to school before public education was “dumbed down” knows is inscribed on a bronze plaque at the base of the statue.

Although most people know the story of the Statue of Liberty and are familiar with the poem, and many people know the poem’s author was Emma Lazarus, few probably know—or care—that she was Jewish. But Obama made sure he mentioned her background because, well, it is an election year and Democrat popularity among Jewish voters has plummeted because of his eagerness to throw Israel under the Palestinian bus. (I can imagine Obama’s political guru, David Axelrod, telling the speechwriters, “Yeah, that’s good. Put in that she’s Jewish. That might give us a tenth of a percent bump in the polls!”)

Obama also went out of his way to say that although Lazarus was a poet, she “spent much of her time advocating for *better health care* and housing for the newcomers.” (Add another tenth of a percentage point bump for the Lazarus-ObamaCare connection. Don’t anyone dare tell me that was not intentional. And although Lazarus was an advocate for immigrants in general, I don’t know that she spent “much of her time” on the issue of health care. But I am certain she did not advocate a 10 percent tax on tanning salons and had no fondness for death panels.)

Inasmuch as Obama got a few other important facts wrong, I am even more skeptical of the “health care advocate” claim. But we can let him slide on that. We should not, however, let him slide on his story of the fundraising. Obama stated that Lazarus “wrote down her thoughts and donated a piece of work to help pay for the construction of a new statue—the Statue of Liberty—which actually was funded in part by small donations from people across America.” Most Americans know that the Statue of Liberty (“Liberty Enlightening the World”) was a gift from France to the United States to commemorate the centennial of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. (Well, okay, it was dedicated 10 years late, but it’s the thought that counts.) About the only people who are *not* aware that the statute was a gift from France are Obama and the 10 to 20 million undocumented Democrats—excuse me, *undocumented asylum seekers*, as Janet “Highway Patrol” Napolitano calls them—that he wants to convert from illegal welfare recipients to legal welfare recipients.

The fault may lie with his ill-educated Generation X speechwriters, but Obama nevertheless should have known better. The truth is that neither Lazarus nor anyone else had to raise funds for the statue. There *was* a fundraising drive—but it was to pay for the construction of the *pedestal* on which Lady Liberty stands. Most Americans know that as well.

But it got worse. Obama then read the poem. That is, he read some of the poem. Incorrectly.

Here is the original:

*Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,  
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;  
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand  
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame  
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name  
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand  
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command  
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.  
“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she  
With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me.  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”*

Here is what Obama read:

*Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand, she wrote,  
A mighty woman with a torch...  
From her beacon-hand  
Glows world-wide welcome...  
“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!”...  
“Give me your tired, and your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to be free...  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”*

The poem is not long, yet Obama felt it was necessary to skip several lines. If he was that eager to save time he could have knocked a few unnecessary sentences from the rest of the speech. (Did he *really* need to tell us the meaning of “E Pluribus Unum?” My guess is that his speechwriters had simply been given the assignment of coming up with an “immigration speech,” with orders to “blame the Republicans for obstructing progress,” “say they have to learn English before we’ll grant them amnesty,” and “put some historical stuff in there.” When they stumbled across “E Pluribus Unum” in their “research” they said to themselves, “Hey, that’s good! It even sounds, you know, like it’s Spanish or, like, Latin, or something!” They may then have spent a moment or two wondering if Obama could pronounce E Pluribus Unum correctly—after all, he had mispronounced the word “corps” as “corpse” in a previous speech—but it seemed too good not to include.)

So he read the reduced-attention-span MTV version of the poem, which omitted “The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.” How can you leave out “The wretched refuse of your teeming shore?” That’s like the Fourth of July without the American flag, or Halloween without candy corn, or campfires without marshmallows, or elementary school without the Pledge of Allegiance. (Oh, wait, they don’t recite that anymore, do they?)

And the line is, “Give me your tired, your poor…” not “Give me your tired, and your poor.” (Has he no sense of rhythm?)

And those huddled masses yearn to *breathe* free, not *be* free.

I suspect that a president who was an actual natural born citizen—*born on U.S. soil to two U.S.-citizen parents*—would not have made those obvious mistakes. On the other hand, perhaps we should allow Obama some “poetic license.” After all, his teachers in Jakarta likely have not visited the Statue of Liberty either.

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