Gendered Voices:
Rhetorical Agency and the Political Career of Hillary Rodham Clinton

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symbolic legacy of Hillary Rodham Clinton and all the other feminist candidates who have forever altered electoral politics. The glass ceiling has cracks, and I will spend my academic career and political life trying to help shatter it.

--Justin Killian
St. Paul, MN

Dedication

To my mother for giving me a voice

To my sister for believing in my voice

To my friends for sustaining my voice

Abstract

Hillary Diane Rodham Clinton's public life represents a specific moment when a generation of women started to materially symbolize the progress made by feminist activists. Because of the struggles of previous reformers, Rodham Clinton was able to serve as a corporate lawyer, a First Lady of the United States, a health care reformer, a foreign diplomat, a candidate, a U.S. Senator, and a presidential front-runner. She is also the third woman to hold the post of U.S. Secretary of State. Rodham Clinton has a public resume unmatched by any political woman, but her success has also made her the victim of misogynistic symbolic violence. She is the most (mis)interpreted figure in U.S. politics.

This project analyzes significant moments of public address in the life of Rodham Clinton. Her career presents transitional spaces from which to understand rhetorical agency, voice, and gender. The chapters cover: (1) Rodham Clinton's speeches promoting the 1993 Clinton healthcare reform, (2) Rodham Clinton's U.N. address in Beijing China, (3) Rodham Clinton's 1996 Democratic National Convention Address, (4) a collection of speeches that Rodham Clinton offered on the 2002 Iraq conflict, (5) Rodham Clinton's presidential campaign rhetoric, and (6) Rodham Clinton's 2008 Democratic National Convention Address.

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Author's Preface

I was once a paid member of Hillary Rodham Clinton's staff. As an operative in the field department, I spent 2007 traveling through much of Southwestern and Central Iowa attempting to garner Democratic caucus votes for Rodham Clinton. I also worked within the political department to orchestrate public rallies, small gatherings, and private interviews for Rodham Clinton, her husband, and her many surrogates. As a member of her staff, I had multiple interactions with Rodham Clinton. In one private conversation, she informed a small group of staffers that she felt like the "most well known, misunderstood person in the world." This statement was the early seed that grew into my dissertation. My goal is to rethink ways of understanding the binds facing public women.

What follows is an academic effort meant to understand the gendered nature of U.S. politics. It is a rhetorical and critical project, and it does not infringe on the legal agreement I made with Rodham Clinton's presidential committee. At times, certain anecdotes and personal experiences are used simply to help illustrate critical arguments.

As a rhetorical critic, I embrace Philip Wander's notion that we each bring experiences and political beliefs to the texts we encounter. This enhances our scholarship and makes diverse accounts possible. For this reason, chapters six and seven were the most difficult to write because the texts I analyze in those pages have significant emotional meaning for me. In particular, the speech Rodham Clinton delivered on June 7, 2008, made me cry. I was sad Rodham Clinton did not win the Democratic nomination, but I am proud of the legacy she left for future political women.

--Justin Killian
Minneapolis, MN

Chapter One:
The Rhetorical Voices of Hillary Rodham Clinton

"You can be so proud that, from now on, it will be unremarkable for a woman to win primary state victories ... unremarkable to have a woman in a close race to be our nominee, unremarkable to think that a woman can be the President of the United States. And that is truly remarkable, my friends."

--Hillary Rodham Clinton, Washington, D.C., June 7, 2008

My agency does not consist in denying this condition of my constitution. If I have any agency, it is opened up by the fact that I am constituted by a social world I never chose. That my agency is riven with paradox does not mean it is impossible, it means only that paradox is the condition of its possibility.

--Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender*

On Sunday January 18, 2009, Emily's List held a Washington D.C. gala to celebrate the electoral victories of 2008. The organization, whose name is an acronym for "early money is like yeast," exists to financially support pro-choice, female Democratic candidates for higher office. The 2008 elections ushered a significant number of political women into public office, including two junior U.S. Senators in New Hampshire and North Carolina. The party also celebrated the beginning of the Obama-Biden administration, which Emily's List viewed as a new partner on reproductive rights and feminist issues. The event was a moment to celebrate the end of the George W. Bush-era of politics and the beginning of a new moment for feminist activists in Washington D.C. However, the celebration was also marked by a sense of melancholy. It was, as the *New York Times* remarked, a bittersweet celebration for feminist politics.

The 2008 Democratic electoral victories created a friendly terrain for feminists to pursue legislative and governmental changes. The new Obama administration and the Democratic majorities in both chambers of Congress were sure to be remarkably

friendlier to reproductive freedoms and feminist social issues than their predecessors. However, many of the women at the Emily's List gala celebrated with only half smiles. The election of Barack Obama had brought needed change, but it also witnessed the defeat of U.S. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton.[1] Throughout the Democratic primary, Hillary Rodham Clinton waged an intense campaign becoming the first woman to win a U.S. presidential primary contest. Rodham Clinton earned 18 million votes in the primaries, raised more funds than all Democratic candidates except Obama, and surpassed all of her colleagues in public approval polls asking which candidate was most suited to be commander in chief. For the first time in U.S. history, a female political candidate had broken the fundraising and commander-in-chief obstacles needed to reach the White House. Rodham Clinton was not the first female presidential candidate, but she was the first to achieve two significant symbolic victories once seen as unattainable.

Emily's List was the first national organization to endorse Rodham Clinton. This group and its members spent countless hours and resources trying to secure the Democratic nomination. The women who gathered in the room for the Emily's List Gala might have represented the strongest advocates for Hillary Rodham Clinton's presidential bid. Eventually, Emily's List joined forces with the Obama campaign, and this party was a celebration of that partnership. The irony of the Emily's List Gala was that the celebration of the Obama victory was stalled for several hours as their keynote speaker

[1] I will refer to Hillary Diane Rodham Clinton as "Rodham Clinton" throughout this project. I often make reference to her husband, and the name Clinton typically signifies President William Jefferson Clinton. I refer to President William Jefferson Clinton as "WJC." Also, Rodham Clinton is identified as "Clinton, H.R." in the reference section of this project, and WJC is identified as "Clinton, W.J."

sat in inaugural week street traffic. The women in the room were waiting patiently, but not for President-elect Obama. They waited as Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton inched toward the banquet hall. For many, it may have been more than a simple coincidence. For some, it was an ironic metaphor for the entire celebration. This was a celebration of a victory that came with a strong symbolic reminder of the gendered struggles and barriers still present in 2008. How did this woman, with these accomplishments, fail to reach the ultimate goal? Would future female candidates be forever stuck in the gendered traffic of U.S. politics? What woman could surpass the résumé that Rodham Clinton brought to the election?

Campbell and Keremidchieva (2006) argue that gender "is a regime of power that produces norms and forms of public address and regulates who can enact them" (p. 189). In their essay, they call for studies that usher in new practices and methods for understanding how gender both constrains and constructs rhetorical acts and rhetorical figures. They ask scholars of rhetoric to move toward an understanding of the "gendered constitution of practices, forms, sites, and bodies," and they make the powerful claim that scholarship on U.S. public address has "always depended on the implicit and explicit work of gender" (Campbell and Keremidchieva, 2006, p. 193). Accordingly, this project is at the intersection of political communication, public address scholarship, and feminist theory. In notions similar to those of Monique Wittig, I argue that woman is a political and economic category that is embedded in a specific contextual and relational history (Wittig, 2007, 1981). For this reason, scholarship on U.S. public address needs to pay particular attention to the (explicit) constraints facing the gendered rhetorical actor. That

is, this project follows Campbell and Keremidchieva by seeking to investigate how gender constrains and opens up moments of possibility for gendered subjects. I hope to offer insight into how the strategic use of symbolic messages can offer a larger understanding of how gendered agency is the most enduring paradox in U.S. political culture.

At the beginning of this chapter, I offer two quotations. The first is the final words Rodham Clinton spoke as she suspended her campaign for the presidency. After running the most successful campaign of any female presidential candidate, Rodham Clinton left the race by framing the entire contest as a symbolic moment that would shape the collective memory of U.S. voters. On its face, this is a significantly artistic way to reframe loss in the spirit of party unity. However, that comment is complicated by the second quotation. Butler (2004) asserts that paradox is the condition by which agency is possible. In what follows, I critically analyze the rhetorical career of Rodham Clinton. Her entire public life, as signified by moments of public address, sits at the theoretical intersections of agency, rhetoric, and voice. At the climax of her public work, Rodham Clinton catapulted to the top of the Democratic presidential primaries and watched her symbolic agency be transformed from an asset into a gendered condition that contributed to the failures of her candidacy. The irony is that this is the story of Rodham Clinton's entire public life, and the public lives of all her predecessors. The true victories of Rodham Clinton's campaign are not instrumental. Yes, the prejudices she shattered will forever change presidential politics. However, her success is the continuation of her voice. Rodham Clinton's paradox is that even in her failures, she opened the door to new

possibilities for later gendered performances. That is the feminist victory of her career. That is the news of this project. It is from that notion that I offer a rhetorical analysis of significant moments of public address in the life of Hillary Diane Rodham Clinton.

Rodham Clinton remains the most rhetorically complicated and misunderstood figure in modern electoral politics. Pundits, party leaders, and the U.S. electorate have all struggled with the public place of this political powerhouse since she became a household name during the1992 Democratic presidential primaries. The past one hundred years has produced a list of complex and nuanced political figures. However, in this project I vigorously contend that few public figures have received more personal, psychological, and emotional scrutiny than Rodham Clinton.

Intense scrutiny and public misperception have made Rodham's Clinton's career a transitional moment representing a rupture of the line between the public and private spheres. Many have argued that Rodham Clinton is a test for past, present, and future political women; in fact, the public life of Rodham Clinton complicates traditional understandings of rhetorical agency and gender. In her White House memoirs, Rodham Clinton mentions her awareness of the complicated role she plays in the history of U.S. politics. Discussing her place in the 1992 presidential campaign, she writes:

> I represented a fundamental change in the way women functioned in our society. And if my husband won, I would be filling a position in which the duties were not spelled out, but the performance was judged by everybody…I was called a "Rorschach Test" for the American public, and

> it was an apt way of conveying the varied and extreme reactions that I provoked. (Clinton, H.R., 2003, p. 151)

Rodham Clinton's words highlight what this study investigates. From the battle to speak, to the battle to vote, to the struggle for personal freedom over their bodies and property, U.S. women have surmounted extreme structural barriers. These victories are to be celebrated and embraced, but Rodham Clinton's career touches on another important battle that still plagues electoral politics. Although the instrumental and structural roadblocks facing U.S. women are decreasing, the ambiguous social role and rhetorical place of public women continues to be an issue of intense public debate. Rodham Clinton's public life and the problems this project addresses illustrate the symbolic paradoxes still facing public women.

At the moment Rodham Clinton emerged as a potential first lady, she forced voters, the media, and opposing political forces to understand that women can be both smart and feminine. The résumé she brought to the 1992 presidential race reminded people that married women could have a career, a husband, and a legitimate claim to a role in the public sphere. In short, she was (in many ways) a new type of public woman. She embodied many Second Wave claims that women's private lives and professional success need not be at odds. She was the first First Lady of the United States to hold an advanced degree.[2] She had been recognized as one of the top 100 lawyers in the United States by the age of 29. She organized for nonprofits, reformed education as First Lady of Arkansas, and sat on the board of three Fortune 500 companies. As a member of the

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[2] Michelle LaVaughn Robinson Obama, wife of President Barack Obama, also holds a law degree from Harvard Law School.

board, she was the first public figure to ask questions about gender discrimination in the labor practices of Wal-Mart. She worked on the impeachment trial of Richard Nixon, and she helped with the campaign to elect President Jimmy Carter. Before William Jefferson Clinton announced his intent to run for president, Rodham Clinton has achieved a résumé it takes most men a lifetime to accomplish.

Her professional success came with difficulties. The Arkansas transition of Hillary Rodham into Hillary Rodham Clinton symbolizes many of the gender problems analyzed in this project. Arkansas press and political leaders relentlessly criticized what they perceived to be her bohemian, "unnatural" characteristics. After winning the Arkansas governorship, WJC lost his first attempt at reelection. One prominent party leader mentioned that if WJC ever wanted to regain the governor's mansion, "Hillary would need to change her last name and start shaving her legs." Arkansas is a specific place with a unique cultural history; however, the reactions to Rodham Clinton's performances as First Lady of Arkansas are a movie trailer for a longer documentary of symbolic disciplining.

Earlier political women faced scrutiny and criticism. Eleanor Roosevelt was hated in several corners of the electorate. Bess Truman, Rosalynn Carter, and Nancy Reagan all played pivotal roles in presidential administrations that were shocking to many U.S. citizens. Belva Bennett Lockwood, Margaret Chase Smith, Barbara Jordan, Shirley Chisholm, Patricia Schroeder, and many others forced U.S. voters to confront their preconceived notions that capable, educated women cannot hold public office. The stumbling blocks that Rodham Clinton faced in 1992 were the same ones that plagued the

many successful women who preceded her. However, the important difference is the length and trajectory of her place in history. No public woman has held as many official roles and positions as Rodham Clinton. She has the longest résumé of any political woman. Furthermore, the problems she faced in Arkansas and in 1992 have followed her throughout a public career now spanning 30 years of public service. That is, Rodham Clinton's life has been marked by a series of gendered ruptures.

In the early stages of the 2008 Democratic Presidential Primary campaign, Leslie Bennetts (2008) noted, "It's not really Hillary's gender that's at the core of our deeply ambivalent and conflicted feelings about her. As we continue to dither over whether the United States is ready to elect its first woman president, the real problem is our own schizoid relationship with female gender roles—and the fact that we don't even recognize the true nature of what's bothering us" (Bennetts, 2008, p. 230). This study attempts to rhetorically understand why "Hillary's entire adult life can be read as one long struggle against the stereotypical roles that still pin women to rigid, simplistic definitions, like butterflies impaled under glass" (Bennetts, 2008, p. 230). Rodham Clinton's life represents a historical moment when a specific generation of women started to materially symbolize the progress made by generations of activists. Because of the struggles of previous generations, she was able to serve as a trial lawyer, a First Lady of the United States, a health care reformer, a foreign diplomat, a candidate, a Senator, a presidential front-runner, and a Secretary of State, and, she has been questioned and constrained in each of these roles. The question is not, why does Rodham Clinton receive so much gendered scrutiny? Instead, this scrutiny seems to beg us to ask the question, what can

we learn about gender and agency from analyzing the controversies that surrounded Rodham Clinton?

Rodham Clinton meets Rhetorical Theory

In the remainder of this chapter, I outline the academic and popular accounts of Rodham Clinton's career. I also offer a brief summary of my theoretical approach in this project. Each chapter of the project takes a different approach. I am concerned with textual analysis in every chapter, but I approach each text with a different and novel perspective. These are not lenses that are forced on the text; instead, I allow the situation and the text to suggest the rhetorical method that will work best to make sense of her performance in each instance.

Pierre Bourdieu (2001) argues that, "being included, as man or woman, in the object that we are trying to comprehend, we have embodied the historical structure of the masculine order in the form of unconscious schemes of perception and appreciation" (p. 5). He encourages scholars to avoid old patterns of inquiry that seek to reaffirm gender norms. Like Campbell and Keremidchieva, Bourdieu promotes a type of critical work that searches for places, or sites, that challenge previous understandings of gender construction. Following Bourdieu, this study uses Rodham Clinton's public addresses as such sites. Her public image and legacy represent a type of transitional space from which to chart and understand the complicated relationship between rhetorical agency and voice. That is, Rodham Clinton's public image allows for "transcendental reflection aimed at exploring the 'categories of understanding'" (Bourdieu, 2001, p.5). Rodham

Clinton's "voices" enable reflection on how gender, rhetoric, and agency influence and constrain rhetorical performances.

In what follows, I argue that Rodham Clinton's life is marked by a series of public, gendered controversies that highlight the paradox of her complicated agency. In each of these moments, Rodham Clinton created a special voice for her performance as she gave voice to a specific constituency she represented. The paradox of her agency is that each of these situations shows public perception and expectation placing her in a confounding role. Although she often fails to live up to public expectations, she often changes public perceptions with her failure. That is, her life with William Jefferson Clinton and her career as a successful corporate attorney opened doors that afforded her the opportunity to serve in several different capacities. Ultimately, she has been attorney, primary earner, First Lady of Arkansas, First Lady of the United States, Senator, presidential contender, and U.S. Secretary of State. All of these have given her platforms and podiums. At the same time, each of these has come with expectations that even the most talented rhetors would fail to meet.

Trying to make sense of Rodham Clinton's complicated public life, Leslie Bennetts (2008) writes:

> How did we ever imagine that the one-dimensional roles we force women into could hold her now? For she contains multitudes. The larger truth is, so do we all, if only we are honest enough to acknowledge our true complexities. Isn't it time for all of us to stop expecting people of either gender to conform to simple-minded, anachronism cartoons? They have

> never helped us understand Hillary Clinton, except insofar as we struggle to escape or enlarge them. And they will never encompass everything she is, let alone all she might become, if only we were willing to give her the chance to show us what it really means to be a woman (Bennetts, 2008, p. 247).

Bennetts helps me illustrate the paradox of agency that has permeated the public life of Rodham Clinton. What is similar about all the moments I analyze is that in each gendered controversy, Rodham Clinton faced a specific "one-dimensional" expectation. At times she meets those demands and conforms. In other moments, she fails to meet the generic or cultural norms placed on her performance. However, as she offers a voice that expands roles and perceptions for public women, she also confronts a gendered expectation. She opens up new opportunities for those who might follow in her footsteps. Her voice is frequently offered on behalf of others, which makes her a truly feminist rhetorical figure. Rodham Clinton expands gender roles by offering voice, giving voice, and playing with the limits, and paradoxes, of rhetorical opportunity.

Finally, I should explain what I mean by "voice." In some rhetorical circles, "voice," as an element of discourse, is pragmatically avoided because of its relationship to new criticism and the dreaded specters of Saussure and Bakhtin. Discussions of voice often lead to theorizing on the embodied subject. For some critics, this distracts from the important work of textual analysis. I sympathize with their concern, and like these critics I do not intend to rehash the distinctions between *la langue* and *la parole*. In other rhetorical circles, "voice" is enthusiastically used to reference a multiplicity of ideas.

Both theorists and critics have used "voice" as a synonym for terms as diverse as speaking, style, heard utterance, agency, text, discourse, and intent. It would not be uncommon to see a sentence that reads, "She voiced her concern." At the same time a critic might write, "This poem is indicative of her particular voice." Or, someone might say, "Many voices expressed opposition to the bill." Ultimately, is voice a stand-in for the speaking subject? Is it the tool used by the subject? Is it an element of style? As a speaker, do I use voice? Do I have a particular voice? Am I the voice I utter? It is easy to scan the rhetorical literature to find a "yes" answer to all of these questions.

Finally, many well intentioned critics will also speak of "forgotten" or "lost" voices as they engage unnoticed discourses from minority communities and rhetors. Critics might reclaim the voices of Native American speakers. Critics will write important works that add female or gay voices to the rhetorical canon. These are all vital and important projects that I applaud. In fact, this project could be categorized with this group. These scholars move "voice" from tool to object of study. Voice is not something uttered by the speaker. It becomes something that is found by the critic. This project will identify Rodham Clinton's voice at the same time I use my critical voice to expand theory within the field. In this sense, voice is both subject and object.

Eric K. Watts (2001) addressed these conceptualizations of "voice" to arrive at a more nuanced and accurate depiction of the term. He rightly notes:

> 'Voice' is an ambiguous and redundant concept. It is another term for the 'speaking' subject. It represents the vocabulary on an interpretive community. It is a synonym for 'style.' It is a catchall term that means too

> many things and, thus, means virtually nothing. Except for the tendency in our field to talk of 'voice' when reflecting on the gendered or cultural revisions and subversions of dominant language or practices, rhetorical studies are in a sense, 'voiceless.' (Watts, 2001, p. 185)

I further assert that the rhetorical literature has failed to develop a more succinct definition of the term. What does it mean for a rhetor to use a specific voice? How do texts give voice to the experiences of others? What does it mean for a voice to be lost or (re)claimed? In this critical project, voice is a dialogic moment that is embedded within civic encounters. Simply, voice is a rhetorical concept, about: (1) adopting roles, (2) engaging others, and (3) speaking for responses. Voice allows rhetors to speak their agency. It is the mechanism through which a speaker moves from object of study to a speaking subject.

First, to "speak with a voice" indicates a position. Voice is about the adoption of a role. If I say, she speaks with a "critical voice" or he speaks with a "scientific voice," I am emphasizing the specialized knowledge or position the speaker brings to the specific situation. Voice is the tool that allows a rhetor to play a specialized part in a scene. All speakers have a voice, but speakers access different voices for different occasions. As a critical lens, voice first refers to the role a rhetor plays. Ong (1962) writes, "every human word implies not only the existence—at least in the imagination—of another to whom the word is uttered, but it also implies that the speaker has a kind of otherness within himself [*sic*]" (p. 52). Rhetors always speak from a specific vantage point. Every speaker is afforded the opportunity to speak because of varied symbolic and material advantages.

To critically speak of a rhetor's "voice" is to acknowledge that individuals have a menu of roles from which they are always choosing. This is not to say that certain demands, expectations, limitations, and stereotypes do not limit these choices. It is merely the acknowledgment that voice, like other rhetorical maneuvers, is a particular strategy used for a particular end.

Second, voice is always about engaging others. Unlike other dimensions of style, a rhetor cannot use voice, or give voice, without the presence of others. Watts (2001) defines the concept of voice as "a relational phenomenon occurring in discourse." Voice brings out the communal aspect of discourse. Watts (2001) writes:

> 'Voice' is not reducible to the subject's agency nor does it reflect a limitless range of signification. 'Voice,' in this explication, is *constitutive of ethical and emotional dimensions* that make it an answerable phenomenon. This, 'voice' is the enunciation and the acknowledgment of the obligations and anxieties of living in community with others. (p. 180)

Musical critics will write of the beauty of a singer's voice. Literary scholars will theorize the poetic voice within a sonnet. Political scholars will speak of the "voice of the public." Although varied, these uses speak to the notion that voice lives in community. Every speech is a response to a previous act. It is a continuation of performed discourses, and it will soon become part of future discursive acts. A particular voice is used to reach a particular audience. Just like the notion of a "scientific voice" speaking to the specific training and expertise of a rhetor, it can also refer to the notion that the discourse is meant for a specific community of scientific auditors. Voices are meant for specific "others,"

and they are crafted to meet the ethical, emotional, and situational needs of those communities.

Finally, voices are uttered to solicit specific responses. Rhetors have the authority to use certain voices with certain communities. In doing so, a rhetor will use a voice to indicate a desired response or expectation that is required from the community addressed. Some of the most interesting examples of this dimension of voice come from moments in which speakers use voice to do what bell hooks calls "speaking out." For hooks (1994), voice is a tool that allows marginalized rhetors to "speak out" and move beyond being "spoken to" as objects. Voice allows for the marginalized other to emerge as a subject and "speak with" those who once marginalized their performances. Voice demands a response from a community of interlocutors, and that response can be a particularly liberating experience. hooks (1994) claims that when a rhetor "comes to voice," she can do so as "a gesture of resistance, an affirmation of struggle." (hooks, 1994, p. 58). Watts (2001) further writes that "voice emanates of the distinct lived experiences of persons. 'Voice' interrupts the on-going flux of time and space by projecting the subject into it; the sound of one's 'voice' bends space and time …One's 'voice' entails one's capacity for moral agency. 'Voice' is a puissant phenomenon." (p. 184). I argue that voice is a rhetorical element that will identify the strategic response required from the perceived other.

Academic and Popular Accounts of Rodham Clinton

In each chapter, I explore a rhetorical event in which Rodham Clinton is forced into a specific role. She is asked to perform in a specific manner that is complicated, ill-

defined, or problematically gendered. Every person comes to understand the world and is understood through a set of roles they play. However, there are some roles that are so ill-defined and contradictory that they leave the actor in a dilemma facing competing messages about how to fulfill expectations.

Janeway (1971) comments that “role-changing and role-breaking make both heavy emotional demands on both the central figure, the role player, and on the others who form part of the relationship which changed the role” (p. 27). She further notes, “these breakdowns in role are often frightening to all those involved, and fright creates anger and hostility” (Janeway, 1971, p. 297). It is my contention, that *political woman* is one of the most ill-defined, ambiguous roles for a rhetor to assume. Rodham Clinton had to invent voices because she was placed in new and “ambiguous” situations. When a rhetor embodies the position of “public woman,” she tends to mold and change this public place in a way that breaks communal stereotypes about women. Ultimately, the rhetor that enters a rhetorical situation as a political woman will be faced with fear, fright, prejudice, anger, and mischaracterization. Rodham Clinton is the most salient example of this process.

There are many ways to approach this “role problem.” Talcott Parsons (1951) offers the original treatise on roles by calling them an “aspect of what the actor does in his [*sic*] relationship with others seen in the context of its functional significance for the social system” (p. 25). He originally proposed that roles imply (1) a relationship with someone else, (2) an activity and an audience that reciprocates the action, and (3) an

actor. For Parsons, roles are public and private. They are "action-plus-expressive gesture, action undertaken in a way that is understandable to others" (p. 72).

Kenneth Burke (1937) takes another approach to roles with his notions of dramatism. He introduces his frames of acceptance to explain how actors historically situate themselves and adopt roles within a particular moment.[3] Erving Goffman (1959) builds on Burke and provides several models to explain the constitutive parts of any given role.[4] Even Louis Althusser (1970) with his notion of the "hail" offers an explanation of how actors come to find themselves in particular subject positions.[5] All of these are important, vibrant, and needed methods of understanding the place a particular rhetor inhabits in a given moment. However, in the words of Bourdieu, they are the old models that do not produce new understandings about how gender functions in the world.

Other theoretical models and explanatory devices provide a window into the complicated relationship between agency, female candidacy, and high political office in the life of Rodham Clinton. Kathleen Hall Jamieson's (1995) notion of the double bind remains one of the most salient and insightful methods for considering the distinctive struggles facing female candidates for high public office. Jamieson's strategy works from the established cultural spheres that separate the work of men and women. Also, feminist historians like Eleanor Flexner and Ellen Fitzpatrick (1996) have been instrumental in showing that women have been trapped by the "cult of true womanhood"

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[3] Burke discusses frames of acceptance in *Attitudes Toward History* (1937).
[4] Goffman offers a discussion of roles in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959).
[5] In particular, see "Ideology and State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (1971).

that uses nature-based essentialism to promote that a woman's proper place is in the domestic sphere. History shows that women are to be pure, pious, domestic, and submissive. They are not to be public or political.

Theories of the double bind and the cult of true womanhood help to unpack the troubles facing political women. U.S. culture treats political office as a place that requires quick action, courage, and strong leadership. The double bind shows that as women try to emerge as public leaders cultural ideals about womanhood clash with expectations for political activity. This produces almost impossible rhetorical situations that make persuasion and communication a particularly tricky act. Jamieson (1995) writes that "binds draw their power from their capacity to simplify complexity. Faced with a complicated situation or behavior the human tendency is to split apart and dichotomize its elements" (p. 5). In other words, women seeking any position of power, but particularly those of an electoral nature, are placed in a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" type situation. Appear pretty but not too pretty, smart but not an affront to men, strong but not a lesbian, caring but not weak, combative but not a nag. It is an impossible situation that can be both constraining and liberating. Thus, critiques of contemporary female leaders must always consider the powerful grasp of the double bind on any woman candidate for political office.

Second, Karrin Vasby Anderson and Kristina Horn Sheeler's (2005) use the metaphor of the "culture of containment" to explain many of the codes that govern U.S. politics. The term containment harks back to cold war foreign policy, but Anderson and Sheeler use the basic tenets of this principle to explain many of the dilemmas faced by

powerful, female leaders. The authors determine that although containment reached its peak during the nuclear arms race, sexual containment has been used for centuries to demarcate a distinction between the sexes. For instance, they propose that these strategies were used during efforts for woman suffrage as a complex trope that desexualized suffragists by building on the notion that women should be contained in the household and cared for by their male counterparts. The authors argue that notions of containment and women's relationship to hearth and home still influence modern thinking and can be key factors in the consideration of a women's ability to lead.

All of these critical tools influence my investigation of Rodham Clinton's rhetorical performances. However, beyond notions of double binds and metaphors, I am most interested in how agency links voice and performance. I ask how voice is a product of agency. And, in turn, how does voice open up new channels of agency for Rodham Clinton and other women? Campbell (2005) argues that among other characteristics, agency is the power to do evil. She argues that agency is protean, and that it is open to reversal and can be turned on the subject or audience. She calls for more "synthetic, complex views of authorship and articulation, of the power of form as it emerges in texts of all sorts" (p.8). Campbell (2005) is concerned with how audiences interpret texts, but she also wants theorists and critics to consider the links "to the cultural context, material, and symbolic, in which discourse circulates" (p. 8). Rodham Clinton offers unique moments at which to test the limits of Campbell's claim. For example, she entered the race for president with the second largest financial resources of any candidate. She had more political endorsements than all other candidates, higher name recognition, and a

longer résumé of public service. In short, she had what most male candidates can only hope to achieve. She had the markings of a powerful candidate for the Democratic Party.

During the course of the primary race, this agency was interpreted as a sign of her "insider status," her links to "corporate America," and her use of "machine politics." She became not a viable candidate but a calculating shrew with evil intentions. Then, as she struggled to continue the race as the underdog for the nomination, audiences no longer heard Rodham Clinton say, "When I am president, I will." Instead, she would say she was "running to make it easier for future female candidates." This is partially true, but she was also running to win the office of president. It is the interesting nature of communal agency that it was both her biggest asset and obstacle.

Beyond the above theoretical literature, I will draw from diverse academic and popular accounts of Rodham Clinton's life. What follows is a sample of some of the work that has been written about Rodham Clinton.

During the 1992 presidential race, Rodham Clinton told reporters, "When Bill was first elected governor there were not many female spouses who had their own professions and their own interests. So I feel like I have lived through this once before" (as cited by Miller, 1992, p. 11). At this moment, Rodham Clinton simultaneously signified her awareness of the public's uneasiness about her image and her hope that it would eventually subside. As a rhetor, she was not a stranger to problems of reception. In the eyes of Rodham Clinton, it would take U.S. voters an adjustment period to accept her active role in her husband's political career. From her point of view, once she was

allowed to work on substantial policy issues in a new administration, these collective feelings would go away.

Unfortunately, both the academic and popular literature on Rodham Clinton show that this problem grew bigger after she began to work within her husband's administration. As the Clinton-Gore campaign prepared to take over the executive branch, the speculation about Rodham Clinton's role intensified. For example, WJC commented on Rodham Clinton's participation in a congressional economic summit he held with Vice President-elect Al Gore by noting that she "stayed the whole time. Talked a lot. Knew more than we did about some things" (as cited by Hall, 1992, p. 7A). This type of endorsement should have quelled some of the early, collective fear about Rodham Clinton. After all, here is the man who just won the presidential election claiming that his wife actually has more knowledge on some issues than he does. To many, this should be viewed as strength of his new team taking over the White House. However, most of the press coverage about the transition did not parallel WJC's evaluation. Reporters talked about the "unelected" partner and asked about the role First Lady Rodham Clinton would play in this pivotal administration. Media coverage implied that a smart woman might not be able to fill the role of first lady while commentators asked if an unelected spouse should offer advice on substantial public policy.

The transition to the White House marked more than just the beginning of national problems for Rodham Clinton. It also marked the moment at which popular and critical academic authors start to speculate on her special place in U.S. history. These accounts start from the tension arising as the Clintons transitioned to the White House.

These authors struggle with the question: What role should and could Rodham Clinton play in U.S. politics? Although the accounts of Rodham Clinton take many perspectives and arrive at a diversity of conclusions, they are all bound up in questions about her role, place, and position in government and leadership. They all use textual interpretation and lay psychoanalysis to make conjectures about Rodham Clinton's motives, mission, and purpose. Lakoff (2001) notes that authors each want to add their own spin to the story of Rodham Clinton. She argues that "we are eager for the story-making rights because we want to construct her, and through her, ourselves" (Lakoff, 2001, p. 160). I follow Lakoff's notion that Rodham Clinton constantly "eludes our 'narrative grasp' resulting in a series of deliberate misinterpretations" (Lakoff, 2001, p. 161). What follows will attempt to thematically make sense of this enormous body of "narratives" that discuss Rodham Clinton's roles.

Several biographical narratives presented vastly different Rodham Clintons. To some, she was a champion for women and children. To others, she was a conservative who forgot her liberal roots. Finally, to a vibrant and well-funded sector, Rodham Clinton represented the dangers of women's liberation and feminism. There are hundreds of books on her life. I shall not attempt a full description of each work. Also, many of the books I cite are from problematic or political publishing houses. I do not discriminate in this literature review for two reasons. First, all of these books, the good ones, the silly ones, and the mean ones, show how all authors, regardless of vantage point, deal with the theme of role and place as it relates to Rodham Clinton. Second, I find it important to include the attack literature with the commentary from academics and lay critics.

Psychoanalysis of Rodham Clinton has become a cottage industry, and a quick taste of these texts gives a window into some of the discourse that fueled the gendered traps she faced in her various public roles.

First, Gil Troy's (2006) *Hillary Rodham Clinton: Polarizing First Lady* is a prime example of lay critical analysis. Although he is an academic, this book is written for a public audience. It makes use of biographical data and personal interviews to explain the popular reception of Rodham Clinton, and it was widely read. It is the type of book that fueled much of the gendered understandings of Rodham Clinton. Troy traces the roles Rodham Clinton assumed during her husband's administration to make conjectures about her Senatorial role. He comes to the conclusion that "a significant portion of the criticism she received as first lady had less to do with her personality, her policy, or her gender and more to do with her position's peculiarities and the difficult fit between her ambitions and the traditions of being first lady" (p. 205). This seems to be a fair and well-established assumption. The job of first lady is ill-defined, and all women who have tried to meets its demands have received some sort of criticism. Troy does not stop with this explanation; he ends by arguing:

> Women who want real power in the American political system need to learn the democratic lesson that Hillary Clinton ultimately learned: better to earn power via election than to assume it via marriage, even when your spouse is president of the United States (Troy, 2006, p. 213)

Although a coded statement about Rodham Clinton's unconventional relationship with WJC, Troy points to the first dominant theme of these works. Rodham Clinton's

problems show that public women struggle with defining their legitimacy to hold certain positions and work for specific causes.

Carl Bernstein's (2007) *A Woman in Charge* also deals with the theme of legitimacy and power, but he also offers conjecture about the drives and motives of Rodham Clinton. He concludes, "What Hillary serves up for public consumption, especially since her sights are on the Senate and the presidency, is usually elaborately prepared or relatively soulless. This is the true shame" (Bernstein, 2007, p. 553). He adds that she is "neither the demon of the right's perception, nor a feminist saint, nor is she particularly emblematic of her time"; instead, she is "more old fashioned than modern" (Bernstein, p. 554). Bernstein thinks there is a lack of connection between Rodham Clinton's "words, and her actions" (p. 554). His work also uses psychoanalytic concepts to offer motives for Rodham Clinton's attempts to enter the public sphere.

Other popular accounts of Rodham Clinton analyze a key moment in her life. Each author takes a different perspective and offers slightly distinct critical insights. A lot of these books discuss the struggles Rodham Clinton encountered in proving to New York voters that she was qualified to run and dedicated to the state of New York. These books include: *The Girls in the Van: Covering Hillary* by Harpaz (2001) and *Hillary's Turn* by Tomasky (2006). Halley (2002) offers a third example of this book type. His work, *On the Road with Hillary*, gives and account of Rodham Clinton's campaign efforts in Arkansas, on a national stage, and in New York. It offers insight into how Rodham Clinton works with her campaign staff, prepares for speaking events, and

interacts with the press. It only focuses on the campaign abilities of Rodham Clinton, and it gives a meaningful understanding of one reoccurring role in her public life.

Finally, many popular accounts of Rodham Clinton could properly be labeled books of intense, partisan critique (both from the left and right). Some prime examples of this type include Barbara Olson's (1999) *Hell to Pay*, which claims that Rodham Clinton is a "woman with a Nixonian frame of mind" (p. 4). Olson further argues that "Hillary Clinton is a determined, focused leader who rapidly rose to the top ranks of the radical left, and who now seeks to foment revolutionary changes from the uniform of a pink suit" (p. 5). Olson's work is representative of a common conservative critique that Rodham Clinton is out to destroy traditional values and impose extreme versions of feminism on every U.S. family.

Some of the popular books framed Rodham Clinton with a corporate lens. Bedell Smith's (2007) account of Rodham Clinton labels her the "CEO" of a political corporation that is out to sell a new style of politics to the US electorate. She describes the Clinton marriage as a special partnership that can be viewed as a corporate operation. Dick Morris, a former Clinton confidant and political campaign director, argued that the corporation that Rodham Clinton heads uses branding techniques to sell a new type of gender politics and political ideology to voters. Dick Morris was fired by the Clinton White House, and his writings should be viewed with skepticism. However, he attracts a lot of media attention, and many of his accusations have complicated public understandings of Rodham Clinton. He offers two book-length projects that "debunk" what he perceives to be lies in Rodham Clinton's memoirs. He also tries to highlight the

errors of her political strategy. Morris ends his second book on Rodham Clinton by commenting that she is "more in the tradition of all those widows and daughters on the subcontinent who step in, after their husband or father flies, to lead their nations. At best they are pseudofeminists. Feminism is supposed to be a form of self-reliance, not a free—or even costly—ride on the coattails of the career of powerful male kin" (Morris, 2004, p. 337). Although his work includes a specific critique of her strategies, it seems that Morris ultimately returns to questions of legitimacy and place as it concerns Rodham Clinton.

There is also a genre of books that make bold and outlandish claims about Rodham Clinton's influence. Although they are not necessarily meticulously accurate in their reporting, they all garnered wide readership that spreads their harsh themes. For example, Laura Ingraham (2000) wrote that Rodham Clinton seeks power in all the wrong places and represents a style of "old fashioned and retrograde values" (p. 12). Ingraham also presents lengthy analysis that spirits and new age religious practice guide Rodham Clinton. The evidence for this claim comes from one statement in which Rodham Clinton mentioned she has imaginary conversations with Eleanor Roosevelt.

There are two other books in this genre that are merely hit pieces. First, Bay Buchanan also published *The Extreme Makeover of Hillary (Rodham) Clinton* during the 2008 presidential primaries. She claims that Rodham Clinton underwent constant political makeovers so all her rhetoric and work is a mere show to achieve personal power. Finally, Texe Marrs (1993) offers a self-published book that claims, "Hillary's hellcats are determined to control the rest of us. Control translates into power. These

calculating and ruthless women are clever and diabolical enough to understand that only if the world can be transformed and molded into a global dictatorship can their control over us be complete" (p. 25).[6] Although Buchanan and Marrs represent two very different types of public figures, they both wrote works that represent the theme of right-oriented personal attack. Both seek to question and speculate on Rodham Clinton's motives.

The most significant popular account of Rodham Clinton is a collection of thirty essays that was published during the height of the 2008 Democratic primary campaign. Titled *Thirty Ways of Looking at Hillary*, it claims to contain diverse views of Rodham Clinton's presidential run from the perspective of women writers. However, with the exception of four essays, the book was an expression of uneasiness and mean-spirited criticism from both the political left and right. For example, Amy Wilentz notes that the United States has what she terms a Rodham Clinton problem and admits that she places all of her own worries and failures for public women on Rodham Clinton. In another essay, Shriver argues that she will never support Rodham Clinton for president and says she "would be sorry to see Hillary Clinton, wife of a popular previous president, become the first female leader" of the United States (Shriver, p. 47). Shriver argues that the story of Rodham Clinton is anti-feminist.

Rhetorical critics, cultural theorists, and communication scholars have also been prolific on the topic of Rodham Clinton's role. As mentioned earlier, Lakoff offered a

[6] Self published books are not given much credit in academic circles. I support these suspicions. I include this book because it was widely circulated. Also, it was dropped off at my office by a "concerned Iowan" when I was working for Rodham Clinton. It exemplifies the cottage industry of attack writing about Rodham Clinton.

nice insight into the cultural projections that are often laid on the actions and texts of Rodham Clinton. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (1996) and Stanley Fish (2008) both produced similar critical accounts that understand the intense reactions to this complicated woman's role in U.S. politics. These three studies shift the analysis away from Rodham Clinton as a rhetor, and they begin to ask questions about why Rodham Clinton elicits vibrant and colorful reactions.

From a disciplinary standpoint, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell (1998a) asks the same questions as Gates and Lakoff in her study "Hating Hillary." Campbell uses cultural reactions to dress reform and press accounts of Rodham Clinton's place in the Clinton administration's attempt to overhaul health care to conclude that the public does not understand how to conceptualize powerful, competent women. Campbell's analysis concludes that "women whose training and personal history fit them for the roles of rhetor, lawyer, expert, and advocate, roles that are gender-coded masculine, will arouse the intensely hostile responses that seem so baffling" (Campbell, 1998a, p. 15).

Other treatments of Rodham Clinton from the field of Communication Studies have tended to focus on her time as First Lady of the United States. Colleen Elizabeth Kelley's (2001) book makes sense of the rhetorical techniques Rodham Clinton employs to deal with various public controversies in her life. Kelley highlights key moments of criticism from Rodham Clinton's time in the White House and then shows that each of these instances called for one of eight strategies: the common ground strategy, the blaming strategy, the apology strategy, the strength through adversity strategy, the fair fight strategy, the martyr strategy, the logic strategy, and the honest and humble strategy.

Ultimately, Kelley concludes that the rhetorical style of Rodham Clinton is compromised of what she terms "crisis management rhetoric."

Besides Campbell's poignant account of reactions to Rodham Clinton and Kelley's book length project about specific moment of contention in Rodham Clinton's public life, other communication scholars have taken up a series of journal-length studies about Rodham Clinton's ability to maneuver the rhetorical tightrope that is the position of first lady. Winfield (1994, 1997a, 1997b) produced three studies on this topic. The first claims that Rodham Clinton represents a new style of first lady and represents a break from old ways of understanding the position. Her later studies conclude that because of this new role and new style, journalists struggle with framing Rodham Clinton for public consumption.

Gardetto (1992) offers the first specific case study of a single reaction to Rodham Clinton. Her study analyzes the *New York Times'* early attempts to place Rodham Clinton into frames and roles. Her article looks at the first eleven months of the Clinton administration, and she shows that the paper struggled with ways to report on a First Lady of the United States who challenged perceived gender stereotypes.

Mary Vavrus (2002) gives the best account of how news outlets cover and frame Rodham Clinton. In her book *Postfeminist News*, she critiques news coverage of Rodham Clinton's 2000 U.S. Senate Race. Vavrus (2002) argues that Rodham Clinton's run for the Senate spurred a "schizophrenic range of treatments" (p. 130) that ultimately constructed her as a "neoliberal, postfeminist subject" (p. 142). Vavrus's account predates Rodham Clinton's run for the presidency, but in many ways her book predicts

the unfair commentary that eventually comes from commentators like Chris Matthews. Vavrus (2002) writes, "Hillary Rodham Clinton seems to inspire a mixture of respect and disdain from media personnel, and this mixture is more often than not structured by patterned references that reveal their creators' perspectives on women, power, and public life" (p. 130). Rodham Clinton's politics and rhetoric are always read by media through a post-feminist frame that delegitimizes the continued work of the feminist movement.

Finally, Parry-Giles (2000) and Anderson (2002) offer careful analysis of the rhetoric and reception of Rodham Clinton. Anderson uses the concept of metaphor to show that Rodham Clinton often assumes, or is given, personas such as "the Madonna" to deal with moments of public misunderstanding. Parry-Giles offers a bright understanding of the struggles and controversies that arose each time Rodham Clinton moved from a more traditional role of femininity to a more active policy role within her husband's administration.

Communication scholars have also started to comment on Rodham Clinton's presidential bid. Although the scholarship is just starting to be printed, there have been numerous convention panels and keynote lectures that speak to the gendered dynamics of the 2008 race for the Democratic presidential nomination. To date, the most significant full-length study of Rodham Clinton's presidential run is John M. Murphy's (2009) analysis of Rodham Clinton's speech following the stock market crash of 2008. Murphy compares Rodham Clinton's speech with those of McCain and Obama and concludes that she adopts a theme of expertise to offer solutions for US voters.

Political scientists have also produced a significant amount of literature on Rodham Clinton's role. Barbara Burrell's (1997) *Public Opinion, the First Ladyship, and Hillary Rodham Clinton* offers the richest analysis of how Rodham Clinton often was a lightning rod for her husband's administration. Burrell shows that rises in public approval for Clinton's policies also led to higher approval ratings for Rodham Clinton. Her analysis also shows the reverse to be true. Thus, Burrell's work determines that Rodham Clinton becomes a living representative of the day-to-day activity of her husband's administration.

Besides commentary on her role as First Lady of the United States, political scientists have been the most vocal about Rodham Clinton's run for the U.S. Presidency. First, Greenberg (2009) analyzes the role of negative campaigning in the presidential election of 2008. He does not consider the gendered dimensions of negative campaigning, but his analysis explores how negative attacks worked against Rodham Clinton and helped boost her opponent, Barack Obama. Second, Norman Birnbaum (2008) offered an analysis after Rodham Clinton's presidential concession speech. He claims that she was unprepared for the meticulous and well-planned campaign of Obama. Finally, Charles O. Jones (2008) takes up notions of validity and experience to understand how Rodham Clinton attempted to claim her experiences as first lady as preparation for the role of U.S. President.

Other political science treatments of the 2008 presidential election also attempt to highlight some of the gender discrimination she may have faced from the press, voters, and party leaders. Barbara Burrell (2008) offers understandings of public perceptions

and gender by showing that Rodham Clinton challenged public assumptions that female candidates cannot be seen as strong. Her study investigates the uses of the terms "likable" and "effective" to conclude that many of the masculine biases facing former female presidential contenders have been shattered by Rodham Clinton.

Second, the mere speculation that Rodham Clinton might enter the 2008 presidential race inspired a series of book length studies containing several scholars' reflections on the likelihood of a madam president. Erika Falk (2008) authored a book-length account of eight previous female presidential contenders and the struggles they encountered trying to achieve fair coverage from the news media. Second, Lori Cox Han and Caroline Heldman (2007) assembled a team of political scientists to consider if the U.S. electorate is ready for "Madam President." They both open the collection with individual chapters that show that U.S. voters claim to be ready for a female head of state but cultural stereotypes and pressures have yet to create an environment that is welcoming to female candidates. Finally, Gutgold (2006) offers a book length historical analysis that sketches the biases and public problems that have faced major female, presidential contenders.

Finally, Susan Carroll (2009) offers the most significant examination of Rodham Clinton, the presidency, and gender, in her article "Reflections on Gender and Hillary Clinton's Presidential Campaign: The Good, the Bad, and the Misogynic." Carroll seeks to understand how women who seek high office must "find a way to strike a balance between agentic, masculine behavior and communal, feminine behavior" (Carroll, p. 6). After concluding that Rodham Clinton shattered many of the old stereotypes associated

with female candidates, she argues that the 2008 race witnessed three troubling stereotypes. First, the mainstream media did not find the sexism directed at Rodham Clinton newsworthy. Second, pundits were allowed to offer sexist statements without repercussion. Finally, journalists were allowed to show political bias throughout the Democratic primary (Carroll, p. 12). Carroll concludes her article by saying, "perhaps someday the American public and the media will come to value strength and assertiveness in women leaders as much as they value those qualities in men. If so, Hillary Clinton's 2008 campaign will be one with historic coattails" (p. 18).

Popular press accounts of Rodham Clinton offer intense praise and wide speculation. Rhetorical critics and communication scholars have offered analyses about the reception of Rodham Clinton and key textual moments in her public career. Finally, political scientists have analyzed both the policy role Rodham Clinton played in her husband's administration and the barriers she overcame in her historic bid for the U.S. presidency. I hope to fill the gaps in all of this vital scholarship. I do not offer other biographical details or simply review one face of her career. Instead, I hope to show how Rodham Clinton navigated particular ruptures that arose when U.S. audiences projected intense emotions onto her as a rhetorical figure. That is, I hope to complicate understandings of why Rodham Clinton encourages intense speculation about the role of public women.

Preview of Chapters

In the chapters that follow, I analyze public performances in Rodham Clinton's political life.[7] Chapter two is an analysis of key Rodham Clinton's speeches promoting the Clinton healthcare reform. Chapter three is an analysis of First Lady Rodham Clinton's U.N. address in Beijing China. Chapter four focuses on her 1996 Democratic National Convention Address. Chapter five considers a collection of speeches that Senator Rodham Clinton offered on the Iraq conflict. Chapter six surveys her presidential campaign rhetoric, and Chapter seven is an analysis of her 2008 Democratic National Convention Address.

[7] I avoid discussion of William Jefferson Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinsky because I feel that it distracts from analysis of Rodham Clinton's public address. Much of the controversy around the Lewinsky affair speaks to the romantic partnership of equals that is the Clinton marriage. It is impossible to understand Rodham Clinton without considering her complex attachment to Bill Clinton. It is also impossible to understand WJC without understanding his connection to Rodham Clinton; however, WJC's romantic affairs lend themselves primarily to an analysis of WJC.

Chapter Two
Voicing Care:
Rodham Clinton as Health Care Czar and Spiritual Leader

"I do not know who will lead us through the '90s, but they must be made to speak to this spiritual vacuum at the heart of American society—this tumor of the soul."
--Lee Atwater, Republican Strategist
As cited by Rodham Clinton (Clinton, H.R., 1993, April 7)

"As he [Lee Atwater] faced death, he found that a life devoted only to getting power, wealth, and prestige left a lot to be desired, and he hoped that in a parting shot, he could push us to a higher purpose. In Austin, on April 6, bearing her own sorrow, Hillary tried to define that purpose. I loved what she said and was proud of her for saying it."
--President William Jefferson Clinton (Clinton, W.J., 2004, p. 501)

On November 19, 1992, Barbara Pierce Bush welcomed Hillary Rodham Clinton to the White House for a tour, a conversation, and a discussion of the duties of being first lady. As each presidential administration prepares to leave the White House, the spouse of the outgoing president hosts the incoming spouse for this type of meeting and public relations spectacle. It is always one of the many ceremonies that heals the electorate and reunites the citizenry behind the newly elected administration. The meeting between Pierce Bush and Rodham Clinton fulfilled all of these symbolic requirements, but it also marked another type of transition. This was not simply a change of administrations. It was not simply a shift of power from one political party to another. This was a generational shift for U.S. first ladies. Pierce Bush and Rodham Clinton had lived different public and private lives, and Rodham Clinton eventually approached the office of first lady in a drastically different manner than Pierce Bush. At this meeting, Rodham Clinton shook hands with Pierce Bush, but she was also introducing herself to the U.S. electorate as a new type of presidential spouse. Rodham Clinton was starting a national,

public career that would be marked with moments of gendered controversy and a search for her rhetorical voice.

As the two women greeted the press, Pierce Bush told reporters that the two women would talk about "family issues" and "pets." When asked what advice she would be giving Rodham Clinton, Pierce Bush said she would caution the new first lady against speaking "on the record." Pierce Bush then pointed to the press corps, looked at Rodham Clinton and said, "avoid this crowd like the plague…and if they quote you, make damn sure they heard you" (As cited by Hall, 1992, p. 7A). As the wives of the presidents, first ladies have the ability to reach wide audiences on social and policy issues. However, Pierce Bush remained relatively silent during her husband's administration, and she had not held positions outside the domestic sphere prior to her tenure in Washington D.C. She did not finish college, and she was mostly known for her sharp comments and motherly advice. Most U.S. voters liked Pierce Bush, and she was one of the less controversial first ladies in U.S. history. Pierce Bush was not the active partner the public saw in Nancy Reagan or Eleanor Roosevelt, and she did not have the celebrity attraction of a Jackie Kennedy. Pierce Bush represented the end of a specific generation of presidential spouses while the woman she welcomed to the White House initiated a new role for U.S. first ladies.

As I have written, Rodham Clinton was the first presidential spouse to hold graduate degree. She had outperformed her husband at Yale Law School, where they met, and she had been the primary wage earner throughout the Clinton marriage. When asked about her work outside of the domestic sphere, Rodham Clinton raised eyebrows

on the campaign trail by making gaffes about "baking cookies." This PR misstep spurred a bake-off with Pierce Bush, hosted by *Family Circle*.[8] Rodham Clinton had a different pedigree than previous women in her position, and WJC amplified this difference by framing his candidacy as a "two for the price of one" campaign with Rodham Clinton as some sort of "gift with purchase" venture. He frequently channeled the relationship of John and Robert Kennedy by telling audiences Rodham Clinton was his "Bobby." WJC was unapologetically honest that Rodham Clinton would be the one person in the room as he made really tough decisions during his presidency. This was not the Bush partnership, and this would not be a first lady in the style of Pierce Bush.

As Rodham Clinton met Pierce Bush, she had already entered her first period of public, gendered controversy. The meeting was the symbolic start of Rodham Clinton's tenure as first lady, but she had already violated Pierce Bush's "silence rule" by being an active participant in transition meetings that were taking place in Little Rock, Arkansas. WJC and Vice President-elect Albert Gore were interviewing potential cabinet members, and Rodham Clinton attended all hearings and met with all potential appointees. The Clinton-Gore transition team did not hide her active role, and the domestic press ran several stories about Rodham Clinton spending more time than her husband interviewing

[8] Rodham Clinton made the "cookie gaffe" at the Busy Bee Coffee Shop in Chicago, Illinois. She was campaigning for her husband, and she was asked about her work as a corporate attorney in Arkansas. The quotation was taking out of context, and it was shortened for the evening news circuit. Rodham Clinton writes about the experience in *Living History*. The event initiated a presidential cooking contest that now takes place in every election cycle. Rodham Clinton won the bakeoff 55% to 45%. Marian Burros (1992, July 15) with *The New York Times* wrote about the bakeoff and Rodham Clinton's commitment to cookie baking. Many batches of Rodham Clinton's cookies were served at the 1992 Democratic National Convention. Rodham Clinton's recipe won the public opinion vote.

potential Attorneys General. Rodham Clinton's role as an active participant in her husband's administration was starting to take form, and the public was now gaining actual examples of the partnership marriage the Clintons had touted on the campaign trail. As Pierce Bush cautioned her to avoid the press, Rodham Clinton had already moved into the media spotlight. This marked the beginning of Rodham Clinton's national, gendered public life.

In this chapter I analyze Rodham Clinton's role as head of the Clinton Task Force to reform the national health care system. In particular, I examine the discourse that Rodham Clinton offered between November of 1992 and December of 1993. The push for health care reform continued into 1994, but the momentum stalled in November/December of 1993.[9] By January of 1994, the Clinton administration realized it had lost the support not only of the Republican leadership but also of some of Democratic allies in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. I conclude that November 1992-December 1993 was one of the most gendered periods in the public career of Rodham Clinton.

The intense gendering of Rodham Clinton during this period should be viewed as a preview of the gendered traps that followed her throughout her public career. For these reasons, this chapter details the symbolic violence Rodham Clinton received as she tried to lead her husband's effort at passage of health care reform. Everything that happened during this period was a precursor to the problems she faced later. Rodham Clinton's

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[9] National Public Television offers "A Detailed Timeline of the Healthcare Debate portayed in 'The System.'" (Online NewsHour, 1996, May).

public discourse as head of the health care task force was her first attempt to find a voice that responded to various public expectations and institutional roles.

At the start of the Clinton presidency, Rodham Clinton was a popular public figure. However, after her role as Health Care Czar, she became a lightning rod for her husband's administration. Fineman and Miller (1993) reported that at the start of the first Clinton term, Rodham Clinton was out-polling her husband and outselling Princess Diana at the newsstand (p. 21-22). She maintained this favorable public opinion through the earliest days of the health care battle. For example, Carlson (1993) reported that at the start of the administration's health care efforts, Rodham Clinton had the support of 63% of U.S. voters, and a substantial block of people found her health care role appropriate (p. 31). She was a liked First Lady of the United States, and a majority of U.S. voters were not fazed by her attempts to shape public policy.

Rodham Clinton was also well received by the Washington establishment. This was not an easy task as both Rodham Clinton and WJC were viewed as inexperienced, political outsiders. However, Clymer (1993) reported that she had "five hit appearances on Capitol Hill" and a strong connection to the public (p. A9). Both Republican and Democratic leaders in Congress spoke highly of Rodham Clinton's knowledge and interest in health care reform. Not only was the public accepting her active role but the established Congressional leadership was also impressed by Rodham Clinton's knowledge and dedication to the issue. At the start of the battle, Rodham Clinton was the ideal pick to head the task force. She started as a popular, advocate with an admirable mission. However, her success was quickly transformed into a public failure. The

Clinton health care plan never passed Congress, and Rodham Clinton suffered a huge policy defeat. In this chapter, I chart her public rhetoric to see how her discursive moves preview what lies ahead in her public career. The symbolic violence Rodham Clinton faced in this moment was merely a sign for future roles and struggles.

I proceed with three sections. First, I offer commentary on the contextual situations that constrained the health care discourses of Rodham Clinton. Second, I offer my critical approach. Finally, I offer a textual analysis of the three 1993 speeches by Rodham Clinton on health reform. They include: (1) the June 13, 1993, address to the American Medical Association, (2) the October 8, 1993, address to the American Association for Retarded Citizens, and (3) the November 4, 1993, speech at Marshall University.

Contextual Constraints on Rodham Clinton's Health Care Voice

Rodham Clinton's health care discourse must be understood through two contextual constraints: (1) the symbolic shift Rodham Clinton represented for public women, and (2) the symbolic shift the Clinton presidency and marriage represented for U.S. politics. Lanter (1993) made the accurate observation that, "In the administration that likes to talk grandly about change, she [Rodham Clinton] is change incarnate" (p. 19A). Rodham Clinton forced U.S. audiences to test the limits of what was deemed acceptable for public women. Carlson (1993) further speculated that Rodham Clinton represented U.S. womanhood and was the "medium through which the remaining anxieties over feminism are being played out" (p. 36). Rodham Clinton's generation had already won many instrumental battles for equality, but the victories for abortion and

birth control and against sexual discrimination had not eclipsed the symbolic and patriarchal expectations that still haunted all public women. Rodham Clinton was of the Baby Boomer generation, but she was haunted by the specter of previous expectations that are tied to the office of first lady. She pushed the envelope of what was acceptable public behavior, but the press, the public, and the politics of her position frequently disciplined her into acceptable norms. Her role in the health care debate would become the first battleground for what might be termed her gender-role experimentation.

Carlson (1993) offered a hope that as this new first lady entered the White House, she would "in addition to the other items on her agenda…define for women that magical spot where the important work of the world and love and children and an inner life all come together. Like Ginger Rogers, she will do everything her partner does, only backward in high heels" (p. 36). Unfortunately, it was not this easy for Rodham Clinton. Kurtz (1992) wrote that "Hillary Clinton has become a blank canvas upon which ideologically inclined authors paint their brightest hopes and darkest fears" (p. A12). As she entered the White House, a *Newsweek* poll found that 49% of U.S. voters held a favorable opinion of Rodham Clinton and 46% wanted to see her take an active role in her husband's administration (as cited by Clift and Miller, 1992, p. 23). However, at the same time these figures were released, Quinn (1992) rightly noted that she would have to struggle not to make her spouse look weak. In relation to her individual identity, Rodham Clinton would struggle to be active, but not too active. She would participate, but not participate too much. She would be smart, but certainly not smarter than her husband.

Doris Kearns Goodwin (1993, January) and Frank Rich (1993) both accurately characterized these binds facing Rodham Clinton at the start of the Clinton Presidency. Kearns Goodwin interpreted reactions to Rodham Clinton, and the unrealistic expectations that started to constrain her public role, as unease about "women assuming positions of power." According to Kearns Goodwin, smart women always suffer backlash because they challenge social stereotypes (p. 49). Rich (1993) extended Kearns Goodwin's comments on cultural backlash to Rodham Clinton by writing:

> Few people seem to respond to Hillary Clinton as if she were remotely human. She is alternately defined and vilified as nun or Lady Macbeth, Florence Nightingale or Yuppie from Hell. If she is not going to play First Wife, then she'll be forced to play another female role from stock, like it or not. (p. 70)

The cultural and gendered backlash that constrained Rodham Clinton's performance as head of the health care task force was less about her abilities and more about her role as wife of the president. Goodman (1993) with the *Boston Globe* described it best by writing, "The roles that most women her age are struggling to bridge in their everyday lives—balancing work and home, juggling children and jobs, success and acceptance—are now being played out against the most rarefied backdrop of the White House" (p. 16A). Rodham Clinton became a public example of the private battles women were waging everyday.

At the same time she was expected to play hostess within the presidential administration, Rodham Clinton was also being constrained by the cultural expectations

of the women of her generation. These were not the women who grew up with Pierce Bush. The Baby Boomer women had fought political battles, attended elite colleges, and shattered numerous corporate glass ceilings. This was the first generation of U.S. women to successfully maneuver into all arenas of public life in mass numbers, and these public women were eager to see a first lady that reflected their lifestyle. They believed a smart woman was capable of raising a child and earning an income. They had no problem with a female primary wage earner. They saw these qualities in Rodham Clinton, and they felt a real chance to be represented in the White House. Goodman (1993) noted:

> We are witnessing the high profile of the first full-fledged professional woman to serve as First Lady and the first First Lady to take such an open part in public policy-making. The newspapers and television bring us daily portraits of Hillary the hostess, Hillary the mother, Hillary the health honcho. We see Hillary setting a table, and Hillary setting an agenda. It's as if the long dormant and much debated superwoman had finally broken the glass ceiling (p. 16A)

This generational shift came through in the health care speeches Rodham Clinton offered the U.S. public. Rodham Clinton spoke as a new type of public woman. She was both mother and policy-maker, and this stretched the imaginations, and sometimes the patience, of U.S voters. Lewin (1993) argued that the health care discourse of Rodham Clinton was a type of "feminism that speaks for itself." She further argued that "few women in American public life have so seamlessly incorporated the disarming charm once called 'feminine' with the steely confidence associated with powerful and

persuasive men" (p. A14). I agree with Lewin's views, but as I note, the expectations of her audiences and her abilities often come into conflict producing gendered reactions as audiences tried to decode her rhetorical messages.

Beyond viewing Rodham Clinton's health care discourse through cultural constraints about her gender, the Clinton marriage and the Clinton presidency represented two seismic shifts for U.S. politics. As Rodham Clinton was pulled in one direction by gender norms, she was pulled in several other directions by norms about marriage and political behavior. Rodham Clinton and WJC were Washington outsiders. They had both been trained at elite universities, and they had both worked on several presidential campaigns. Rodham Clinton also spent a brief period in Washington working on the Nixon impeachment trial, and WJC was an undergraduate at Georgetown University. However, they had resided and worked in Arkansas for the majority of their public lives. They were not trained in the social graces and networking rules needed to survive inside the beltway, and they were viewed with suspicion by many establishment Republicans and Democrats. They were also significantly younger than the outgoing presidential administration.

Their marriage inverted many common assumptions about the labor breakdown in a heterosexual pairing. Rodham Clinton represented a new type of First Lady of the United States, and her husband represented a new type of President. Throughout their entire marriage, WJC had earned less than Rodham Clinton, which shifted only when the Clintons moved to Washington. With his presidential salary, WJC became the primary wage earner for his family for the first time in their public lives. WJC had always

worked as a public servant. Rodham Clinton had always worked in the private sector and supported the family.

This new partnership marriage was a sharp contrast from the traditional marriage of George and Barbara Bush. Feminist leader Gloria Steinem praised the Clinton pairing as a democratic approach to family. Rodham Clinton and WJC were a new type of public couple, but as they went public with their working relationship, narratives circulated about their private lives. First, some authors engaged in lay psychological analysis that produced what might be best termed "conjugal narratives" about the Clinton partnership. Judith Warner (1993) argued that the marriage worked because WJC made "her human." Dick Morris countered that "everything is under control" in the Clinton marriage; Morris used lay psychology to speculate that Rodham Clinton liked it when she got to rescue WJC. Accounts like these led to questions about the sexual nature of the marriage. Did they love each other? Did they sleep together? Was Rodham Clinton a lesbian? Are they codependent? Many struggled with the notion that a man and woman could operate in a complementary work relationship and still have a private, intimate life. The narratives sometimes marked the Clintons as "power hungry" individuals who teamed up for purely political gain, and the narratives often forgot that their union had produced a child and a traditional nuclear family.

The Clintons said they would operate from a model of marriage equality, and they decided to speak openly about the influence of the first lady. Fineman and Miller (1993) wrote that Rodham Clinton and WJC would embrace something like a "team presidency." The two had operated in this type of partnership throughout their careers in

Arkansas. One critic called Rodham Clinton "one half of a seamless union called Billary."[10] The Clintons not only brought progressive politics to Washington D.C. They also brought a progressive marriage. Theirs was the first, modern presidential family to embrace a partnership model. WJC often called on Rodham Clinton's expertise and skills to help with policy problems. A simple change in geography would not alter their collaboration efforts.

Although the U.S. electorate liked Rodham Clinton at first, their partnership model did start to raise questions about how this "new type" of White House might operate. This early questioning of her role shows that she was constrained not only by her gender but also by her marriage. First, Burros (1993) ran a story that this first lady not only would change her role expectations, but she also would change daily life in the White House. For Burros and other reporters, this first lady was different because she wore pants, ate Boca burgers, and "put her official stamp on the space by outlawing smoking" in the White House (Burros, 1993). In addition, Rodham Clinton had an office in the West Wing. The staff of previous First Ladies operated solely in the East Wing. *The New York Times* alerted readers to the fact that Rodham Clinton would keep her more traditional ceremonial staff in the East Wing, but she would also take up prime real estate in the West Wing. This would be the physical space she would use for her work on health care (Another First, 1993, March 1, p. C11).

This Clinton partnership work style also became an issue for many journalists and political observers inside the beltway. Their reports further challenged Rodham Clinton

[10] This header is a direct quote taken from Kelly (1993, January 20) with *The New York Times*. The article was titled "Hillary Clinton as First Lady: A Very Leading Role."

as she spoke about healthcare reform. When Rodham Clinton was named to head the healthcare task force, Gabriel (1993) claimed "this is an issue of nepotism, no different from JFK's appointment of brother Robert" (p. 17A). Broder (1992) had already written that "her role as a policy adviser, perhaps more influential than any other, in the Clinton White House raises questions of accountability that both Clintons must address." Maureen Dowd (1993) joined the chorus by claiming this was the "official end of the era in which Presidential wives pretended to know less than they did and to be advising less than they were" (p. A11). She added:

> Whatever her skills and status, her power comes in part from being married to the boss. No matter how some feminists admire Mrs. Clinton, some would rather see a woman President than a powerful First Lady. (p. E3)

Although the partnership was new and "democratic" for Steinem, many others raised questions about two powerful people sharing a conjugal and professional relationship. Ifill (1993) quoted Barbara Bush's press secretary as saying, "Mrs. Clinton is coming close to not just influencing public policy, but making public policy" (P. A18). Ifill also quoted Perez, Pierce Bush's Press Secretary, as saying, "If she succeeds…she will have designed a new paradigm" for first ladies (p. A18). Rodham Clinton certainly challenged old paradigms, and she helped create new frames through which to analyze the policy work of future presidential spouses. However, her health care discourse was constantly constrained by her limited Washington experience, her marriage, and the generational shift signified by her husband's administration.

Moral Frames and Policy Rhetoric: Critical Arguments

Rodham Clinton's health care rhetoric was met with speculation because audiences and media were reading it through a moral frame. Rodham Clinton was comfortable discussing the political issues associated with health care reform. She knew the facts, statistics, and legal arguments around this policy issue. However, her policy rhetoric was delivered with a confusing morality frame. Rodham Clinton presented two sides to her public image during the health care debate, and audiences often conflated her two personas. Skilled rhetoricians will often make use of different personas to meet the immediate and the symbolic demands of specific audiences. However, when Rodham Clinton started to publicly campaign for health care reform, she was already in a public position to which was attached hundreds of years of cultural expectation. She set a precedent for future First Ladies to take policy roles in presidential administrations, but she complicated this new standard by offering a moral frame that was consistent with her past but potentially confusing to the public.

From a textual standpoint, the moral frame was established on April 7, 1993, at the University of Texas Liz Carpenter Lecture Series. Rodham Clinton was asked by University leaders to deliver a joint lecture, with Governor Ann Richards, on the virtues of public service. Rodham Clinton initially accepted, but her appearance was complicated as her father's health deteriorated. What was originally scheduled as a presentation to a small audience grew into a public lecture with 14,000 guests. Rodham Clinton participated, and she gave a presentation that was similar to some that she had delivered as a lay preacher in the Methodist Church. What was significant about this

speech was that it was the first, large-scale national example of what can be called Rodham Clinton's moral voice. The speech was policy-light and philosophy-heavy. She did not advocate for healthcare reform or other substantial presidential programs. She did not offer partisan politics. In fact, the majority of her outside sources came from the writings of Republican strategists. The speech was ceremonial. It was sermonic, and Rodham Clinton assumed the role of a pastor as she spoke.

Rodham Clinton began by describing the United States as caught between two oppositional societal structures. First, "We have our economy—the market economy—which knows the price of everything and the value of nothing. That is not its job" (Clinton, H.R., 1993, April 7). In her talk the economy existed in a dialectical tension with " the state or government which attempts to use its means of acquiring tax money, or making decisions to assist us in becoming a better, more equitable society as it defines it" (Rodham Clinton, 1993, April 7). These two forces could never account for what she talked about as a "spiritual" void in U.S. public life. Her lecture embraced themes of public morality. On a personal level, it was probably best understood as the thoughts of a public individual going through a difficult personal crisis. Regardless, in the speech Rodham Clinton identified a uniquely U.S. spiritual void that must be filled with a new approach to civic life.

After identifying the problem, Rodham Clinton offered the audience an answer:

> We need a new politics of meaning. We need a new ethos of individual responsibility and caring. We need a new definition of civil society which answers the unanswerable questions posed by both the market forces and

> the governmental ones, as to how we can have a society that fills us up again and makes us feel that we are part of something bigger than ourselves. (Clinton, H.R. 1993, April 7).

She asked the audience to help build, arguably through the new political programs being championed by her husband's administration, "institutions more responsive to the kind of human being we wish to be (Clinton, H.R., 1993, April 7). Rodham Clinton's lecture was learned; it was insightful and meaningful. However, it emerged from a new voice that had not been part of her first lady persona. The United States electorate had met Rodham Clinton the policy wonk. Voters knew the campaign advocate. Rodham Clinton as moral philosopher was a new role on a national stage.

Rodham Clinton had delivered this type of talks for years within her faith community. It was a new frame in Rodham Clinton's national public life, but it was not new in her personal life. For example, she was first introduced to national audiences on May 31, 1969. In a commencement speech, she asked her classmates to consider the role of the individual in society. She said:

> We are, all of us, exploring a world that none of us even understands and attempting to create within that uncertainty…we are searching for more immediate, ecstatic and penetrating mode of living. And so our questions, our questions about our institutions, about our colleges, about our churches, about our governments continue (Rodham, 1969).

Her address was so successful that *Life* magazine featured a young Hillary Rodham in its pages. However, what is significant is that Rodham Clinton had a paper trail of

delivering speeches that pushed the envelope of public morality. These were questions she seemed to work through. The speech at the University of Texas was consistent with her intellectual life, but it was not like her public work as health care czar.

Many political pundits did not know what to do with Rodham Clinton's speech. In the *New York Times Magazine*, Michael Kelly (1993, May 23) wrote an article in which he dubbed her "Saint Hillary." She appeared on the cover dressed in a white suit, and a heavenly glow had been placed around her image to make her appear angelic. Kelly (1993, May 23) argued First Lady Rodham Clinton was on a spiritual "crusade" to make herself the savior of U.S. Civic Culture: "The First Lady's vision is singular, formed by intellectual passions and experiences of a life. But it is also the most purely voiced expression of the collective spirit from the Clinton Administration" (p. 24). Kelly (1993, May 23) did mention that this was a "message of values, not programs" (p. 63). He also reminded readers that the speech was a "message of the preacher, a role Hillary Rodham Clinton has filled many times delivering guest sermons from the pulpits of United Methodist churches" (Kelly, 1993, May 23, p. 63). However, his tone was suspicious as he tried to make sense of a liberal, activist first lady giving sermons about public morality.

Toner (1993) wrote that the speech at the University of Texas changed the public frames used to make sense of Rodham Clinton. He commented that "the nature of her media coverage, so far, has helped give her work on a deeply political subject an apolitical cast…the personal and political became even more blurred when her father died in the midst of the task force's work" (Toner, 1993, p. A11). Based on Toner's

observation, I create a critical lens to understand Rodham Clinton's speeches on health care. From a critical standpoint, I start with Campbell's (1998a) salient account of public discomfort with Rodham Clinton. Campbell comes to understand the mixed reactions to Rodham Clinton's rhetorical performances by revisiting the cultural reactions to women's dress in the nineteenth-century. Like early female advocates, Rodham Clinton struggled throughout the healthcare debates and other moments of public advocacy in her husband's administration. She challenged expectation and pushed the limits of what was appropriate for a public woman. She also became the living embodiment of new U.S. womanhood. She was representative of a new generation, and she showed audiences a skilled advocate and policy wonk. This was not met with universal acceptance, and it caused her many troubles.

Campbell (1998a) concludes her article on Rodham Clinton by commenting on the symbolic problems that face public women "writ large." She writes, "women who play public roles or function in the public sphere discursively enact their femininity, and that women who do not or who do so to only a limited degree, women whose training and personal history fit them for the roles of rhetor, lawyer, expert, and advocate, roles that are gender coded masculine, will arouse the intensely hostile responses that seem so baffling" (Campbell, 1998a, p. 15). Following Campbell, I would like to extend this frame to the health care rhetoric of Rodham Clinton. This period of gendered controversy is significant in the life of Rodham Clinton for three distinct reasons.

First, Rodham Clinton's advocacy for healthcare reform was the first national example of what might be termed her policy voice. Rodham Clinton had developed a

sizable résumé in Arkansas, in her corporate law career, and as a public attorney during the Nixon impeachment. However, when she headed a national task force, spoke before Senate committees, and campaigned on behalf of the administration before labor, medical, and policy groups, she broke through barriers that had once seemed impossible for other women in her position. Second, this period foreshadows the many gendered problems Rodham Clinton faced in other roles and periods of her public life. Finally, it is an interesting period in which Rodham Clinton uses moral discourse and themes to talk through a policy issue. Thus, it is one of the first examples of her blending personas to meet ill-defined public expectations. It is the first example of the complicated public burdens that face public women such as Rodham Clinton.

Textual Analysis

Rodham Clinton's public speaking on healthcare reform began with two commencement speeches at the Universities of Pennsylvania and Michigan in May of 1993. These speeches fit the genre of epideictic speaking, and she only alluded briefly to health care reform. Her first major policy speech on the subject was made at the June 13, 1993, annual meeting of the American Medical Association. This was a fitting occasion for Rodham Clinton to take the stage as a champion of healthcare reform. The AMA brings together physicians, hospital administrators, and other leaders in the health industry. This was a prime opportunity for Rodham Clinton to test the limits of her policy work. She had spent the previous six months working with a team of experts on the how to make insurance and care affordable for all U.S. citizens. As she took the

stage, however, the audience was prepared to be peppered with facts, figures, and policy analysis.

Rodham Clinton did not address the crowd as a political wonk. Instead, the words she offered resembled the style she had used at her lecture in Austin, Texas. Her first argument framed the debate by stating:

> We have lost some of the hope and optimism of that earlier time. Today, we too often meet our greatest challenges, whether it is raising of [*sic*] children or reforming the health care system, with a sense that our problems have grown too large and unmanageable. And I don't need to tell you that kind of attitude begins to undermine one's sense of hope, optimism, and even competence. (Clinton, H.R., 1993, June 13).

Rodham Clinton made two interesting moves here. First, she returned to the theme of optimism and hope. Her speech in Austin, Texas, spoke to a moral void and emptiness felt across civic culture. She paralleled that claim in this speech before the AMA. The speech followed a problem solution structure, which is fitting for this type of policy address. However, Rodham Clinton did not describe the "problem" that many in the crowd might have expected. Yes, everyone in the room knew the healthcare system was failing. Rodham Clinton had been charged with the task of fixing healthcare. However, she does not spend time addressing this issue. Instead, the "problem" is a lack of hope. It is a moral problem. Yes, there is a financial and political problem that must be addressed. However, her first major speech on the subject of health care reform framed the problem in moral terms.

Second, although the initial section reframed the health care debate within a public argument about morality, it also shifted healthcare reform from the public to the private sphere. There had been serious speculation about her role, her marriage, and her beliefs. In this opening moment of her presentation, the act of reforming a national healthcare policy is on the same level as raising a child. Yes, raising children and families are difficult tasks. However, they are difficult tasks that take place within the domestic and private spheres of social life. Reforming an industrialized nation's approach to health insurance is an issue of public importance. Solutions reside in the political sphere. First Lady Rodham Clinton faced all of the cultural baggage associated with femininity and public women. She had already raised eyebrows by stepping outside the private sphere and working as a public advocate. However, in the opening of the speech, she tried to reposition her health care work within the domestic sphere, and in the traditional realm of a first lady's responsibilities, by comparing it to raising a child.

It would be inaccurate to say that Rodham Clinton's policy voice never emerged in her first speech on health care reform. She did address issues of cost and coverage with expert testimony and sharp analysis of the status quo. However, such analysis occurred between two moments of personal testimony and moral discourse. In the middle of the speech, she claims that the administration is striving to make "the practice of medicine again a visible, honored link in our efforts to promote the common good" (Clinton, H.R., 1993, June 13). First, medicine becomes a moral profession in Rodham Clinton's narrative. Then, she offered the crowd a personal account of her father's care. She recalled being treated with respect by dedicated nurses and doctors. She used this

moment of personal reflection and revelation to transition into a policy voice that addressed the principles, guaranteed coverage, and cost controls in the Clinton plan. Thus, she prefaced her discussion of policy specifics with a personal story. She then summarized the details of the plan.

She then shifted from her discussion about policy specifics by claiming that health care reform should consider the "human perspective" of costs. She also added, "We are not just talking about the particulars of how we deliver health care, we are talking about creating a new sense of community and caring in this country in which we once again value your contribution, value the dignity of all people" (Clinton, H.R., 1993, June 13). Healthcare involves humans, families, and communities. It involves moral issues in many respects. However, as she took the stage at the AMA, Rodham Clinton was not only a first lady. She was the official head of a government task force that promoted and created a policy that would affect every doctor in that room. She had a stage to address specifics and clarify the nature of the proposal. However, she placed her brief analysis of the policy proposal between two appeals to morality and kindness. She moved her rhetoric in two directions that left more confusion than clarity. Her opening speech campaigning for health care reform promoted a policy change with a confusing moral claim.

Rodham Clinton continued to use moral language to talk about healthcare policy throughout the fall of 1993. The Clinton plan was not officially delivered to Congress until November 20, 1993. However, Congressional representatives from both parties brought the issue up in a series of floor debates. Also, members of the House and Senate

started offering alternative health bills. Rodham Clinton was constantly on the defensive throughout 1993, and she was offered a speaking opportunity at the national conference of the American Association of Retarded Citizens on October 8, 1993. Again, as the head of a federal task force Rodham Clinton was charged with the responsibility of speaking about the finer details of the plan. As this speech is months removed from her first appearance at the AMA, she also had to respond to several attacks circulating in the public sphere. Unlike the speech at the AMA, Rodham Clinton offered some specific policy analysis. For example, she said,

> The health care reform plan will move beyond even the legislation that was mentioned and will finally make it clear that, regardless of income or age, individuals with severe disabilities should have the option to choose home-based care or community-based care…In fact, we would like to be able to…to increase the living allowances for residents of ICMFR from the $30 to higher than that, maybe as high as $100 per month. (Clinton, H.R., 1993, October 8)

In this moment, Rodham Clinton clarified many misconceptions about what changes would result from the new policy. However, this is just one of a few policy moments in the speech.

Rodham Clinton quickly moved away from talk about costs and figures and returned once again to framing the issue in moral terms. In one of the more persuasive moments of the speech, she claimed that if the new healthcare plan was to work, it could not "discriminate against any American. It must be appropriate in the sense that we

should build on what works. It should provide access to adequate quality, affordable health care in appropriate settings based upon the choices that individuals make that are best for them and their families" (Clinton, H.R., 1993, October 8). Rodham Clinton moved from her cost specific analysis into a discussion of discrimination. She carried this theme of discrimination into her analysis of equity and safeguards. Rather than talking about what rules and regulations would guard against patients being denied access, she shifted to make moral claims. She stated, "It must -- it must have equity. And if it is comprehensive and does not discriminate, it should have equity. But it needs to have safeguards built in so that all of us feel that we are not being taken advantage of or discriminated against" (Clinton, H.R., 1993, October 8). Rodham Clinton's speech to AARC started with policy analysis, but she again hid this voice and used moral terminology and discourse to describe a complicated policy proposal.

The final speaking opportunity of 1993 that afforded Rodham Clinton a chance to speak about health care reform put her back on a college campus. She visited Marshall University on November 4, 1993. As she took the stage in West Virginia, U.S. audiences had been introduced to scathing attacks on the Clinton health initiative. The health insurance lobby had started their famous Harry and Louise ads that called the plan socialized medicine and made inaccurate claims about costs and affordability. Rodham Clinton had been publicly sparring with the health care industry, and she had made direct attacks on the inaccuracies of the advertisements. However, neither of these issues nor the specifics of the plan made it into the speech at Marshall University. Instead, she

returned to moral phrasing as she talked to the crowd about the initiative. She opened her speech with:

> Last year, we had a dream that we could begin to tackle the problems that America had neglected. And we are. It isn't easy. It certainly is controversial. But it is far better to wake up every morning and go to bed every night knowing that we're trying to help the American people deal with their real problems, day in and day out. (Clinton, H.R., 1993, November 4)

Thus, she made reference to the questioning and political fighting taking place over the health initiative. From the opening of her speech, it seemed Rodham Clinton might address the controversy and misconceptions about the plan.

Instead, Rodham Clinton framed the remainder of the presentation in a moral voice. She said:

> And when the President, last week, presented the Health Security Act to Congress, he invited the entire country to become involved in this great national discussion. We want you to read this book. We want you to ask questions. I was thrilled when I got here and saw the newspaper carrying the questions and answers that so many citizens had called in-- right here on two big pages. (Clinton, H.R., 1993, November 4)

First, Rodham Clinton spoke to Marshall on November 4, but the actual Clinton health care plan did not make it to Congress for a few more weeks. The administration held a

symbolic ceremony, and it was likely that Rodham Clinton was speaking about this event. They presented talking points and delivered speeches on the health plan, but Congress would not receive the actual document until right before the Thanksgiving recess. Rodham Clinton referenced this event and then mentioned a "we" who urged a "conversation." Rather than take credit for the work of the task force, Rodham Clinton put herself in a collective "we" with her husband and spoke about the need for national dialogue. This was an odd request from Rodham Clinton. The plan had already been submitted. Decisions had been made. The time for discussion was over, and she knew this as the leader of the task force. However, rather than spell out what was in the plan, she merely asked the audience at Marshall to ask questions and converse about the topic.

She then returned to larger ideas about morality and public discourse. She stated, "This is what we need to be doing as a country. This is exactly the kind of discussion we need to have. Because when we do, we will be able to compare not only what the President has proposed with what we have today, but also with all the other proposals" (Clinton, H.R., 1993, November 4). She returned to the theme of public conversation, but she made a shift in pronoun use. The "we" of this section was the public. It was not the "we" of the administration asking for discourse, but the "we" of the people speaking back to the administration about their concerns with the plan. Although this is a noble request, it was an odd framing of a proposal that was set to hit Congress in two weeks.

Rodham Clinton ended the speech at Marshall University by claiming that “the worst alternative facing America is to do nothing” (Clinton, H.R.,1993, November 4). She told the audience:

> We have to stand up and say, "We want a health care system that works for all of us." And if we do that, we will put together the kind of majority in this country, and in the Congress, that will once and for all speak with a loud voice. Enough is enough. Let's make all Americans secure. Let's take the unnecessary costs and waste and fraud and abuse out of this system. And let's spend our money where it counts --taking care of people who need it. (Clinton, H.R., 1993, November 4).

Rodham Clinton returned to a theme of voice at the end of her presentation. This was the last moment of public address she used to promote healthcare reform in 1993. It was also the last speech she offered before the final bill went to Congress, where it was destroyed by both Republicans and Democrats. She asked the audience to speak for fairness and equality in this speech. She used her voice to ask the public to voice its concerns. She wanted all citizens to ask for equality in access to health coverage. These were all important subjects related to the health debates. However, they were safe subjects. They were topics that fit the traditional realm of first lady advocacy. The Clinton Health Plan was in a serious political crisis. Rather than offer a policy voice, Rodham Clinton moved in the direction of cultural expectations and framed her arguments in terms of morality.

This rhetorical action did not stop the momentum of inaccurate policy attacks coming at the administration from Congress and the insurance lobby.

Concluding Thoughts

I opened this chapter with a quotation from Lee Atwater and another by William Jefferson Clinton. In her speech at the University of Texas in 1993, Rodham Clinton referenced the spiritual void to which Atwater had alluded. WJC later wrote in his memoir that he was proud of Rodham Clinton for addressing that issue at the University of Texas. For WJC, the University of Texas speech was an important part of a national, moral conversation. I agree with the former President, but the speech illustrated the enormous and impossible constraints placed on public women like Rodham Clinton. Had Rodham Clinton not been head of the healthcare task force, the speech at the University of Texas might have been received in a completely different manner. It was a speech about morality. It was a speech that addressed the issues that publics considered appropriate for First Ladies. However, she offered this public message at the same time she was immersed in the world of politics. That is, Rodham Clinton was fighting and engaging in traditional policy moves at the same time she spoke about morality and public service. She offered two competing frames or what I term two voices. The U.S. public heard Rodham Clinton's moral voice as they were finally adjusting to hearing her policy voice.

Rodham Clinton made mistakes while running the health care task force for her husband, but she was also a powerful advocate for his cause. Her biggest shortfall came from not understanding that public expectations of first ladies are ill defined and

unforgiving. It is hard to role switch when you are always expected to be the ideal example of "American womanhood." Marton (2001) wrote that:

> Hillary, who studied all her predecessors, nonetheless underestimated the nation's attachment to the traditional role of the first lady. She was succeeding one of the most popular presidential wives in modern history, and one of the most traditional. But she believed she could change things rapidly. (p. 319)

Marton's analysis fails to mention why the change was so problematic. The U.S. electorate was accustomed to the partnership of Rodham Clinton and WJC pushing the envelope of traditional behavior. However, this first year of the Clinton presidency afforded Rodham Clinton many opportunities when she had to be both a moral first lady and health care policy activist. It was difficult enough to figure out how to put a nontraditional woman in a traditional role. This was complicated even more when the President appointed her to head a controversial task force.

Rodham Clinton and the Clinton administration both made several mistakes during the health care debates. Too many of the debates were held in private rooms. The public was not informed of how the document was being written. The task force should have spent more time coordinate its efforts with the Congressional leadership. Rodham Clinton (2003) wrote:

> After twenty months, we conceded defeat. We knew we had alienated a wide assortment of health care industry experts and professionals, as well as some of our own legislative allies. Ultimately, we could never

> convince the vast majority of Americans who have health insurance that they wouldn't have to give up benefits and medical choices to help the minority of Americans without coverage" (Clinton, H.R., 2003, p. 247-248).

Her memoir tells an accurate story of the bill's defeat. She had made severe missteps as the manager of the policy, and the entire presidential administration, including Rodham Clinton, made amateur moves that prevent the passing of this important legislation. The public record is littered with these examples, and Rodham Clinton accepted responsibility, and blame for the failure of the legislation.

Beyond the structural problems, the bill also failed because of Rodham Clinton's complicated rhetorical decisions. It is my contention that Rodham Clinton's used disastrous public relations efforts to promote this bill. She framed a policy issue in moral terms, and her audiences were left trying to decipher a complicated policy through competing media and rhetorical frames. I feel confident that she might agree with me because Rodham Clinton has always accepted most of the blame for the health care bill's failure. She wrote, "I knew I had contributed to our own failure, both because of my own missteps and because I underestimated the resistance I would meet as a First Lady with a policy mission" (Clinton, H.R., 2003, p. 248). The first part of this statement speaks to the political and structural mistakes she made as head of the task force. However, it is the second part of the statement that gets at the heart of this chapter. She failed to understand that the public had not witnessed a First Lady working so directly with public policy. This was new. This shattered expectations, and this behavior violated norms and

rules about roles. This should have been managed better in her rhetorical choices. This rhetorical miscalculation only exacerbated the problems that would await her in future battles as First Lady of the United States. Rodham Clinton helped complicate a symbolic problem with her complicated rhetorical choices.

Rodham Clinton searched for a personal voice in 1993, while she worked as the official policy voice on healthcare for the administration. Any rhetor would fail to meet these daunting expectations. The expectations were insurmountable. She spoke in a moral voice as an advocate for a policy change. She tried to meld the incompatible roles of traditional first lady and policy advocate. It is telling that no other first lady since Rodham Clinton has taken such an active role in a presidential administration. The gendered period of 1993 was a preview for the remainder of Rodham Clinton's tenure as a public servant. As head of the health care task force, she opened new doors for future first ladies, but she presented two competing voices that ultimately led to the defeat of an important public policy.

Rodham Clinton reflected on her morality speech in her White House memoirs. The death of her father was difficult time for her. She wrote, "I believe that when our hearts are raw with grief, we are more vulnerable to hurt, but also more open to new perceptions" (Clinton, H.R., 2003, p. 160). This is what she struggled with as she addressed the audience at the University of Texas. However, what she saw as opportunity to create a new paradigm for civic participation and polity only confused others. Rodham Clinton's speech at the University of Texas was powerful, and her concerns about U.S. political participation were valid and insightful. They did not help

her pass health care reform. The use of a moral voice to push public policy was a miscalculation on her part. Her writings would agree with this statement. This moment showed the type of struggles that she would face in other roles and positions. She would struggle to find a voice to fit a multitude of expectations. In this moment, her chosen frame did not garner public support. This public period showed that the use of confusing public voices allowed for gendered (mis)interpretations to echo across the remainder of her public life.

Chapter Three
A Diplomatic Voice:
Rodham Clinton in Beijing

"Viewed as a woman, an equal factor in civilization, her rights and duties are still the same; individual happiness and development."
--Elizabeth Cady Stanton, U.S. woman's rights/woman suffrage activist
"The Solitude of Self", 1892[11]

"That is why we must respect the choices that each woman makes for herself and her family. Every woman deserves the chance to realize her own God-given potential."
--Hillary Rodham Clinton, First Lady of the United States
Remarks to the U.N. 4th World Conference on Women Plenary Session, 1995

"Women hold up half the sky."
-- Jiang Zemin, President of the People's Republic of China
Opening Remarks to the U.N. 4th World Conference on Women Plenary Session, 1995

In September of 1995, the United Nations convened in Beijing, China, to hold the fourth World Conference on Women. The United Nations held similar meetings in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), and Nairobi (1985). Also, in 1979 the United Nations drafted a treaty known as *The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*. This document constitutes acts that are considered discriminatory towards women, and it provides a plan of action for nations to fight these forms of discrimination. The United States failed to sign this document as an official supporter.

Traditionally, these conferences brought together world leaders, government officials, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and members of the United Nations to

[11] This quotation appears in the version of "The Solitude of Self" that appears in Karlyn Kohrs Campbell's (1989b) collection of primary works from the first wave of feminism, *Man Cannot Speak for Her Volume II: Key Texts of the Early Feminists, p. 372.*

discuss the global status of women. The Beijing conference continued the conversation and work that began at the previous meetings. It would also be a discussion of what was termed the *Beijing Platform*. Gonnerman (2000) reminds us that the platform was not a binding document, only "international standards for the treatment of women." The Beijing conference considered this document and discussed the fact that the status of most women in the world had continued to deteriorate since the prior meetings. Tyler (1995, September 6), with *The New York Times*, reported that as the convention gathered, "of the 1.3 billion people living in absolute poverty in the world, 70 percent are women." The situation for most women in the world worsened, and many lacked the voice or access to power they needed to rectify their unfortunate place in the global economic hierarchy.

Despite the instrumental importance of the conference, the Beijing meeting was unlike the prior conferences for three important reasons. First, many world leaders were angered that China was given the privilege of hosting the conference. Many Western nations, including many leaders in the United States, viewed China as the most egregious violator of women's rights. Many governments saw participation as an economic and symbolic vote for the Chinese. Some nations refused to send delegations because of the strange rules the Chinese imposed on the conference. For the first time in its history, NGOs would not be allowed to participate in the conference proceedings. At previous conventions, the NGOs would hold meetings in buildings adjacent to the venues of official government leaders. At this convention, the Chinese separated the two meeting

by more than twenty miles. It was also quite difficult to obtain a VISA to attend the conference unless the delegate was the member of an official diplomatic entourage.

Second, the Communist Party of China would send only 2,000 members to the proceedings. They would be the only Chinese allowed to witness any of the meetings. None of the speeches, committee meetings, or debates would be aired on Chinese television. Finally, China orchestrated the conference so most of the major meetings would be outside the city limits of Beijing in an affluent suburb, away from the poverty-stricken neighborhoods. The foreign participants would be shuttled outside the city and offered only a glimpse of urban life for Chinese women. In short, the Chinese would be in complete control of the messaging and production of the event.

This meeting was criticized because of the uncertain role the United States would play. Prior to the meeting, the governments of China and the United States had disagreed over three key issues. First, WJC held a state dinner with members of the Taiwanese government in the summer of 1995. Because of historical and diplomatic ties between Taiwan and China, this made the participation of Rodham Clinton very important to China. It would be a symbol of parity and impartiality in the ongoing debate between these two Asian nations. Second, the Clinton Administration and the Chinese were trying to come to an agreement on trade that satisfied the economic needs of both nations while meeting the demands of the unions and trade activists within the Democratic Party. Finally, the Chinese had recently raised eyebrows by arresting and convicting former Chinese National Harry Wu of treason.

Early in 1995, the Clinton Administration had agreed to participate in the Beijing conference. It was decided that the first lady would attend the meeting as the official representative of the administration. She would travel with U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Madeline Albright, a large number of Congressional Representatives, and Senators from both political parties. The decision was eventually postponed and reconsidered after the Harry Wu situation. Many parties in the United States, on both the left and the right, had concerns about what message HRC's participation might send to the Chinese government. Like the other situations analyzed, the conference in Beijing became a moment of gendered controversy in the life of Rodham Clinton.

In this chapter, I analyze the speech that Rodham Clinton gave to the delegates at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China. This public performance was the most significant moment of international diplomacy performed by Rodham Clinton while she was First Lady of the United States. This speech should be of particular importance to rhetorical critics for two key reasons. First, the importance of this rhetorical moment was completely dependent on the artistic nature of her symbolic persuasion. That is, Rodham Clinton's performance in Beijing was not a significant moment of international diplomacy because she traveled to Beijing and negotiated a treaty or spoke with specific leaders. In fact, Rodham Clinton participated in little negotiation or direct diplomacy while she visited China. Instead, this speech needs attention from rhetorical critics because it was a moment in which a first lady used the symbolic trappings of an intensely complicated role to artistically raise global

consciousness about the status of all women. In short, it was a subtle, feminist use of a role that is wrapped up in centuries of misogynistic and patriarchal misunderstandings.

Second, this speech deserves more critical attention because critics and supporters of Rodham Clinton have declared this to be the most important speech of her public career. As a staffer for Rodham Clinton's presidential bid, I once listened to WJC offer his own review of this speech. He mentioned that since 1995, he rarely travels to a foreign nation without being asked about Rodham Clinton's speech in Beijing. While campaigning, he mentioned that Rodham Clinton's speech may have been one of the most important moments of his time in the White House. Following WJC, I further assert that more rhetorical scholars need to analyze a speech that continues to inspire generations of young women.

Finally, this speech represents yet another moment in which Rodham Clinton responded to a gendered trap through the use of public address. As the Clinton Administration was debating Rodham Clinton's participation at the conference, the U.S. public sphere was flooded with opinions from the right and the left. Robert Novak offered a particularly gendered opinion when he claimed:

> Well I'm interested in having—developing a dialogue, bringing these people along gradually. But going over there and lecturing them, I think that we ought--I think Mrs. Clinton ought to read the autobiography and the writings of Mrs. Truman, because she knew how to be a first lady and she didn't try to be a world politician. (Novak & Shields, 1995)

Throughout 1995, Rodham Clinton was struggling with the looming midterm elections of 1996. She also was dealing with the disaster of the healthcare overhaul, and she had publicly decided to "soften" her image within the administration. It is obvious that Novak's claim is overtly sexist because he assumes and predicts that Rodham Clinton's speech would be read as a scolding rather than positive participation. However, Novak taps into the specific gendered problem that faced Rodham Clinton in 1995. By mentioning Bess Truman,[12] Novak subtly reminds audiences that Rodham Clinton is not a "typical" first lady. By completing a diplomatic trip to China, without her presidential husband, Rodham Clinton would be doing little to quiet the public discussion about her uncharacteristic public role in the administration.

Many right-leaning political leaders and groups loudly criticized both the conference agenda and the potential participation by the first lady. For example, Judie Brown, president of the American Life League, publicly said, "I want to express my outrage at the insidious, deceptive manner in which the U.S. delegation continues to promote abortion, contraception and population control, all under the guise of human rights" (as cited by Tyler, 1995, September 6). In addition, Senators Jesse Helms and Phil Gramm claimed that the conference was "shaping up as an unsanctioned festival of anti-

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[12] Novak seems to be drawing on the notion that Bess Truman was "silent" because she spent most of her time outside of Washington, D.C. and did not give press conferences. However, her distance was only geographical because the record shows that Bess Truman counseled President Harry S. Truman through significant decisions. Beasly (1996) reports that Harry Truman called her "the Boss" before he was President (p. 454). It is fair to say that Bess Truman did not hold press conferences, and she did not take a formal or public role on public policy. However, it is an odd analogy for Novak because Bess Truman was an influential advisor to President Truman. Caroli (1995) stresses that "a lifetime of correspondence between Harry Truman and his wife reveals how much he valued her judgment and how often he conferred with her on important matters (p. 203).

family, anti-American sentiment" (as cited by Clinton, H.R., 2003, p. 299). Finally, besides the voices of U.S. Senators and movement leaders, many religious institutions expressed concerns about the conference. In her retelling of the context surrounding the speech, Rodham Clinton writes, "The Vatican, vociferous on the subject of abortion, joined forces with some Islamic countries concerned that the conference would become an international platform to promote the women's rights they opposed" (Clinton, H.R., 2003, p. 299).

Many outspoken, female pundits in the United State also voiced opposition to the conference. In one of her more scathing attacks, political commentator Arianna Huffington told audiences that the Clinton administration's decision to attend the conference was a blow to human rights progress around the world. She wrote:

> So, it's a shame you've chosen to be on the wrong side of history on this one. But at least you will not be the first to visit a totalitarian country and swallow, I'm sure with nothing but good intentions to further women's rights, the lies your hosts will serve about how profoundly they value women's rights. But you will be the first First Lady to provide magnificent cover for their lies and for their crimes. Congratulations. And please do enjoy your time in Beijing. (Huffington, 1995, p. A17)

Huffington's message offers an odd symbolic twist to the public commentary around the event. She uses verbs such as "swallow," and she casts Rodham Clinton as a cover for the Chinese. Huffington predicts that Rodham Clinton will attend the conference, pay lip service to the Chinese, and ultimately do more harm. With offensive verbiage,

Huffington used sexist language to symbolically silence Rodham Clinton's diplomatic voice.

Beyond political commentators and conservative opponents, Rodham Clinton faced the concerns of many members of the left wing of U.S. politics. Many liberal members of Congress thought that participation in the conference would ultimately ignore the human rights violations of the Chinese. However, most liberal criticism surrounded the controversy over Harry Wu. Many argued that Wu was a small example of the basic rights violations that take place in China on a daily basis. Wu was a Chinese national who fled the country in the 1970s after he became active in movements to oppose the Communist Party. He came to the United States and worked on issues related to human rights violations for twenty years; then he returned to China in 1995 to participate in a conference. When he crossed the border, he was immediately arrested, put in prison, and sentenced to a hard labor camp. After a month of negotiations, the Chinese released Wu in a sham trial on August 24, 1995, and they permanently banned him from the country. The White House confirmed the attendance of Rodham Clinton a few days following this decision. Rodham Clinton reported that "Mr. Wu criticized my decision, reiterating that my attendance might be construed as a tacit approval of China's record on human rights" (Clinton, H.R., 2003, p. 301). Wu's Congressional Representative Nancy Pelosi asked Rodham Clinton to reconsider her attendance at the conference (as reported by Clinton, H.R., 2003, p. 301). Many human rights activists on the left saw the Wu situation as a moment of back door bargaining that ultimately

resulted in the first lady bringing undeserved attention to a nation that violates the basic human rights of its citizenry.

Situational Constraints

Despite the domestic chatter, Rodham Clinton and the administration continued to prepare for the official trip. However, before she arrived in China, many world leaders began to criticize the silence and inactivity of the United States. The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto, opened the conference as the keynote speaker. Bhutto offered a not so subtle criticism of the West and the United States by noting that the "silence" on issues pertaining to women must stop (as cited by Tyler, 1995, September 6). Tyler (1995, September 6) with the *New York Times* argued that Bhutto's speech indicated "the most forceful call for action that may emerge from here in 10 days' time is a demand for international protection from violence, whether it is rape and terror of 'ethnic cleansing' and armed conflict or domestic battering."

Bhutto's remarks broadly criticized the failure of the United States to take the lead on global issues related to women. Bhutto also subtly criticized the consideration by the Clinton administration that Rodham Clinton might not attend. Writing about these criticisms in later reflections, Rodham Clinton makes the point that there was never any question about whether she would attend the conference. The Clinton administration had indicated in private talks and public negotiations that the first lady would not attend the conference if Mr. Wu remained in prison (p.300). However, Rodham Clinton (2003) noted that had the Chinese kept Wu in prison, she would have considered attending the conference "as a private citizen" (p. 300). The real internal debate, according to Rodham

Clinton, surrounded the nature of her performance. The issues being discussed were of particular interest to the first lady, and she worried that her message might be misinterpreted. In her memoir, she wrote, “I had learned during health care reform that my own strong feelings rarely help me in my delivery of public address.”

After the administration confirmed that Rodham Clinton would attend, many voices from China and the United States wanted to know the specific theme of her remarks. The Chinese government sent daily inquiries to the first lady asking about the nature of her speech. In one pointed request, Rodham Clinton says the Chinese “made it clear that while they welcomed my physical presence at the conference, they didn’t want to be embarrassed” (Clinton, H.R., 2003, p. 303)

Journalists in the United States turned the writing of Rodham Clinton’s speech into something of a dramatic mini-series. Hoagland (1995) commented, “When middle-aged and older white men at the State Department and in the Republican Party started telling Hillary Rodham Clinton she could not go to China, we should have known that she would -- come hell, high water or Harry Wu” (P. A23). Hoagland further commented:

> Her decision was an outcome of personality as well as politics. This first lady was not about to trust anyone else's advice about where, when and how she should speak out on "women's issues." She and her president-husband did not turn their lives inside out in pursuit of the White House for her to be muzzled on the gender front, a key political battleground for the Clintons. (p. A23)

For many domestic writers, this issue became a narrative about Rodham Clinton acting as a feminist crusader and not an official representative of her husband's administration.

Because many journalists identified Rodham Clinton with the crusader persona, other writers started to reconsider, yet again, the uncharacteristic role Rodham Clinton played in her husband's administration. Hunt (1995) wrote that the trip to Beijing underscores:

> Mrs. Clinton's difficulty in finding an appropriate role for herself, one that Americans are comfortable with, after her prominent leadership of the administration's failed health-care reform campaign. In the aftermath of that battle and the Republican election sweep last November, Mrs. Clinton has adopted a lower profile, largely avoiding the front-line fights confronting President Clinton on issues such as the budget and welfare reform as he fights for re-election" (p. A4).

He also cited Melanne Verveer, Deputy Chief of Staff to the First Lady of the United States, who said: "People are much more comfortable having her not delve into the legislative give-and-take and not having that kind of hands-on negotiating…They are more comfortable with her as an advocate." (Hunt, 1995, p. 4A). Even Rodham Clinton's own staff had started to speak about her new role in the administration, and they rhetorically worked to shift public perceptions of her place in the White House.

Contextually, this speech was riddled with gendered traps and multiple interpretations. Rodham Clinton (2003) acknowledged this later in her public career by writing, "Given all that preceded it, one wrong word in this speech might lead to a

diplomatic brouhaha" (p. 302). She also noted, "I wanted to push the envelope as far as I can on behalf of women and girls (Clinton, H.R., 2003, p. 302). The importance of this speech was heightened by international tensions and domestic controversy, so I argue that although Rodham Clinton had to make careful rhetorical choices, she was also afforded an important opportunity to make specific feminist claims and participate in consciousness-raising discourse. Rodham Clinton (2003) pushed the limits of international diplomacy to give voice to global women while criticizing the Chinese government on their own soil. The performance was a rhetorical triumph for Rodham Clinton and a significant victory for WJC's international efforts.

Critical Frame

Rodham Clinton's offered a gendered performance in Beijing. In critical terms, her speech was not propositional. Rodham Clinton did not advocate for policy, and she offered no specific proposals for how governments and legislative bodies might best address the needs of women. Beyond the lack of wonkish content, Rodham Clinton filled her speech with appeals to natural rights philosophy and enlightenment ideology that almost seem contextually out of place in Communist China. Finally, the speech avoided the deductive, legal reasoning that is characteristic of most of her public appearances. The speech is best described as an exercise in enumeration of anecdotal and personal evidence that inductively leads the audience to a specific philosophical conclusion. In Beijing, Rodham Clinton transformed a privileged "social location" into a globalized "political position" to speak as a representative voice for the collective "mothers, wives,

sisters, daughters, learners, workers, citizens, and leaders" (Clinton, H.R., 1995 September 5).

Rhetorical critics and theorists have explored the topic of mutedness. Cheris Kramarae (1981) was one of the first theorists to argue that women are deprived of equal opportunities for free expression because vocabularies and codes of language favor those in power. Following the research of Edwin and Shirley Ardener, she dubbed all women a "muted group" (p.1). Later, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell (1989c) explored specific aspects of mutedness by illustrating that many courses in U.S. public address and key anthologies of great speeches typically lack any serious attention to the significant voices of great female speakers. Campbell's study was further supported by the work of Vonnegut (1992) who claimed that "the voices of women and other muted groups are almost entirely absent from the American public address classroom" (p. 28). Finally, other theorists, like Wood and Cox (1993), have offered significant inspection of the role of critical voices from within the academy.

Bonnie J. Dow (1997b), however, offers the most significant commentary on the relationship between voice, politics, and rhetorical theory. Voice is a slippery concept for rhetorical theory. Rhetorical criticism is skewed toward the investigation of texts that are performed for immediate audiences. Scholars who spend their days and nights composing rhetorical criticism spend many of their classroom hours teaching students to use "voices" in public speaking classrooms. However, from a theoretical standpoint voice is a particularly liberating concept that begs the critic to ask vital questions about intersections of gender, privilege, race, class, role, and identity. Voice is more than the

physical part of communication. Voice refers to the content of a message, the ability to speak, and the location of the performance. By investigating moments of "voice," rhetorical critics are asking important questions about the material and symbolic effects of addressing an audience as a public advocate.

In her essay, Dow (1997b) investigates "the troublesome implications of uncritically equating social location with political position in our evaluation of the voices we create and hear" (p. 246-7). For Dow, a social location is often linked to power and is eclipsed by narratives of race, gender, class, and other demographic categories of social classification. A critic investigating matters of social location might ask, "who has the right to speak here?" or "why is this group the focus of a specific rhetorical act?" By contrast, a political position is a personal identity that is crafted by overt performance. That is, outside discourses primarily dictate the social location of an individual but the political position flows from specific roles and discursive performances of the rhetor. As Dow (1997b) argues, "when we produce knowledge, when we speak or write, we do so from social locations that are constituted by discourse and experience" (p. 247).

Following Dow, I argue that investigations of voice interrogate notions of timing and contextual understanding. That is, at times certain situations call for specific voices to address social concerns. At other times, those same social voices might needlessly silence the voices of the disempowered that need to be heard. The most competent rhetorical performances come from those individuals who accurately detect when their voice is the best means to bring the most positive social change (Dow, 1997b, p. 250).

That is, they know when they can properly give voice as opposed to taking voice from those that too often are silenced.

Rodham Clinton's performance in Beijing is an ideal example of a "voice giving" rhetorical performance. Rather than silence those in less fortunate social locations, Rodham Clinton transformed her location of power into a political position, and she spoke as a collective voice for a global community of women. She used a powerful subject position to bring global awareness to many silenced, forgotten, and unknown populations. This was a moment of "voice giving" rhetorical action. Rodham Clinton utilized her social location to give voice to those in less powerful positions. In accomplishing this, she did not further silence these women but instead stood as a symbolic surrogate for them. The speech gave voice to the voiceless. She became a surrogate for the collective of silenced voices.

The classification of this speech as "voice giving" and the analysis of the both the context and text of this performance is particularly important to the larger narrative of this dissertation. Rodham Clinton gave voice to women in this performance, and she stood as the surrogate voice for the majority of impoverished and neglected women across the global community. She also "gave voice" at a conference organized to consider the status and development of women in all nations. Finally, it was the feminist subject matter and the symbolic message of sending this particular first lady to address this body that created initial controversy for Rodham Clinton. Thus, her voice-giving exercise was riddled with gendered subtexts that make this an interesting moment to

consider how this rhetor, who constantly struggled with gendered identities, negotiated a particularly gendered performance that required her to speak on gendered issues.

Creating and Using the Voice: Textual Analysis of the Beijing Speech

Three rhetorical moves made this text a significant moment of voice-giving discourse for Rodham Clinton. First, she used the early parts of the speech to develop her position as an advocate for global populations of women. As she took the stage in Beijing, she spoke for many demographic categories. As a representative of the United States, she spoke for factory workers and corporate CEO's. As a global ambassador, she spoke for Asian villagers and European mothers. In short, Rodham Clinton took the podium as the mouthpiece for a diverse and dispersed group of people. Her first successful move came from her use of pronouns to address the needs of this group. She rhetorically established herself as the advocate for all women by saying, "We come together in fields and factories. We come together in village markets and supermarkets. We come together in living rooms and board rooms" (Clinton, H.R., 1995, September 5). Rodham Clinton chose to use the pronoun "we" rather than "they." She included herself as part of the collective she represented. This allowed her voice at the conference to become the voice of many.

She carried this use of collective identity throughout the speech. After her initial remarks, she informed the crowd that the world's women were concerned about politics and the future in all areas of daily life; Rodham Clinton argued that "whether it is while playing with our children in the park, or washing clothes in a river, or taking a break at the office water cooler, we come together and talk about our aspirations and concerns"

(Clinton, H.R., 1995, September 5). Again, Rodham Clinton included herself as part of the collective. She was one with the woman washing clothes in a river, and she understood the concerns of the corporate worker. However, this quote showed her moving in the direction of voice-giving discourse. This was a moment of consciousness-raising for global audiences. The women, the "we" in her statements, were using individual voices and experiences to build community and talk about shared constraints. She was aware of this because with her phrasing she made herself part of that community. It was her job now to use her voice and make others aware of these concerns. The "we" in Rodham Clinton's speech was the chorus of individual voices expressing similar concerns. She had the job of orchestrating their voices into a larger composition for the audience in Beijing.

The use of collective pronouns took a new form in the midsection of the speech. First, Rodham Clinton started to use "we" to form a new collective. She stated, "By gathering in Beijing, we are focusing world attention on issues that matter most in the lives of women and their families" (Clinton, H.R., 1995, September 5). This "we" was not the same as the "we" in her earlier statements. This collective was the group of government officials and leaders who were assembled to make policy that could impact the lives of the women working in factories and villages around the world. Rodham Clinton ultimately created two collectives at this moment in the speech. First, there was the collective of global women who are struggling to support families and communities. Second, there was the group of leaders who have the power to make life easier for the

other collective. She stood as the one person who permeated the boundaries of both groups.

After creating these dual communities, Rodham Clinton offered a statement that addressed the specific rhetorical problems mentioned earlier. She said, "There are some who question the reason for this conference. Let them listen to the voices of women in their homes, neighborhoods, and workplaces" (Clinton, H.R., 1995, September 5). This statement marked the moment when she brought the two communities together. First, she reminded the audience of the individual voices that sent a collective message of concern. She then noted that the conference had the ability to make pragmatic change in the world, that the conference could overpower the oppositional voices at work in the public sphere. Finally, she made the leaders in the audience part of the global community of concerned women. That is, she used her membership in both (of her created) groups to say that the conference should be the surrogate voice for women. Ultimately, her sex and her role as first lady allowed her to walk between two different communities and produce a text that gave voice to the voiceless and hope to those struggling to improve the lives of women.

Beyond creating a collective voice, Rodham Clinton also had to establish her ethos with the global communities she hoped to represent. As First Lady of the United States, she was one of the most significant and powerful women in the world. On its face, many would question her ability to speak to the experience of working-class women in developing nations. There were few similarities between her daily routine and that of a rice farmer in Lombok. In fact, her invitation to speak at such a prestigious event

signified that she was in a different social and political class. Thus, the question became: how can this powerful woman be the voice for a class of people who live in a material world completely different than her own? Rodham Clinton overcame this problem by speaking from her personal experiences. That is, she created her ethos for global women and for the audience in Beijing by using narrative. Early in the speech she stated, "I have met mothers in Jogjakarta and Indonesia, who come together regularly in their village to discuss nutrition, family planning, and baby care" (Clinton, H.R., 1995, September 5). She then began to tell stories about her conversations with Danish women about child care, South African women about race and apartheid, U.S. women in public office who work on policy and legislation, Indian and Bengali women taking advantage of microloans, and female health care workers in Belarus and the Ukraine that struggle to give adequate care. In this moment, her experiences spanned four continents and all power structures. She positioned herself as an ideal ambassador because her position afforded her the opportunity to speak to so many different types of women. That is, her position of privilege became the personal quality that made her the ideal voice for women in the villages and boardrooms.

Rodham Clinton then moved from this ethos-building moment, to make the bold claim that she was the ideal and appropriate person for this role:

> Speaking to you today, I speak for them, just as each of you speaks for women around the world who are denied a chance to go to school, or see a doctor, or own property, or have a say about the direction of their lives, simply because they are women. The truth is that most women around the

> world work both inside and outside the home, usually by necessity (Clinton, H.R., 1995, September 5).

Her phrasing symbolically transformed her into a credentialed voice for all the women she has encountered through her role as first lady. The "them" in this quotation were the health care workers and the mothers fighting racism. She might not fully understand their struggles, but she heard their voices. She had seen the hardships. And, she had a connection to these women through her past experiences. She established her credibility, and planned to use it, to speak for all the women striving to improve their communities.

Finally, after rhetorically establishing her credibility and building herself as an advocate, Rodham Clinton then was able to use her words for an enormous symbolic victory. As she stood at the podium, Rodham Clinton represented more than the women of the world. She also represented the largest and most successful democracy on the planet. She was not simply a representative of this democracy. As first lady, she was the symbolic mother of a specific group of people. She embodied notions of civic virtue and citizenship. In short, she was a symbolic representation of the enlightenment project associated with U.S. independence. Her conjugal relationship to the leader of the nation made her symbolic proof that democratic ideals will continue to spread to future generations. She was the future of democracy, self-governance and natural rights.

In every other moment of her career, the trappings of republican motherhood and civic virtue have put Rodham Clinton in difficult rhetorical places. However, these trappings and associations afforded her the agency to spread these notions to all women around the world. That is, she was able to take a hefty and misunderstood responsibility

from her domestic role and use it to symbolically extend the U.S. democratic project to all women around the world. She transformed her location into a position through which to transform human rights associated with the West into a natural rights philosophy for the global community.

This philosophical transformation happens at the climax of the speech in a series of paragraphs that are guided by parallel structure. She starts these paragraphs with the phrase "It is a violation of human rights when" (Clinton, H.R., 1995, September 5). After each repetition of that phrase, she moved through a list of examples that included: baby girls who are killed because of their gender, women who are forced into slavery and prostitution, women who are raped, women who are treated as a prizes of war, brides who are burned because their dowry is too small, women whose mutilated genitals reflect some ancient cultural belief, and women who are denied access to family planning services. She walked through graphic details, and she showed that these acts are violations of human liberty and happiness.

Following this, she offered her thesis, which comes at the end of the speech. Rodham Clinton inductively walked through the list of examples and then asserted:

> If there is one message that echoes forth from this conference, let it be that human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights once and for all. Let us not forget that among those rights are the right to speak freely—and the right to be heard. (Clinton, H.R., 1995, September 5)

This was the most important section of the entire speech. It was followed by a list of demands that conclude with the statement, “freedom means the right to ‘debate openly’” (Clinton, H.R., 1995, September 5).

The rhetorical power of this section resided in the use of key verbs. In particular, Rodham Clinton used echo, speak, and to be heard. These words made the symbolic nature of her thesis even more powerful. The idea of an echoing message signified that although she opened the conversation, her speech was merely another moment in a larger consciousness-raising conversation. This message had to spread like sound waves in a cave. It had to reach the far corners of the planet, and all people had to be aware of the struggles that face global women. She also returned to the verbs “speak” and “hear.” Her presentation attempted to open a space where the most fundamental element of the enlightenment project is given to all people. She opened a space where all people were allowed to voice their opinions regardless of sex. However, it was not enough just to speak. The audience had to be open to the message, and the enlightenment was about engagement. Rodham Clinton extended the right to free expression and civic discourse to all women. Her speech started a conversation, and she used what was normally a problematic role to say that the rights associated with free people must finally be granted to all people regardless of sex. In a clever rhetorical move, she used the trappings of a gendered role to free others from the symbolic bonds associated with sexism and patriarchy. Her trappings were the tools that allowed for the freedom of others. She made the enlightenment project about voice, and she extended that voice to all women

regardless of their country of origin. Her speech gave voice to the voiceless. It was a feminist use of the first lady's podium.

Concluding Thoughts

Rodham Clinton used her appearance in Beijing to create a voice for lost, forgotten, and ignored women around the world. It is important to rhetorical studies because she used a position that often constrained her personal voice to create a space of free expression for those who are silenced. In other words, this was a consciousness-raising, voice-giving moment of feminist public address. After her appearance, Rodham Clinton wrote in an editorial, "I am grateful that on behalf of our country I had the opportunity to attend this conference with men and women from all over the world who are committed to speaking out and taking action against abuses and injustices that fly in the face of human rights. (Clinton, H.R., 1995, September 11). She added, "The women's conference by itself won't change any lives. But I hope that, by encouraging people to take notice of these issues, it will help lead us to a world in which every woman and girl is given the respect and dignity she deserves" (Clinton, H.R., 1995, September 11). For Rodham Clinton, respect and dignity start with the ability to speak, argue, and use voice.

The speech was reviewed as a success by both domestic and international audiences. Hunt (1995, September 10) noted, "At one conference panel, she was introduced as 'the first lady of the world.'" Many people seem to see her as the voice of women's struggle for access to education, health care, jobs and credit, as well as freedom from violence" (p. 4A) Harry Wu, who had been an early critic of her participation, offered a glowing review by saying, "Over the past two months, I have had many reasons

to be proud to be an American citizen. Today all Americans should be proud that their first lady spoke out directly and forcefully in Beijing about human rights." He told reporters with *The Washington Times* that "her Chinese Communist hosts had to wonder if it was such a good idea to hold the conference in Beijing after all" (Only Mrs., 1995, p. A20). Many accounts described the speech as important, provocative, and courageous.

Robert Novak seemed to be one of the lone critics who described the presentation as a failure. Rather than giving the first lady credit for her efforts and courage, he wrote:

> What courage is involved? I mean she was at no risk here. The only thing at risk is U.S.-Chinese relations. I still wonder every time she goes out there and makes controversial statements who elected her, who appointed her to office. I think first ladies are supposed to do ceremonial things, not controversial things, and she is whacking the hell out of the Chinese when we have important bilateral relations between those two countries and all--and just attacking their social policies is not constructive. (Novak & Shields, 1995)

He then added, "While Mrs. Clinton is certainly right to criticize the forced abortion policy of the Chinese government, her credibility is questionable because of her inconsistent and illogical stand" (Novak & Shields, 1995). Novak's comments mentioned earlier in this chapter were filled with elements of misogyny and sexist stereotypes. Rodham Clinton would never please critics like Novak. That he remained critical after her speech was a success shows that she did something to upset gendered assumptions. Novak held to the stereotype of a silent and submissive first lady. Rodham

Clinton's moment in Beijing was a clever use of the "womanly trappings" of her position for a feminist goal. Novak's remarks expressed patriarchal frustration at the fact that Rodham Clinton used the master's tools to dismantle part of the master's house.

Finally, the Chinese were not fans of the presentation. Following her statements, the Chinese Government issued a report on the status and treatment of Chinese women. The report was an apparent response to Rodham Clinton's criticism of China's human rights record. It argued that even though "certain groups in the United States" have attacked China over the status of its women, the Chinese Government has taken a far more progressive stance toward women than has the United States. The Chinese also added, "The position and conditions of Chinese women are in no way inferior to the situation of the women in the United States and are indeed much better on the whole" (Faison, 1995, p. 10). Again, much like Novak, the Chinese were uncomfortable with Rodham Clinton's push for sexual equality.

Following the presentation, *The New York Times* noted that "Mrs. Clinton's unapologetic affirmation of American values is a departure from the bland and euphemistic rhetoric of other recent United States diplomatic visitors to Beijing. The Clinton Administration should follow her good example" (Editorial: Mrs. Clinton, 1995, September 6). This contrasted sharply to the cautionary voices that almost prevented her from participating. Years later, Rodham Clinton (2003) noted, "To this day, when I travel overseas, women come up to me quoting words from the Beijing speech or clutching copies they want me to autograph" (p. 306). This was a successful use of a public address in a problematic context. It was a feminist speech that continues to echo

across global communities. It might be the most successful moment of public oratory in Rodham Clinton's White House career, and it was one of the most overt uses of the first lady position for feminist ends. It is a model speech that should be studied for its use of voice and clever rhetorical maneuvers.

Chapter Four
An Inconsistent Public Voice:
Rodham Clinton at the 1996 Democratic National Convention

"My scheduled speech to the delegates on Tuesday evening would mark the first time a First Lady had ever delivered a televised prime time address at a national political convention."

--Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Living History,* p. 374

In his 1996 State of the Union address, President William Jefferson Clinton (WJC) proudly declared before the United States Congress and televised U.S. audiences that "the era of big government was over." WJC and Hillary Rodham Clinton arrived in Washington D.C. with the intention of returning the federal government to a service role for the U.S. electorate, but the early work of the administration and of the first lady were thwarted in several key battles by a well funded, loud opposition. WJC's iconic remark on January 23, 1996, refuted the criticisms coming from an opposition organized by Newt Gingrich's Contract with America. It also signaled a new tone for a presidential administration gearing up for a re-election campaign. As WJC denounced government programs, he tempered his bold proposition by asserting that the "era of every man [*sic*] for himself must never begin." The Clinton administration would now pursue programs that encouraged small, incremental changes. WJC would build programs that balanced personal autonomy in the citizenry with some government support as necessary.

Michael Waldman, a presidential speechwriter in the Clinton White House, commented that this memorable phrase was probably a more conservative statement than Clinton had intended because with these words "liberalism was killed and the death was accidental" (as cited by Koenig & Sikka, 2001). WJC's opening words of the State of the Union are an interesting starting point for the analysis of a specifically crucial period in

the gendered life of Hillary Rodham Clinton. The first eight months of 1996 mark a complicated gender trap that constrained the rhetorical work of Rodham Clinton in troubling and interesting ways. WJC used the State of the Union to respond to vibrant opposition, but he also subtly marked another symbolic transformation within the White House. The "end of big government" claim can be viewed as an indirect response to the criticisms that continued to follow Rodham Clinton. Big government seems to have been a symbolic allusion to healthcare reform, and Hillary Rodham Clinton was the public face of that failed proposal. The theme of the 1996 State of the Union marked a turning point for the administration and for First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton.

For the first eight months of 1996, Rodham Clinton was mired in "gendered traps" that constrained her rhetorical performances.[13] This period marks a crucial moment in U.S. public address that highlights the complications that face the women who become First Lady of the United States. Rodham Clinton struggled to find an appropriate voice to meet the demands of a variety of rhetorical situations during this period, and the months between January 1, 1996 and September 1, 1996 were filled with several historic firsts that further symbolized the gendered stereotypes of public women and first ladies. These may be the most gendered moments in the public life of Rodham Clinton.

Karlyn Kohrs Campbell (2004) argues that presidential wives often arouse curious reactions because they "raise the more problematic issue *of the relationship between women, sexuality, and power* (p. 181). According to Campbell, these women are

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[13] In this chapter, I am specifically analyzing the rhetorical acts that happen between January 1, 1996 and September 1, 1996. For my analysis, this period ends with Rodham Clinton's performance at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Illinois. From this point in the chapter, I sometimes refer to this period as "the crucial months of 1996."

troubling for many audiences because they represent a “subtle intrusion of the private into the public, political sphere (p. 181). In the first seven months of 1996, Rodham Clinton worked through this tension. In this period, Rodham Clinton was lodged in a place of public, gendered disciplining that made any rhetorical performance insufficient on some level. That is, the situation constrained Rodham Clinton’s personas, performances, and reception by the public. It is likely that any rhetorical act would have failed to address some aspect of her many rhetorical constraints and problems.

As I have shown, Rodham Clinton’s life has been marked by crucial rhetorical moments. Rodham Clinton’s 1996 Democratic National Convention Speech in Chicago, Illinois, was the rhetorical climax of another critical period in her public life. The speech was a simple twenty-four minute presentation that was pitched as an opportunity for Rodham Clinton to bolster the re-election campaign of WJC. However, pundits and other historical records reveal that this presentation represented much more for her, the election, and the relationship between Rodham Clinton and WJC. It was crucial because of the audience size and the political setting in which it occurred.

I argue that the 1996 convention speech is best understood as a moment of inconsistency in the rhetorical career of Rodham Clinton. Prior to this crucial speech, she had carefully established herself as a confident and able advocate, lawyer, and political figure. She had a consistent public voice. U.S. audiences were familiar with both Rodham Clinton the health care advocate and Rodham Clinton the campaign surrogate. Some may not have been completely comfortable with the gendered transformations she

represented for U.S. women, but the public would no longer be surprised to see Rodham Clinton take the stage as a powerful, public advocate.

The complex political situation that constrained her speech at the 1996 convention led her to offer a rhetorically inconsistent performance. She rejected the roles of lawyer, leader, defender, advocate, and politician and instead spoke as a mother and a wife. What she said failed to meet the complicated expectations placed on the wife of a U.S. president. Rodham Clinton's advocacy role had been questioned in the months leading up to this performance. She needed to answer these criticisms with an advocate's response. Instead, Rodham Clinton adopted the rhetorical trappings of the first ladyship and addressed her audience with the voice of a wife, daughter, and mother.

At the 1996 convention, Rodham Clinton found herself in a gendered trap that neither her legal training nor her background as a political advocate helped her navigate. The role she was required to play, as first lady, called for a public performance that was inadequate to respond to the problems she posed for the larger Clinton re-election campaign. Ultimately, she had to think through how a first lady can act like a public advocate, republican mother, loving and loyal wife, and victim in a moment that calls for a set of behaviors that are undefined but strictly enforced. In what follows, I offer a critical analysis that tries to tease out why this performance was a turning point in the public life of Rodham Clinton.

As a rhetorical critic, I claim that this performance differs in style and tone from her other performances. In arguing that this speech was inconsistent, I hope to show that the convention appearance marked the moment at which her two public voices collide. In

her role as an attorney and advocate she faced allegations of crimes and misdeeds, which had tarnished the first lady role she was required to play. She was asked to speak because she had become a campaign liability for her husband, but she could not respond with the apologia of a typical public rhetor. That is, the situation called for a response to the charges she faced, but her role at the convention called for her to perform as the first lady and political wife. It seems as if her entire speech tried to answer the question: how does a first lady meet the demands of "republican motherhood" while answering the criminal charges made by a vibrant opposition?

This chapter develops in three sections. First, I discuss three contextual elements coalesced to form the gendered trap facing Rodham Clinton. The political scene of 1996 was marked by a crisis of public-private distinctions, a private versus a public advocacy campaign, and a public-private oppositional pair. Second, I describe my method as a positionalist approach to understanding Rodham Clinton's speech. Finally, I offer a textual analysis of the 1996 convention speech that highlights its inconsistencies (and rhetorical fissures) with Rodham Clinton's past. I conclude with some larger thoughts about traps, first ladies, and public-private distinctions.

<u>It Takes a Paradox: Contextual Factors of the 1996 Gendered Trap</u>

Leading up to 1996, Rodham Clinton had survived the Republican midterm victories of 1994, the rise of Newt Gingrich, the failure of healthcare reform, and the ascension and investigations of Kenneth Starr as Independent Counsel. As a result of previous battles, she decided to take a different policy role in the White House. As Gould (1996) notes, "Her focus was now on the older model of an activist First Lady. As Lady

Bird Johnson and Rosalyn Carter had done, she intended to be an advocate for specific causes rather than a legislative manager as she had been in the health care debate" (Gould, 1996, p. 646). Rodham Clinton was now using her private power in an acceptable public manner, but for purposes of this analysis, that strategic decision created parts of the gendered trap. Before 1996, Rodham Clinton was receiving critical attention for taking a direct and open role in the governing of the administration. As Gould rightly notes, Rodham Clinton's press room set out to make 1996 her year of issue advocacy. However, three contextual forces combined to form the constitutive elements of the disciplining trap that confounded her rhetorical acts.

First, Rodham Clinton found herself in the same contextual bind that imprisoned every woman who served as first lady. Depending on the author and discipline, many scholars will give this slippery problem a different name. However, here I shall refer to this problem as the "public-private distinction." That is, first ladies are expected to uphold the feminine virtues of domesticity and true womanhood at a public level. For many audiences, these women are expected to play hostess but not advocate. Burrell (1997) gives an accurate description of this problem:

> The idea of the First Lady in American politics joins in a unique way the two domains of public and private life. This position has the potential to dramatically alter the idea of what is private and what is public in the political realm. The woman who serves as First Lady is there because of her relationship to a man, not having attained a public position through her own achievements. (p.13-14)

The relationship between WJC and Rodham Clinton pulled this tension in new ways and tested the limits of political first ladies. Rodham Clinton worked outside the home while WJC was Governor of Arkansas. She was the financial head of household, and she brought her skills from the world of corporate law to the White House. Rather than slip quietly into the East Wing to plan state dinners, Rodham Clinton moved her office to the West Wing, sat in on cabinet meetings, and ran a major policy program.[14] In other words, she quickly violated the public-private distinction, and an oppositional force brought criminal and civil lawsuits to discipline Rodham Clinton's symbolic transformation of the office of First Lady.

Although the questioning of Rodham Clinton's public-private position began early in her tenure at the White House, it took a significant turn when former Reagan-Bush era political attorney and operative Kenneth Starr was appointed as independent counsel to investigate the private financial matters of the Clintons. Before the arrival of Starr, Rodham Clinton had been investigated for possible illegal activity in a commodity trade investment involving cattle futures contracts in the late 1970s. An independent investigation had determined that Rodham Clinton had received no special favors nor did

[14] In an interview with *PBS Frontline*, former White House Senior Aide George Stephanopoulos (2000) commented on Rodham Clinton's role in the administration by saying, "It's a different kind of partnership -- two for the price of one. We're going to show a modern couple, a modern White House. We're going to do things in a different way. That got in the way of advancing the agenda we wanted to advance. That became the issue and the management. Is it appropriate? Is it right for a first lady to manage a legislative issue? And I think one of the things that Mrs. Clinton learned over time in the White House was that there are battles that was [sic] not necessarily worth being fought. Yes, the battle for health care should be fought, but let's do it in a different way."

she participate in any illegal activity.[15] At the same time, both WJC and Rodham Clinton were still being investigated for a real estate venture that is now commonly referred to as Whitewater. Prior to Starr assuming the independent counsel role on August 5, 1994, the U.S. House and U.S. Senate banking committees had acquitted twenty-nine Clinton administration officials of any wrongdoing in the handling of information related to Whitewater.[16] Although multiple prior investigations had led to insufficient evidence, Starr opened a new series of allegations that pried into every aspect of Rodham Clinton's public and private affairs.

On January 3, 1995, the U.S. Senate Democrats on the banking committee relieved both Clintons of any charges and drew the conclusion that no laws had been broken in the Whitewater situation. After further investigation, the U.S. House of Representatives Banking Committee chaired by Republican Jim Leach concluded that there were no illegalities in the Whitewater investment. On July 18, 1995, the U.S. Senate banking committee also began investigations into the behavior of Rodham Clinton and WJC. Senator Alfonse D'Amato, Republican chairperson of both the banking committee and Senator Robert Dole's Republican presidential campaign, chaired the

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[15] Charles R. Babcock offers a detailed analysis of the entire Cattle Futures Contracts in an article for *The Washington Post* entitled "Hillary Clinton Futures Trades Detailed" which appeared on page A01 on May 27, 1994, and on washingtonpost.com.
[16] *The Washington Post* offers a detailed timeline of the significant events surrounding the Whitewater investigation found at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/special/whitewater/timeline.htm.

investigations for eleven months. His committee's investigation[17] only resulted in multiple votes that fell along party lines.[18]

On January 4, 1996, a White House aide found the billing records from the Rose Law firm that had previously been lost and were the subject of several conspiracy theories and a special issue of *Nightline* that called the missing files the greatest mystery in Washington.[19] The files had been misplaced when the Clintons moved to the White House, and it was determined that their location was a mishap and oversight. In response to this finding, William Safire penned an editorial for *The New York Times* on January 8, 1996, claiming, "Americans of all political persuasions are coming to the sad realization that our First Lady—a woman of undoubted talents who was a role model to many in her generation—is a congenital liar." He asserted that Rodham Clinton was involved in the death of Vince Foster, had lied about commodity trading, and had committed illegal acts in the Whitewater investigation.[20] In addition to Starr, members of the media now challenged Rodham Clinton's public-private role.

After Safire's scathing attack, Rodham Clinton was forced to respond to the allegations at all of her public appearances. In one rather awkward moment, she attended

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[17] Rodham Clinton offers significant testimony about her role with this committee in *Living History* (2003). She even reminds readers that when the Republicans stopped the federal government in 1995, this committee continued its investigations and hearings because they were "deemed essential" (Clinton, H.R., 2003, p. 326).
[18]The U.S. Senate Banking Committee never found enough evidence of wrongdoing but Senator D'Amato refused to stop investigations until Senate Democrats threatened to filibuster his funding (Clinton, H.R., 2003, p. 351).
[19] See Frontline/Nightline joint program (Bury, 1996), January 30, 1996, Ted Koppel. The complete transcript is available at pbs.org.
[20] At this time, multiple inquiries had cleared Rodham Clinton of any wrongdoing in the commodity trade. She had also been cleared in the Foster case.

a small function for Girl Scouts in New Hampshire, and she was greeted with a sign that said, "Safire was right." Finally, in an attempt to suppress the questioning of her behavior, Rodham Clinton told a reporter at one public appearance:

> I don't take Mr. Safire seriously. I was on the staff of the committee that impeached Richard Nixon. Mr. Safire worked for Mr. Nixon and, the best I can tell he still is working for Mr. Nixon. I do believe the person who was most offended was my mother because, calling someone congenital anything suggests that my mother and my late father were somehow involved. (Hillary Rodham Clinton, as cited by Carvajal with the *New York Times*, 1996, January 14).

Rodham Clinton tried to move out of the public-private question with an interesting use of legal logic, guilt by association, and a syllogistic argument. The entire statement then moved to a moment of transcendence that asked the audience to consider the feelings of her parents. Safire ultimately responded to the HRC response, which continued on the Diane Rehm show (January 15, 1996), in an interview for 20/20 with Barbara Walters (January 19, 1996), and on multiple National Public Radio Programs. Safire then used his "On Language" column in the *New York Times Magazine* to continue the conversation in space he claimed was "academic" and "neutral." In this essay, he again asserted that Rodham Clinton has a character flaw that makes her unfit for public service.[21]

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[21] This also sparked interest because WJC entered the debate. His White House press secretary Michael D. McCurry told reporters that if it were not "for the constraints of the

The public-private disciplining of Rodham Clinton rose to an intense level through the remainder of early 1996. She stated in all her public interviews that she would do whatever it took to explain and defend her role in Whitewater and Travelgate.[22] In early January, *The New York Times* reported that Rodham Clinton was a large liability for her husband's reelection. This was confirmed by a CBS News poll that showed that from January 2-3, 1996, she had a 59% approval rating but on January 16, 1996, her approval rating had dropped to 42%[23] (as cited by Cohen, 2000, p. 378).[24] The public-private questioning of Rodham Clinton reached a crescendo on January 26, 1996, when Rodham Clinton became the first wife of a sitting president to testify before a grand jury. Starr refused to interview Rodham Clinton under oath at the White House; he required

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presidency, the president would be minded to defend the family honor by punching Mr. Safire on the nose" (Safire, 1996, February 4).

[22] Travelgate is the popular term used in print to refer to the replacement of seven employees in the White House Travel Office. The situation was the first ethics case of the Clinton White House, and it surfaced in May of 1993. The employees serve at the "pleasure of the president" and can be replaced without reason. However, their replacement raised suspicions because individuals holding this post often stayed in their jobs across administrations. Rodham Clinton was charged, and acquitted, of taking a role in the unethical firing of these individuals. All investigations concluded that no ethical breach had occurred in the handling of these positions.

[23] The CBS news poll also revealed that for the first time Rodham Clinton had a lower public approval than WJC. On January 2, 1996, her approval rating was 59% to his 42%. On January 16, 1996, WJC's approval rating was at 46% while Rodham Clinton's had dropped to 42% (Cohen, 2000, p. 378).

[24] Rodham Clinton also was the first First Lady of the United States to be the subject of numerous public opinion polls. For example, 1984 and 1992 were also presidential election years in which a sitting president was running for a second term. In 1984, Nancy Davis Reagan was the subject of two polls. In 1992, Barbara Pierce Bush was the subject of 32 polls. However, Rodham Clinton was the subject of 230 public approval polls during the 1996 presidential election (Cohen, 2000, p. 376).

her to make an appearance at the courthouse. Rather than challenge the call, Rodham Clinton answered questions for four hours.[25]

Rodham Clinton also faced a "private as public" constraint during this crucial, gendered period in her public life. Owing to the personal setbacks that arose out of the healthcare battles, she geared up to redefine herself in the mold of previous First Ladies. Parry-Giles and Blair (2002) comment on the relationship between the position of first lady and the rhetorical persona of a republican mother by writing:

> Revealing the importance of institutional memory, many first ladies, like their predecessors, exemplified similar ideological commitments to family welfare and character issues when they ventured to the public stage. The nineteenth-century republican mother assumption that "being a good citizen meant being a good mother" was now translated into "being a good first lady meant hailing, modeling, and promoting publicly the civic values that good mothers historically instilled." (p.576-577).

They further argue that "many contemporary first ladies also naturalized their roles as the ideal nation-mother by politicking on behalf of the country's children" (Parry-Giles and Blair, 2002, p. 578). As she was steeped in legal controversy, Rodham Clinton took to the public stage as the author of a book entitled *It Takes a Village and Other Lessons*

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[25] Rodham Clinton insisted that her motorcade park in front of the White House. She felt it was important that she enter from the front because she wanted to stress she had nothing to hide in the case. She wore a long black overcoat with gold embroidery that became the subject of discussion of many pundits. Many claimed it made her look like a dragon, and although she had worn the coat before, it was at this moment some people in the press found it acceptable to refer to her as a dragon lady. See *Living History*, Clinton, H.R., 2003, pp. 336-337.

Children Teach Us (*ITAV*). The title is based on an African Proverb, and it offers a detailed policy account of the first lady's thoughts on caring for the next generation of U.S. citizens.

Rodham Clinton (1996) tried to control the spin on the book by claiming, "this book is not a memoir…nor is it a textbook or an encyclopedia…it is a statement of my personal views, a reflection of my continuing meditation on children. Whether or not you agree with me, I hope it promotes an honest conversation among us" (p. 17). After leaving the White House, Rodham Clinton (2003) wrote that the book was a way to have a public debate with Representative Gingrich about policy issues that matter to children (p. 263).[26] However, members of the academic and popular press took control of the book's image.

Tabor (1995) of *The New York Times* asserted that the book helped Rodham Clinton fulfill "the traditional images of First Ladies" and also commented that in the prose, readers would not find "the Hilary Clinton of health care battles, or the one defending her investment practices or the one making campaign speeches for her husband." This early review went on to claim, "Mrs. Clinton will cement her role as a champion of children in a new book about the need for better quality of family and community life in contemporary American society" (Tabor, 22 April 1995).[27]

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[26] At this moment that Newt Gingrich's mother told Connie Chung in a televised interview that her son often referred to Rodham Clinton as a "bitch" (Rodham Clinton, 2003, p. 263).

[27] Another early review of the book in *The New York Times* offers a similar assessment. It reads: "The book weaves research in education and child welfare into what is essentially a personal discourse on effective practices that Mrs. Clinton has observed in her travels around the country and the world" (Cohen, 1996 January 17).

The public-private disciplining and legal battles, however, took precedence as Rodham Clinton attempted to sell the book on a nationwide tour. The book met with harsh criticism and skepticism from a majority of reviewers,[28] and *The New York Times* claimed that her book tour was about more than child rearing: "Hillary Rodham Clinton began a hybrid literary and political campaign this weekend to promote her new book and defend herself against critics who said she had distorted her actions" (Carvajal, 14 January 1996). As Rodham Clinton tried to slip into a historically tested model for public engagement by a first lady, she remained mired in the legal debates surrounding her private life. At one book event in downtown Little Rock, Arkansas, Rodham Clinton spent the entire time answering questions about her criminal charges rather than her book. She also was forced to keep her White House communications team on the book tour with her to help handle press inquiries at every book-signing event.

The trade reviews also rejected the rhetorical efforts of the book. Rather than seeing *ITAV* as a "proper" advocacy role for Rodham Clinton, critics on the political left and right both attacked it. First, there were allegations of plagiarism. Critics said she did not have any influence on the original ideas in the book.[29] Then, popular academic

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[28] *The Los Angeles Times* was one the few national publications that gives the book a warm review. Writing for the *L.A. Times*, Burke (1996) claimed, "'It Takes a Village' demonstrates intellectual vitality and openness to new ideas…there is the sound of tempered frustration and unshakeable determination, a missionary's zeal and a mother's vulnerability."

[29] Tabor (1995) with *The New York Times* noted that Rodham Clinton received the assistance of Barbara Feinman in the writing of ITAV. Both Feinman and Rodham Clinton assert that the Rodham Clinton wrote the book and Feinman helped with editorial and organizational matters. Some reviewers and critics attacked Rodham Clinton for not citing Feinman as a co-author. However, both Rodham Clinton and Feinman publicly

writers attacked the quality of the work. In the subtle review titled "Hillary's Vacuum," *The New Republic* stated that the book strikes a "peppy balance between Immanuel Kant and Tracy Chapman" and offers another example of how both Clintons like to "treat the voters like children" (Rosen, 1996, p. 42). Also writing for *The New Republic*, Elshtain (1996) complained that Rodham Clinton extended the metaphor of the village to a global model praising nationalized programs that distract from local attempts at child rearing (p. 33).

Reviews published in more right-leaning publications offered even harsher critiques. King (1996) with *American Enterprise* theorized that the book seeks to "hijack the family-values issue for the Democrats and refashion her image to one of true womanhood" (p. 78). He predicted that image refiguring would be hard for Rodham Clinton. Schiffren (1996) with *The American Spectator* said the book was less about policy and belief and more about image management so Rodham Clinton can diminish the "unfortunate impressions the public has of herself" (p. 68). Finally, Fox-Genovese (1996) with *The National Review* questioned Rodham Clinton's authenticity by arguing that the book "takes a more conservative position on some sensitive issues than many of her liberal allies may feel comfortable with" (p. 62).

Finally, this gendered period in her life was constrained by the presence of a viable, and strategically manipulated, public-private pair, Robert and Elizabeth Hanford

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stated that the original content of the book was the work of Rodham Clinton. The practice of editorial assistance and ghost writing are widely used by all political figures.

Dole (Dole and Hanford Dole).[30] As Starr and D'Amato attacked Rodham Clinton on the legal front, the Republican presidential election efforts started to strategically paint *ITAV* as socialist propaganda promoting a government takeover of private matters. This public effort took center stage at the Republican National Convention in San Diego, California.

First, Hanford Dole wooed audiences with a captivating floor speech. Rather than address the convention from a podium, Hanford Dole stood on the floor of the convention and interacted with people in the audience. She modeled her rhetorical act after the famous television program *This is Your Life*, and she used the moment to enact the role of wife and partner. Her "Dole Stroll," as it was termed by the media, offered a distinct contrast to recent public performances of Rodham Clinton. Dan Rather called the event electrifying and termed Hanford Dole "My Fair Liddy," and *The Washington Times* added that it was "something Hillary Clinton couldn't hope to match in her wildest dreams" (Editorial: The convention, p. A20).

Rodham Clinton (2003) praised Hanford Dole's performance as "poised and intelligent" (p. 374). However, Robert Dole's acceptance speech at the convention also pushed the boundaries of its genre. Rather than directly respond to WJC and Vice President Al Gore, Dole offered an unprecedented attack on the first lady and her political efforts. Dole stated:

> And after the virtual devastation of the American family, the rock upon this country - on which this country was founded, we are told that it takes

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[30] The Doles had a Clinton-like partnership. Elizabeth Dole had served in presidential cabinets and chaired the American Red Cross. However, once Robert Dole receives the GOP nomination, she strategically suspended her professional life and played the traditional supporting role in his campaign.

> a village, that is, the collective, and thus, the state, to raise a child…The state is now more involved than it has ever been in the raising of children, and children are now more neglected, abused, and more mistreated than they have been in our time. This is not a coincidence. This is not a coincidence, and, with all due respect, I am here to tell you, it does not take a village to raise a child. It takes a family to raise a child. (Dole, R, 1996)

As Rodham Clinton noted in her White House memoirs, Dole treated her village metaphor as a stand-in for state programs. This deliberate misreading attempted to paint the first lady as a socialist, and it was the first time a presidential nominee used an acceptance address to directly attack an opponent's spouse.

Rodham Clinton (2003) would later claim that Hanford Dole's convention speech was the impetus for her speech at the 1996 Democratic National Convention. However, the combination of "My Fair Liddy" with Dole's policy attack on her challenged Rodham Clinton on two competing levels. First, Hanford Dole offered a performance that fit the mold of supportive wife and traditional, private first lady. Second, Robert Dole publicly disciplined the work of Rodham Clinton and her most recent attempt at issue advocacy as a mask for a larger socialist agenda.

Positionalist Criticism and Gendered Traps

Bonnie J. Dow (1997a) encourages feminist critics of public address always to be aware that rhetorical women are directed by history, influenced by situation and institutional demands, and constrained by discourse in their efforts to alter and move

audience perception (p. 94). At the moment of the convention speech, Rodham Clinton fit this theoretical claim. My analysis shows that she sits at the intersection of previous convention appearances by Barbara Bush, Hanford Dole, and Eleanor Roosevelt. She is bound by public perceptions of first ladies, and she is limited by the discursive choices she can make because of her precarious legal situation. However, to extend Dow, it seems that Rodham Clinton is bound by more than the past and present. She found herself in an entirely new gendered position. Rodham Clinton not only was constrained by the trappings of the past, but she was also bound by mammoth public expectations about her private and public roles. The best method for speaking to these constraints seems to be the feminist notion of positionalist criticism.

Celeste Condit (1993) advanced the call for feminist rhetorical critics to abandon situation-centered approaches to rhetorical criticism for approaches that examine how the discourses surrounding a particular text ultimately influence a rhetorical performance. For Condit, (1993) problems of ethos have historically plagued women rhetors so critical attention to situation often leads to judgments of the rhetorical acts of public women as wanting (p. 211). To remedy this methodological exigence, Condit calls for a positionalist perspective that instead moves "toward an exploration of how people in groups and broader collectives cooperate and contest to construct shared public vocabularies that form the substance of human collectivity" (p. 213).

Ramsey (2004) offers the most comprehensive explanation of how a positionalist perspective can maneuver rhetorical critics toward a richer understanding of rhetorical acts. In describing Condit's position, she writes:

> A positionalist perspective represents the predominant social forces in operation during a time period and thus acknowledges that a variety of contextual phenomena influence a rhetorical act regardless of whether all aspects of that context are consciously addressed in the act itself. (Ramsey, 2004, p. 354)

She pushes this explanation further by noting, “Condit’s (1993) positionalist perspective is useful in establishing the importance of context, as well as in helping us determine how rhetoric changes in response to context” (Ramsey, 2004, p. 355). Maddux (2008) further extends this concept by claiming that a positionalist perspective could “concern itself with public vocabulary, specifically the shifts within public vocabulary that define these changes in ‘rhetorical opportunity and constraint’” (Maddux, 2008, p. 31).

Rodham Clinton’s 1996 convention address is best understood as a rhetorical act that was influenced by the discourses of the previous eight months. From January 1996 through August 1996, Rodham Clinton, her supporters, and opposing forces created a host of texts that offered competing views of her past roles and her current place in the White House. The GOP convention that directly preceded her speech was filled with two performances that issued direct and indirect attacks on the first lady. Also, the Hanford Dole performance, in particular, at the GOP convention heightened the need for Rodham Clinton to appear as a supportive wife and mother in her appearance at the DNC convention. On the other hand, the legal discourses circulating in the press made it difficult not to address the convention as a lawyer and defendant. Rodham Clinton was trapped by the position the influencing discourses created, and she ultimately offered a

performance that was inconsistent with her previous style and the historical record of her activities. My analysis shows that Rodham Clinton tried to respond to the positions in which she was trapped by adopting a persona that hid her previous agency and enacted the trappings of republican motherhood traditionally associated with the first lady position.

Inconsistent Voice: Textual Analysis of the 1996 Convention Speech

Rodham Clinton's speech had particular historic significance. In *Living History*, Rodham Clinton claimed that it marked the first time a sitting First Lady of the United States delivered a prime-time address at a national convention (Clinton, H.R., 2003, p. 374). Although her statement is factually accurate, it should be noted that two significant performances preceded her speech. First, in 1992 Barbara Bush briefly stood before the Republican delegates in Houston, Texas, to have a "conversation with the audience." Bush denied that her performance was a speech, but Bush's rhetorical act looked like a speech, talked like a speech, and persuaded like a speech. It would be critically inaccurate not to mention that the style and tone of that performance ultimately influenced the presentation of Rodham Clinton. Bush performed the role of mother and wife in 1992 that set a precedent for other first ladies who also assume the platform at a national convention.

Under extraordinary circumstances, Eleanor Roosevelt also addressed the Democratic Convention in her capacity as first lady. On July 18, 1940, she traveled to Chicago, Illinois, to convince the party to nominate her husband for an unprecedented third term. The delegates were embroiled in a toxic floor battle over the issue, and there

was also disagreement about the nomination for Vice President. Roosevelt took the stage at the convention and argued, "You cannot treat it as you would an ordinary nomination in an ordinary time. We people in the United States have got to realize today that we face a grave and serious situation" (Roosevelt, E.). This was the first time a first lady faced a national political convention to speak to issues about the upcoming election. Doris Kearns Goodwin (1995) provides a detailed analysis of the situation and speech.

Rodham Clinton followed in the steps of Bush and Roosevelt and responded to the direct media calls for her to offer a performance to counter that of Hanford Dole. She opened her address with an acknowledgment of her crisis of persona. In both her White House memoir and in the actual text of the address, she noted that most of the people in her life had offered advice about how she should approach the speech. Initially, she offered a failed attempt at humor by informing the crowd that one friend suggested she appear with a gorilla named Binti.[31] The gorilla had just saved a small child at the Chicago Zoo, and Rodham Clinton called the animal a "typical Chicagoan, tough on the outside but with a heart of gold underneath." This seems to be a veiled description of her own persona, but at this moment, the audience discovers that the tough Binti and the advocate Hillary will not inhabit the podium.

Next, she mentioned that another friend had encouraged her to take cues from the Chicago Bulls basketball player Denis Rodman by coloring her hair orange[32] and altering

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[31] The Binti reference was timely because it happened in Chicago on August 16, 1996. The full story is documented at: http://www.thefreelibrary.com/GORILLA+CRADLES+CRITICALLY+HURT+BOY+AFTER+FALL+INTO+PIT.(NEWS)-a083959885.

[32] Rodman was known for media stunts at this cultural moment. It was a reference audiences, especially Chicago audiences, would immediately recognize.

her name to read "Hillary Rodman Clinton." This also was meant to garner a laugh from the audience, but it seemed that if Binti were a symbolic surrogate for the tough advocate side of Rodham Clinton's public life, Rodman would represent the showman side of her public roles that required spectacle and specific types of performance. Although she did not dye her hair orange or change her name, she seemed to follow the traps of the showman persona and offered an interesting spectacle for the audience.

In the speech, Rodham Clinton ultimately decided to perform the role of republican mother and presidential wife, a role that is undefined and was ill conceived for her. To do this, she rhetorically reconnected herself to her husband and family and then bolstered that connection by denying her agency in all of the administration's activities. Parry Giles and Blair (2002) remind rhetorical critics that when first ladies assume the "republican mother pulpit" they promote and advocate for causes and values that good mothers represent (p. 575). That is, a successful performance of the first lady role asks the rhetor to transform her political work and contributions into a publicly digestible strategy. As wife of the president, a first lady becomes the symbolic mother of the country and of its future citizenry. As such, a strong first lady will be concerned with policies and programs associated with family, children, and the home. This is the role Rodham Clinton chose. She told the crowd she was merely at the podium to talk about "what matters most in our lives and in our nation, children and families." She wanted to have a "conversation," and she offered a speech that lacked advocacy and contradicted the record she had made in private and in public.

She began the rhetorical work of symbolically rebuilding her connection to the president in the first few minutes of the speech. She noted, "For Bill and me, family has been the center of our lives." From this moment, the audience listened to the words of Rodham Clinton the wife; she stood at the convention as a supporter of her husband. This statement was the thesis for the remainder of the presentation, and it was the first crucial element that made the presentation particularly inconsistent with previous performances. Yes, it was fair for Rodham Clinton to state that her husband and child were the most important elements of her life. It was also a normal connection for a human being to emphasize. The inconsistency was that until now Rodham Clinton had been an excessively private person. Although she had played the dutiful wife in other circumstances, this was her largest solo performance. She spoke to a prime-time audience, and she stood before the largest immediate crowd of her career. However, she stood in this place as a mother and a wife, not as the champion of a political cause or as a defender of her own honor.

She continued building her identity and connection to WJC later in the speech when she described the birth of their child. Previously, both Rodham Clinton and WJC were fierce protectors of the privacy of Chelsea. This speech marked one of the rare moments that Rodham Clinton allowed the U.S. public a glimpse of the more intimate details of Chelsea's life. In discussing the birth, Rodham Clinton stated:

> In October, Bill and I will celebrate our 21st wedding anniversary. Bill was with me when Chelsea was born in the delivery room, in my hospital room and when we brought our baby daughter home. Not only did I have

> lots of help, I was able to stay in the hospital as long as my doctor thought I needed to be there. (Clinton, H.R., 1996, August 27)

This revelation was simple, descriptive, and connects WJC and Rodham Clinton to an important narrative of reproduction and childcare. The paragraph had direct implications for healthcare reform, but it was an interesting method of argumentation for Rodham Clinton. She used elements of her personal life to indirectly note that mothers are too often rushed out of the hospital shortly after they deliver. Despite the strange mention of the wedding anniversary in a section about childbirth, this was a simple claim about the past family life of the first couple to indirectly reference an important policy issue.

The statement was extremely awkward when read in the context of the larger speech, however. In the preceding section, Rodham Clinton offered the delegates a paragraph of discourse that the U.S. public might have recognized as her characteristic style. She stated:

> But one thing we know for sure is that change is certain. Progress is not. Progress depends on the choices we make today for tomorrow and on whether we meet our challenges and protect our values. We can start by doing more to support parents and the job they have to do. Issues affecting children and families are some of the hardest we face as parents, as citizens, as a nation. (Clinton, H.R., 1996, August 27)

The juxtaposition of the two sections in the speech shows the paradox in which Rodham Clinton was mired. She was trying to play the role of dutiful wife, and she was working in an overt manner to remind the audience of this reality. In life, she was married to Bill

Clinton, but this is not what was on trial at the moment she spoke. It was her previous work outside the home, her voice on matters of finance and politics, which raised suspicions in the eyes of the public. The discussion of the birth of Chelsea attempted to connect her to Bill and move speculation away from her public activities. However, when that section is paired with the section that preceded it, the entire rhetorical moment encourages questions of about intent and authenticity. While rhetorically connecting herself to a partnership with Bill, she slipped into her advocate role at times reminding the audience of the public problems that originally brought her to the podium.

Next, Rodham Clinton offered another reminder that she was dutifully connected to the current leader of the nation to further rebuild her status as the mother of the nation. She stated, "For Bill and me, there has been no experience more challenging, more rewarding and more humbling than raising our daughter. And we have learned that to raise a happy, healthy, and hopeful child, it takes a family" (Clinton, H.R., 1996, August 27). It was factual and realistic for Rodham Clinton to claim that raising a child and growing a family is a fulfilling and rewarding personal endeavor. However, her next words brought out the inconsistency. Rodham Clinton stated:

> And we have learned that to raise a happy, healthy, and hopeful child, it takes a family. It takes teachers. It takes clergy. It takes business people. It takes community leaders. It takes those who protect our health and safety. It takes all of us. Yes, it takes a village. And it takes a president. (Clinton, H.R., 1996, August 27)

This was not direct advocacy, but it was a textual reference to a larger rhetorical battle with Dole. As noted, Dole chose to attack Rodham Clinton rather than WJC in his acceptance address by claiming it takes "families" not villages to raise a child. With her indirect rebuttal, Rodham Clinton attempted to answer Dole's criticism by playing the role of dutiful wife. Rather than discuss the inaccuracies of Dole's remarks, Rodham Clinton spoke about human connection and the role everyone plays in child rearing. This seemed out of place in her prime-time address.

After she established herself as a loyal and dutiful wife, Rodham Clinton then transitioned from her personal relationship with "Bill Clinton" to her public relationship with "President Clinton." That is, she now moved into the republican mother pulpit to advocate for causes and concerns that are typically associated with first ladies. In making this move, Rodham Clinton made the interesting choice not to mention her own work. Unlike previous First Ladies who had cautiously advocated for children and families on a personal level, Rodham Clinton rhetorically removed her own agency and gave all power, persuasion, and praise to the efforts of her husband. Regardless of the political vantage point of the audience, this rhetorical move seemed completely inconsistent with the reality of her public life. It was fair for her to praise the work of her husband, and necessary at a convention meant to honor and nominate him for a second term as president. However, it is odd that her work, as reflected in this speech, was merely support and encouragement. She rhetorically silenced her advocate voice and painted her role in the past four years as that of cheerleader and helpmate to her successful and thoughtful husband.

She noted, for example, that "the very first piece of legislation that my husband signed into law had been vetoed twice—the Family and Medical Leave law" (Clinton, H.R., 1996, August 27). As a an active member of her husband's administration, Rodham Clinton had been a proponent of this act and possessed the ability to describe the economic and financial gains that resulted from its passage. However, she then reminded the audience that she knew being a parent required "dropping the kids off at school; going to work; checking to make sure the kids get home from school safely; shopping for groceries; making dinner; doing the laundry; helping with homework; paying the bills." She stressed that "she" knows this and that is why "her husband" wants to "pass a flextime law that will give parents the option to take overtime pay either in extra income or in extra time off." The actor in all of this work was her husband. Rodham Clinton appeared before the audience as the messenger. She was the truth teller who had seen her husband work behind closed doors, and she knew that his knowledge and actions have made this productive policy a reality for the nation. In this retelling, Rodham Clinton has been using her private connection to the President to watch him work for what matters. This public speech became a narrative of Rodham Clinton's private role.

This was inconsistent because her discussion of the Family and Medical Leave act in *ITAV* paints a different story. She wrote:

> Bill and I both recognized the need for parental leave, preferably paid. We emerged from our experience committed to ensuring that all parents have the option to stay home with their newborn children and to have

> reliable childcare when they return to work. That's why I was so thrilled when the first bill he signed as President was the Family and Medical Leave Act. (Clinton, H.R., 1996, p. 85)

Here, the audience meets the partnership of Rodham Clinton and WJC. Together, they realize the need for a certain program and become committed to jointly working towards that goal. In the speech, however, Rodham Clinton watched as President Clinton created and signed the act. The narrative was changed in the speech to fit the positional constraints of the discourses that came before it.

This changing of the record continued when Rodham Clinton talked about insurance practices and affordable care for mothers and children. She discussed a specific aspect of insurance reform that asks the new mothers to leave the hospital before they have a chance to fully recover from the pregnancy. She stated, "But today, too many new mothers are asked to get up and get out after 24 hours, and that is just not enough time for many new mothers and babies. That's why the president is right to support a bill that would prohibit the practice of forcing mothers and babies to leave the hospital in less than 48 hours" (Clinton, H.R., 1996, August 27). Again, "The President" is the actor, and Rodham Clinton, who has actually had personal experience, is merely a private witness to his knowledge and activity.

Her claim in the speech fit the performance of a republican mother, but it became inconsistent when the claim is read against another section of *ITAV*. There, Rodham Clinton (1996) wrote:

> No matter how much advice and information is available to a new mother, she and her baby need adequate time to recover from childbirth before she can put it to use. Yet increasingly, American insurance practices are forcing hospitals to discharge mothers and newborns as quickly as possible. (p. 84)

Later, she elaborated this claim by stating:

> Although some have suggested that such laws are another example of unwarranted government intrusion, it is difficult to dispute that the health of new mothers and infants is important enough to be safeguarded by the government (Clinton, H.R., 1996, p. 87).

In *ITAV*, Rodham Clinton is the public advocate about a specific policy concern. In the speech, Rodham Clinton depicted herself as a loyal witness to the knowledge of her husband, "the President." Again, one statement is not more "truthful" than the other. Her statements present an inconsistent picture.

Finally, Rodham Clinton offered a discussion of her husband's work on adoption that presents the third inconsistency. In the speech she said:

> The president also hasn't forgotten that there are thousands of children languishing in foster care who can't be returned home. That's why he signed legislation last week that provides for a $5,000 tax credit for parents who adopt a child. It also abolishes the barriers to cross-racial adoptions. Never again will a racial barrier stand in the way of a family's love. (Clinton, H.R., 1996, August 27)

Once again, the President was the source of knowledge and action. Rodham Clinton erased her own agency from the administration's work on increasing adoption rates in the United States. For her immediate rhetorical act, this painted an appropriate picture for suspicious audiences. The convention was about praising the efforts of President Clinton, and he was the only member of the administration who could have signed a bill into law.

The situation, however, was inconsistent with the narrative previously offered in *ITAV*. In that text, she reminded readers that 450, 000 children sit in foster care while "loving adults are eager to offer permanent homes to many of these children" (Clinton, H.R., 1996, p. 47). She spoke at length about the "historical bias against interracial adoptions" and the need for quick action in many adoption cases (Clinton, H.R., 1996, p. 48-49). She also stressed, "The village can take it further. We could set the goal of reducing our foster care and adoption rolls by 100,000 children each year for the next five years by moving children either back home or into adoptive families" (Clinton, H.R., 1996, p. 48). This was followed by a laundry list of other government and civic progress she recommended on the local and national levels. She also explained ways to partner with business and used the Wendy's food chain as a potential partner in the endeavor. What makes this moment in *ITAV* so interesting is that it is drastically different from the role she adopts in the convention speech. In *ITAV*, readers meet a public advocate with specialized knowledge about adoption practices. In the convention speech, Rodham Clinton watched as her husband worked to make adoption an easier and swifter process. Rodham Clinton silenced her own voice to quell the complaints in the discourses that came before her speech.

Concluding Thoughts

Rodham Clinton faced an unforeseen gendered moment in 1996. After surmounting numerous legal and personal struggles, she was asked to give a public performance at a political convention that was unprecedented yet filled with expectations. Every rhetorical act between January 1, 1996, and her speech at the convention worked to create a position that made it impossible to craft a rhetorical act that would overcome all of her rhetorical constraints. What resulted was a speech that was inconsistent with her previous rhetorical work. In other words, Rodham Clinton's own rhetorical acts created a gendered trap that she was unable to escape.

In another moment in the 1996 State of the Union address, WJC noted, "Before I go on, I would like to take just a moment to thank my own family, and to thank the person who has taught me more than anyone else over 25 years about the importance of families and children -- a wonderful wife, a magnificent mother and a great First Lady. Thank you, Hillary." WJC may have ended "big government" with his 1996 State of the Union, but his comment directed at Hillary nicely sums up what was yet to come following his presentation. Rodham Clinton taught the president a lot about policy and politics, but it was that role that brought her a lot of unintended negative attention. Thus, she would spend the rest of 1996 trying to remind the United States that she was a wife, mother, and first lady. She survived the legal battles, was found innocent, wrote a best-selling book, and set precedents for wives of presidents. She also navigated a sea of gendered discourse that erased her agency and offered inconsistent views of her public

role in the administration. Although she met the demands of the convention, she struggled with the rhetorical battles that had gendered her throughout the year. She created a gendered confusion that would follow her throughout her public life.

Chapter Five
Voicing Experience:
Rodham Clinton and the U.S. Intervention in Iraq

"When you think about it, all the leaders who were contemplating running for President—Hillary Clinton, John Edwards, Tom Daschle—they all voted for it. Why? They all were making a calculated personal decision and didn't want the war hanging over them."

--Lincoln Chafee[33], U.S. Senate, Republican Rhode Island

"Did you tell her I don't like mother fuckers who gas their own people? Did you tell her [Helen Thomas] I don't like assholes who lie to the world? Did you tell her I am going to kick his sorry motherfucking ass all over the Mideast"

--President George W. Bush, private conversation with Ari Flescher about the potential invasion of Iraq (as cited by Isikoff and Corn, p. 3)

Hillary Rodham Clinton has consistently supported "smart power," or the use and threat of military intervention to secure U.S. interests and promote human rights. This reality has long perplexed both her liberal supporters and her conservative detractors. The left often holds Rodham Clinton up as a movement leader, and her promotions of military activities have often caused friction with the progressive wing of the Democratic Party. By contrast, the political right, which has often used Rodham Clinton as a symbol of liberal policies, frequently has been flummoxed on how to admit that they agree with her on issues of national security. I now use Rodham Clinton's public writings and statements on the 2002 U.S. intervention in Iraq to explain how her consistent voice on issues of national security has often been interpreted through unfair, incorrect and gendered frames. Like all periods in her life, she was faced with gendered controversies as she assumed the podium to speak on defense issues.

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[33] Senator Lincoln Chafee offered this statement in an interview with *The Huffington Post* (Stein, 2008). It should be noted that Chafee was the only Republican Senator to vote against the Iraq resolution in 2002.

In this chapter, I shift the focus to a new period in the public life of Rodham Clinton. The previous three chapters contain analyses of texts produced while Rodham Clinton was First Lady of the United States. This chapter will be the only section of the project that considers Rodham Clinton's role as a U.S. Senator from New York. Rodham Clinton spent eight years in the U.S. Senate, and she was a key player in many domestic and international policy debates; however, she was a junior Senator during her two terms. The U.S. Senate is built on hierarchy, and Rodham Clinton made a name for herself as a bipartisan workhorse.[34] Many worried that her fame would cloud her abilities to work with other Senators, but Rodham Clinton accepted her junior status and collaborated with both Republicans and Senior Democrats. While in the U.S. Senate, Rodham Clinton also faded a bit from the national scene. She became part of a team of Senators, and her public approval ratings grew. This was an important moment in her public life because she officially became an elected political figure, and she started to develop a political record that was not directly tied to WJC.

I chose to analyze her Iraq rhetoric for three reasons. First, Rodham Clinton made a concerted effort to become involved in issues of national defense upon being elected to the U.S. Senate. She pursued a seat on the Senate Armed Services Committee. She frequently attended security briefings with the Bush administration, and she established many relationships with Republican and Democratic members of the Joint Chiefs of

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[34] For example, see *The Des Moines Register* (2007) endorsement of Rodham Clinton. The editorial board wrote, "Today, she's widely praised for working across the aisle with Sam Brownback, Lindsey Graham, and other Republicans." Also, see Nagourney & Hernandez (2002) and Green (2006) for further discussion of her work ethic in the U.S. Senate.

Staff. She has a long standing interest in defense policy, and her work with the Armed Services Committee was one of her primary projects in the U.S. Senate.

Second, Rodham Clinton made significant contributions to several policy issues during her time in the U.S. Senate. However, her participation in the decision to invade Iraq gained primacy because of her committee role and because of her geographical ties to the state of New York. The Bush administration used the events of September 11, 2001, to promote the Iraq invasion, and Rodham Clinton represented the state that felt the most immediate pain caused by those events. She was in a position of needing to support a President who was seeking justice for her constituents.

Finally, I chose her Iraq war rhetoric because no policy issue has haunted Senator Clinton more than her October 2002 vote authorizing President George W. Bush to use force in Iraq. She was praised by figures on the right and criticized by supporters on the left. Pundits, constituents, and some Senate colleagues made claims that her vote was not authentic. Some suggested her position was mere pandering for a future presidential run. Rodham Clinton described it as the most important vote of her entire Senate career, and in her floor speech before the vote she stated, “This is a difficult vote. This is probably the hardest decision I have ever had to make. Any vote that may lead to war should be hard, but I cast it with conviction” (Clinton, H.R., 2002). Although she later became an outspoken critic of the Iraq war, she still refused to apologize for this vote that caused much speculation and a lot of gendered chatter. The 2002 vote brought attention and stress to her presidential run, and it was the biggest gendered obstacle she faced in her fight for the Democratic nomination. The Iraq war vote was the primary reason Rodham

Clinton was unable to clinch the support of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party, which made securing the nomination remarkably difficult. However, like all chapters of Rodham Clinton's public life, the presence of a constraint opened up new rhetorical spaces and opportunities. At the same time that she was struggling with progressive Democrats, her commentary and experience with the Iraq conflict made her appealing to new constituencies that the Democratic Party had long courted but never converted. This is the interesting story about Rodham Clinton's Iraq rhetoric, and this is where I begin my critical narrative.

I conclude that Rodham Clinton's vote and commentary on the conflict in Iraq were consistent with her previous stands on the role of the United States military. It was public misperception of Rodham Clinton's views that led to confusion and disappointment. Rodham Clinton existed in another gendered situation in which public perception did not match her personal conviction, and the texts she offered failed to directly respond to some public concerns. Rodham Clinton offered a consistent voice on Iraq, but her audiences could not separate her messages from media reports that offered gendered interpretations of her position. She was in a whirlwind of misinterpretation, and she constantly faced questions about her motives.

In this chapter, I analyze Rodham Clinton's discourse on the U.S. intervention in Iraq that spans 2002 to 2007. Some of the 2007 rhetoric occurred after Rodham Clinton had announced her presidential bid. Although these documents fed into her presidential campaign, she delivered these speeches as a U.S. Senator from New York. They framed her campaign message, but they were not official campaign discourse. In what follows, I

offer a brief commentary on the context surrounding the Iraq vote, a discussion of the gendering of Rodham Clinton's position, and a description of her two hermeneutic fields. I then conclude with my critical reading of her public statements.

Contextual Issues: Facts, Politics, and Iraq in 2002

At the time of the 2002 floor vote on Iraq, Rodham Clinton was a liberal, female Senator from New York, a member of the Senate Armed Services committee, and had worked closely with the recovery efforts following the tragedies of September 11, 2001. She also had personal relationships with Clinton-era foreign policy advisors. Many of them had worked for her husband or worked in her Senate office. She was in constant conversation with these individuals, and she was influenced by their opinions. She also made a strong effort to work closely with President George W. Bush's (Bush) national security team. When she cast her vote in 2002 to allow President Bush to use force if Iraq refused to comply with weapons inspections, it was not a vote for war. This is a crucial fact. It was a vote for more inspections, and it was a vote for the potential use of force if Iraq did not comply with international demands. Finally, she made a speech that fully clarified her position on this issue before the U.S. Senate voted.

Despite these facts, many mediated voices positioned Rodham Clinton's use of force in a variety of ways. Crowley (2007) noted that "Hillary Clinton's entire political identity has become defined by that vote and her subsequent refusal to apologize for it" (p. 19). He also argued that a cacophony of voices made it seem Rodham Clinton was "playing politics." For many, the frame became that "she voted for the war to look tough" (Crowley, 2007, p. 19). At the beginning of this chapter I included a statement in

which Senator Chafee, Rodham Clinton's Republican colleague, said her vote was made for political reasons. Chafee was the only Republican Senator to vote against the Iraq resolution. The trouble with all this speculation and is that intent is a very slippery concept. It is impossible to interpret; I can never fully know why another human being performs a certain task. Furthermore, it is not what I intend to say that matters. It is the interpretation of the message that is important. With that, my analysis starts from Crowley's (2007) original question: "What if she [Rodham Clinton] really believed in the war?" (p. 19).

Gender Controversy and the 2002 Iraq Vote: Theoretical and Situational Concerns

Four elements define the gendered controversy that surrounds Rodham Clinton's Iraq rhetoric. First, on its face, this moment might seem less gendered than other periods of Rodham Clinton's life. However, the gendered dimensions of this moment are deep and seem invisible. They are also particularly dangerous and problematic for feminist politics. The reactions to Rodham Clinton's position and vote speak to problematic public understandings of normalized masculinity. Bourdieu (2001) describes symbolic violence as "imperceptible and invisible even to its victims, exerted for the most part through the purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition, (more precisely, misrecognition) recognition, or even feeling" (p. 2). The questioning of Rodham Clinton's motives and the characterization of her position as calculating are nothing more than public moves to challenge her authority as a public woman. Yes, her vote was rightfully problematic to many liberal minded voters. However, her vote was not more problematic than that of Senator John Kerry or Senator John Edwards. These two men

had made their intentions to be president of the United States known. However, unlike Senator Clinton, they were only minimally accused of an inauthentic vote to prove their commander-in-chief credentials. Rodham Clinton's authenticity was questioned because men can support war and military action, but a public woman who is pro-intervention does not fit public expectations.

This first gender frame flows through her speeches and her refusal to apologize for the vote. Perhaps Rodham Clinton voted for the Iraq war primarily to prove she could be a strong commander in chief of the U.S. military. However, critics will never know her motives. She spoke directly answer about her reasons for supporting the war. What is interesting is that she was symbolically undermined in ways that male Senators, who were potential presidential candidates, were able to avoid. Rodham Clinton's vote, so the public narrative reflected, was about proving toughness. John Edwards was just doing what men do to get elected President of the United States. This represents a fundamental paradox of gender facing political women. Further, the undermining of Rodham Clinton was particularly gendered because unlike the male Senators, Rodham Clinton had an extensive paper trail that explained why she supported this intervention. Regardless of her intent and motive, her public record was consistent, and her speeches stressed her belief in the rightness of this international move. All of this was ignored, and her decision was cast as mere calculation, and she was symbolically undermined in ways that her male colleagues avoided. This silent and invisible undermining is important for understanding the dynamics of gender roles.

Second, like every other period in her life, Rodham Clinton had few role models to study as she offered her positions on Iraq. U.S. audiences might be more comfortable with political women, but they are not quite accepting of public women talking about war and foreign policy. Few women have broken into the patriarchal field of foreign affairs.[35] Tickner (2002) made the correct observation that "in the west, the image of a foreign-policymaker has been strongly associated with elite, white males and representations of hegemonic masculinity" (Tickner, 2001, p. 54). Public women are faced with masculine frames that are rooted in "just war" approaches to national defense. They have few female role models from which to observe and consider different manners to express a consistent or nuanced voice on issues of war and international security.

This lack of roles models comes from a general discomfort with female violence and a foreign policy sphere that is heavily rooted in both family metaphors and the subjugation of women. Male violence is a common trope. It has been both accepted and naturalized. The patriarchy is built on notions that masculinity includes force and violence. By contrast, moments of female violence are seen as emotional and irrational. If a man engages in a violent activity, he is either acting on some natural drive or is enforcing a moral code. By contrast, a woman who engages in similar acts is being driven by emotion, not logic, and is often talked about as being both vindictive and personally motivated. Elshtain (1987) rightly notes that "Female violence, it followed, was an aberration, an eruption of not wholly disciplined subjects, partial outlaws. Not

[35]At this historical moment, women were starting to earn top diplomatic posts. For example, Dr. Madeleine Albright had served as the first female U.S. Secretary of State. Also, Dr. Condoleezza Rice would be appointed the 66th U.S. Secretary of State in 2005.

being politically constituted, women are not politically accountable" (p. 169). Male violence is sanctioned whereas female violence is irrational.

Beyond the general discomfort with female violence lies the complicated role women are suppose to play in times of war. Women are not to be violent, but they are to aid the war effort. With the exception of Joan of Arc, the most readily available war persona for a political woman is a Florence Nightingale figure. Women should be nurses. Women should tend the home fires. Women should mourn the loss of fallen soldiers. And more important, U.S. war efforts are always moral crusades that are about protecting the family. Tickner (2001) reminds us that "the ideology of the family has been an important metaphor on which states rely for reinforcing their legitimacy" (p. 54). And the ideology of family does not work without a mother to raise the next generation of citizens. Therefore, few roles have opened up that allow any political woman to be seen as a rational rhetor on issues of defense. Public men reason through the logic of war. Public women, the story goes, take care of the emotional needs of the nation. This history confounded interpretations of Rodham Clinton's positions.

Third, the gendered controversy surrounding the war rhetoric also grew because media reports failed to account for key facts in Rodham Clinton's long rhetorical record on issues of national defense. Rodham Clinton has always had a strong interest in defense, the military, and U.S. intervention in international crises. This was ignored by all media accounts of her vote to authorize President Bush to use force in Iraq. Reports failed to mention that Rodham Clinton first started speaking about issues of national defense during WJC's administration. She supported the use of force in Bosnia, and she

was one of the administration officials that urged WJC to use the military to intervene in both Somalia and Kosovo. She had been critical of some military practices. For example, her husband authorized the U.S. military to use the coasts of Puerto Rico to practice bombing, but Rodham Clinton criticized his administration for allowing environmental degradation and putting the citizens of Puerto Rico in danger (Hirschkorn & Honojosa, 1999). However, her public statements as First Lady of the United States typically promoted military force for the protection of U.S. citizens, human rights, and the security of U.S. economic interests.

Also, Rodham Clinton's interest in issues of national defense preceded her marriage to WJC. In a speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, First Lady Rodham Clinton informed the crowd that she had tried to enlist in the U.S. Marines prior to marrying WJC. This was confirmed by the Department of Defense, and Rodham Clinton informed the public that she was denied based on her age and eyesight. She also mentioned that the Marine Corps. had encouraged her to take her interest in military service to the U.S. Army. This comment sparked a lot of commentary by the domestic press. Her husband had often been criticized for his lack of military service during the Vietnam War, and Rodham Clinton had now publicly admitted that she tried to enlist. Maureen Dowd, with *The New York Times*, described the situation saying Rodham Clinton had "presented a macho contrast to a president" who did not participate in the draft (Dowd, 1994, June 15). Although Dowd tried to gender Rodham Clinton's comments, other reporters simply wanted to make sense of why a 27-year-old Rodham Clinton with a Yale Law Degree would attempt to serve in the military.

The Clinton White House issued a statement that her attempt at enrollment in the Marine Corps should simply be viewed as part of her larger commitment to public service. It was also further proof that Rodham Clinton has long been comfortable with the military, military service, and military intervention. Rodham Clinton's rhetorical record from the White House shows that she was not shy about encouraging the president to use "might" to make "right" in global politics. Reactions to Rodham Clinton's positions from her time as First Lady foreshadowed the widespread confusion about her 2002 Iraq vote. Many wondered, how could this feminist politician who championed universal health coverage also be so active on issues of defense? She was rupturing public expectations about gender, service, and female relationships, and these ruptures led to confusion and controversy. As with most moments in her public life, audiences were not aware of her consistent record.

Finally, this gendered controversy was a situation that was unique to Rodham Clinton. When casting her 2002 Iraq vote, she was a member of Congress considering a presidential request to potentially use force. Campbell and Jamieson (2008) remind rhetorical scholars that there have always been long standing conflicts between U.S. presidents and Congress on issues of war. Congress has the sole authority to declare war, but presidents have long sought authority to exercise their position as Commander in Chief through the *War Powers Resolution of 1973* (Campbell and Jamieson, 2008, p. 218). Rodham Clinton faced a difficult decision in this debate because she simultaneously existed on both sides of the issue. She was a member of Congress being asked to grant power to the president and reduce Congressional authority, and she was a

member of a former presidential administration that had made similar requests. Rodham Clinton had supported the military efforts of her husband, and she had spoken out against Congressional refusal to grant him the authority to use force. Her experience in the Clinton administration was confounding her vote in the U.S. Senate. Her vote was drawn partially on her past experiences. Rodham Clinton was the only Senator in this difficult position. However, coverage and interpretation of her vote failed to take this into account. Her history and role in the past was erased, and her motives were treated as political and manipulative. Interpretations of her vote ignored her past record and gendered her acts in inappropriate ways.

Rhetorical Theory and U.S. Foreign Policy

In this chapter, I address two problems with rhetorical scholarship on issues of foreign policy. Rhetoricians often ignore foreign policy rhetoric, and most theoretical models are rooted in Cold War ideology. Public address scholars have prolifically analyzed domestic, political discourse; however, the rhetorical literature lacks a comprehensive account of foreign policy rhetoric. Few rhetoricians have ventured to ask questions about congressional foreign policy, the discourses of the state department, or the discourses of non-state actors. Even fewer rhetorical critics have examined the relationship between gender and foreign policy. My analysis of Rodham Clinton's discourse on Iraq helps to fill this theoretical void by adopting a rhetorical-hermeneutic approach.

Beer and Hariman (1996) bemoan the "lack of attention to foreign affairs in rhetorical studies" and speculate that scholars have been too concerned with "domestic

politics and national literatures" (p. 1). Stuckey (1995) also notes the absence of significant rhetorical scholarship on foreign affairs, and she identifies the lack as a cause for a lack of theoretical developments. Scholars of presidential rhetoric have done the most to challenge this domestic bias. Wander (1984b) considers the role of the U.S. presidency in foreign policy discourse, but his treatment has remained relatively unchallenged since its original publication. Furthermore, in their texts *Deeds Done in Words: Presidential Rhetoric and the Genres of Governance (1990)* and *Presidents Creating the Presidency: Deeds Done in Words (2008)*, Campbell and Jamieson provide groundbreaking generic models for the study of presidential discourse. Although the texts are exceptional in all aspects of explaining the domestic rhetorical styles of U.S. presidents, the authors devote only one chapter in each book to the foreign policy discourse of U.S. presidents[36]. Finally, Ivie (1987) also offers presidential scholars a review of common argumentative topoi in justifications for war. All of these studies are insightful, but they only start the conversation on foreign policy rhetoric. The field needs more discourse on international leaders and communicators.

Second, the current treatment of foreign policy rhetoric has failed to give significant attention to the non-oratorical discourse of presidential administrations and branches of the federal government. Bostdorff (2003) and Murphy (2003) provide rhetorical critics with systematic analyses of the primary speeches of the Bush administration in a post September 11th world. Jackson (2005) extends the work of several leading figures in the field to offer a critical analysis of many of the public

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[36] Both books contain a chapter on presidential war rhetoric.

documents of the Bush administration. However, no rhetorical critics have given significant attention to the non-oratorical texts that address issues of international diplomacy. Rhetorical critics need to pay significant attention to the themes, messages, and subject positions that emerge from these important documents.

Beyond challenging the domestic bias, I also use this chapter to address the lack of theoretical models to analyze contemporary foreign policy voices. Most disciplinary approaches to foreign policy rhetoric are rooted in a pre-September 11, post-cold war mentality. Since the tragic events of September 11, no rhetorical critic or theorist has offered a systematic understanding of the way that the Bush administration has altered the discursive field of U.S. foreign policy. In her attempt to update the discipline's understanding of foreign policy rhetoric after the cold war, Stuckey (1995) claimed that "the fall of the Soviet Union left public figures with pre-Cold war models to explain post-Cold war events that hold no suasory force with the American public" (p. 215). In much the same way, in the years following the attacks of September 11, 2001, the U.S. electorate has been bombarded with significant and radically different foreign policy statements. The problem is that our field is left with post-cold war theories to explain a post-September 11th world.

Edwards (2008) offers one of the few analyses of the Post-Cold war rhetoric of President Clinton and argues that Clinton used primitive and modern savagery language to promote U.S. interventions in foreign conflicts. Rojecki (2008) critiques the foreign policy and post September 11 discourse of George W. Bush, but he ultimately returns to the notion of American exceptionalism as the best lens through which to view the

justifications for foreign intervention by the administration. Keller and Mitchell (2006) offer an analysis of "preventative force" and "preemption" as persuasive terms in foreign policy rhetoric. Finally, Maddux (2008) offers the only study of the gendered dimensions of foreign policy rhetoric through an analysis of First Lady Rosalynn Carter.

I answer my own call for a new approach by arguing that the voice of Rodham Clinton reacted to the previous discursive fields created by two presidents. Rodham Clinton, as a Senator, used her speeches and essays to confront a new international situation with words from both her past and present.

I use hermeneutical rhetoric to analyze Rodham Clinton's public texts on Iraq. I design my hermeneutical approach from two vantage points. First, Steven Mailoux (1989) writes, "when we ask about the meaning of a text, we receive an interpretative argument; when we seek the means of persuasion, we interpret the situation. As theoretical practices, hermeneutics involves placing a text in meaningful context" (p. 379). I place Rodham Clinton's Iraq texts in a "meaningful context" that attempts to make sense of the confusion. Critically, I ask, what discourses surrounded Rodham Clinton that can help make sense of these persuasive moments? How should this essay and set of speeches be contextualized within her larger public career? And what consistent voice emerges from this set of texts?

Second, I use hermeneutical rhetoric to allow for a view of the gendered and historical dimensions surrounding Rodham Clinton's war vote. Wilson (2005) explains:

> When the critic uses the hermeneutic/rhetoric distinction as a critical lens, she invites the reader to consider the text as a 'translation.'…This

> perspective implies that the text operates in two directions simultaneously: toward a discursive field comprised of rhetorical norms, values, and symbolic acts that are being interpreted and toward an audience that will be persuaded for someone's benefit, by the interpretation. (p. 308)

All of Rodham Clinton's rhetorical acts on Iraq work in two different directions. First, she used each of them to speak to the norms and values associated with being a Senator from New York, a public woman, and a Democrat. At the same time she used them to support military action in moments of crisis. Senator Clinton's war vote in 2002 is best understood as a moment of public address that works in a bidirectional manner. She addressed public norms while revealing personal convictions. She simultaneously reacted to two discursive fields, and this bidirectionality may have been lost on U.S. audiences. These moves complicated perceptions of her position, so her actions were described as calculating. It seems this may have been one of the most consistent votes she made and statements she has ever delivered, but the public message around the vote muddled her motives and questioned her intent. It was a consistent move with a confused interpretation.

In what follows, I first describe the two discursive fields Rodham Clinton addressed. First, I describe the "Clinton Doctrine Field." All of Rodham Clinton's statements on Iraq bear traces of the foreign policy positions of WJC's administration. She spoke with a voice that was consistent with a Clinton approach to Foreign Policy. At the same time, she addressed the "Bush Doctrine Field." After September 11, Bush set the terms of public debate on global terrorism. Rodham Clinton had to speak to this

rhetorical field in order to be persuasive. Both fields hailed a specific voice from Rodham Clinton. Her attempt to address both at the same time complicated public interpretation of her message. Finally, I end the chapter by providing an analysis of Rodham Clinton's three primary texts on Iraq: Address to the U.S. Senate, October 10, 2002, Address to the U.S. Senate, February 7, 2007, and an essay published in *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 2007).

<u>The Clinton Doctrine as a Hermeneutic Field</u>

First, Rodham Clinton's comments on the Iraq conflict address a discursive field set by the Clinton Doctrine. The term "Clinton Doctrine" technically refers to a view of U.S. foreign policy that emerged during WJC's administration and refers to these ideals. As a Senator and a Former First Lady, however, Rodham Clinton publicly tried to chart her own set of policy positions. As a rhetor, however, by virtue of her connection to WJC, she always represented the Clinton administration. Even when she spoke on contemporary issues, her words were always partially viewed through the prism of the practices of the WJC administration. Therefore, in speeches and essays that outlined her positions on Iraq, Rodham Clinton made reference to and was partially interpreted by the foreign policy positions of the Clinton Doctrine. Her work moved toward, reacted to, and drew persuasive force from her role in the White House. The Clinton Doctrine is probably best represented by WJC's final moves to sanction Iraq, and the congressional conversation that authorized WJC to take action in the Middle East. On January 27, 1998, both houses of the United States Congress unanimously passed *H.R. 4655* or *The Iraq Liberation Act of 1998*. This bill called for regime change in Iraq, established the

U.S. government as a supporter of democratic movements within Iraq, and provided for humanitarian support to Iraqis. The document was signed by President Clinton, who also made a speech at the Pentagon discussing U.S. Military Policy in Iraq. The document was clear in its discussion of the use of force. Section 8 asserted, "Nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize or otherwise speak to the use of United States Armed Forces." However, the document allowed the President to provide "military assistance" in the form of education and training to organizations seeking to work with the principles set forth in the document.

Beyond granting new powers to the Executive Branch, the *Iraq Liberation Act of 1998* also listed twelve findings about previous aggressive acts by the Iraqi government. The document mentions Iraq's 1980 invasion of Iran, 1988 mistreatment of the Kurds, 1990 invasion of Kuwait, 1993 attempted assassination of President George H.W. Bush, 1996 refusal to work with UN weapons inspectors, and 1998 cessation of all weapons inspections. The Act also set a strong precedent for future presidents by stating, "It should be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq and to promote the emergence of a democratic government to replace the regime." This Act authorized the United States executive branch to end human rights violations under Saddam Hussein.

The Iraq Liberation Act of 1998 states the key components of the Clinton Doctrine that influenced the rhetoric of Rodham Clinton because of her role in the Clinton White House and because the Clinton Doctrine was used by the Bush administration in the Congressional debates of 2002. Republican Senators used elements

of this act to reason that President Bush should be given authority to use force in Iraq. Rodham Clinton was in a precarious position. As a Senator, she was part of the current debates, but she also was a representative of the administration that had crafted the international precedent. She had to speak to this discursive field, and her public record showed consistent support of the Clinton Doctrine prior to September 11, 2001.

The Iraq Liberation Act of 1998 displayed how WJC's administration typically used military intervention. WJC wrote in his White House memoir that he constantly feared the Iraqis would use biological weapons on the U.S. citizenry (Clinton, W.J. 2004, p. 833-4). He also mentioned his guiding belief that the military should be used to secure the rights of people across the globe. Rodham Clinton wrote in her memoir that she had spent eight years watching her husband's efforts to stop injustice across the globe be thwarted because of partisan bickering. The Clinton Doctrine privileged the elimination of mass murder over concerns about national sovereignty. It is best described as promoting: (1) the use of force to protect human rights, (2) strong international coalitions, and (3) principle before political party. The Clinton Doctrine espoused the rights of humanity over political gain. Rodham Clinton was on record that partisan differences had no place in issues of international security. She recalled that her husband had been thwarted by Republican Senators. She now was in the reverse role as a Democratic Senator evaluating the proposals of a Republican president.

Rodham Clinton revealed in her memoir that she more often favored military interventions than did her husband. Her memoir explained that when WJC would waiver, she would encourage action. Both Clintons had crafted a post-White House narrative that

made it appear that Rodham Clinton helped create the Clinton Doctrine. Her foreign policy speeches as First Lady of the United States confirm this narrative. For example, on April 9, 1999, Rodham Clinton visited U.S. troops at Dover Air Force Base. Those soldiers were eventually deployed to Bosnia, and Rodham Clinton sent them to battle with these words:

> You learn early enough in life that sometimes after you try everything you know, whether you like it or not, you have to use force to try to bring across a message, and to try to make it clear that you will not tolerate unacceptable behavior and actions that strike at the very core of what it means to be a human being. (Clinton, H.R., 1999, April 9)

The Clinton Doctrine became the first hermeneutic field that constrained Rodham Clinton's rhetorical positioning on Iraq.

The public record also showed that Rodham Clinton used her position as first lady of the United States to push for interventions in the Middle East (Operation Dessert Fox), the Balkans, and Bosnia. Klare (1999) described the Clinton Doctrine as a three-part set of beliefs. First, the administration held a pessimistic appraisal of global security. Second, Clinton officials believed the United States had a strong interest in maintaining economic and political stability around the world. Finally, the doctrine allowed for the use of force to promote U.S. values. Rodham Clinton's justification for her vote on the Iraq resolution of 2002 followed all three of these principles. Rodham Clinton not only had a previous public record and a history with the Clinton Doctrine, but she also asked Clinton-era advisors for guidance before the vote. Crowley (2007), reported that Rodham

Clinton went to great lengths to speak with WJC's national security advisor Sandy Berger and WJC's Secretary of State Madeline Albright. These advisors were in favor of the resolution, and Albright built a strong case for why President Bush should be granted the authority to use force. Rodham Clinton also sought the advice of Kenneth Pollack (2002). He was a Clinton National Security aide and author of *The Threatening Storm*, a book that argued that Saddam Hussein could not be peacefully contained. Beyond these meetings, Rodham Clinton also spoke with President WJC, former UN ambassador Richard Holbrooke, and political strategist Mark Penn. In sum, Rodham Clinton not only had favored the Clinton Doctrine, but she sought advice from those who created and defended the Clinton Doctrine.

Many have held that Rodham Clinton's vote fit the worldview of her husband's administration. Crowley (2007) argued that her vote was "based on the notion that diplomacy required the threat of force behind it" (p.21). This is precisely the precedent that had been set by WJC. James Rubin, the Assistant Secretary of State in the Clinton Administration, also told Crowley, "I think there is a connection to her vote…which is recognizing that the right combination of force and diplomacy can achieve America's objectives." (as cited by Crowley, 2007, p. 20-1). Rodham Clinton had spent a lot of time watching Congressional Republicans stop her husband's international efforts. Crowley was right to assert that "supporting the Iraq war may have been as much about her [Rodham Clinton] future as it was about her past" (p. 25).

As a former member of the WJC administration, she was publicly seen as a believer in the principles of that administration. She also had a public record of

statements that affirmed her belief in those core principles. She was troubled that the Republicans tried to stop WJC from acting in many humanitarian missions around the world. She was now in the position to be a Democratic Senator who faced a Republican President. Her words reflected the Clinton Doctrine out of necessity and principle.

The Bush Doctrine as a Hermeneutic Field

Rodham Clinton also made rhetorical moves in the direction of the discursive field crafted by the George W. Bush administration. In particular, Rodham Clinton's position as a New York Senator put her in an urgent position to react to Bush's framing of international diplomacy. Bush developed a different foreign policy. After September 11, 2001, the Bush Doctrine emerged from the White House with a strong "you are either with us, or against us" call to action. John Lewis Gaddis (2004) has argued that for many U.S. government officials, "September 11th was not just a national security crisis. It was a national identity crisis as well" (p. 10). According to Gaddis, the events of September 11th encouraged the Bush administration to embark on a public relations campaign of redefining the global role of the United States. Rodham Clinton had to react to the new Bush foreign policy that was aggressive in its plan, progressive in its ends, and regressive in its justifications. The Bush Doctrine set the tone for the new foreign policy debates, and Rodham Clinton had to respond to this while keeping some distance from its troubling elements.

The Bush Doctrine started to take a coherent form with the *National Security Strategy of 2002,* which was released a month prior to the Congressional debates on Iraq. The domestic press immediately debated the content of this document, and it became a

set of tea leaves through which to predict how the administration wanted to proceed in the Middle East. Writing for the Boston Globe, Schlesinger noted, "underlying the policy is the overwhelming advantage of U.S. military might and a stated determination to use it when necessary while deterring other countries from challenging U.S. power" (A12). In response to this statement and others, the National Security Council, the document's primary authors, claimed that the NSS of 2002 only had three main objectives: "to prevent terrorist attacks, to reduce America's vulnerability to future attacks and minimize damage and recover from attacks when they occur" (as cited by McGeehan, New York Times Interview, 3-4). The press was using the document as a predictor that the administration was hungry for war, but the Bush Administration clung to a theme of prevention as it released the *NSS of 2002*.

Sanger (2002) with the New York Times offered a review of the document that traced the historic elements within the text. He writes:

> It [NSS of 2002] sketches out a far more muscular and sometimes aggressive approach to national security than any since the Reagan era. It included the discounting of most nonproliferation treaties in favor of a doctrine of "counter proliferation," a reference to everything from missile defense to forcibly dismantling weapons and their components. (p. A1)

Sanger's read of the NSS also compared the *NSS of 2002* with the final NSS released by the Clinton administration in 1999. The Bush Doctrine was not the Clinton Doctrine. It did not favor coalitions. It did not seek to bring humanitarian aid. It was a document that laid out a plan to protect U.S. interests around the globe.

As Rodham Clinton spoke on Iraq, she was also reacting to foreign policy experts who used the *NSS of 2002* to spell out how the Bush administration would likely proceed. For example, Lee Hamilton with the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, bemoaned the document for its overt attention to U.S. superiority in economic and military realms. He noted, "The document emphasizes those things that are 'carrying a big stick' more than the other things that are 'speaking softly' and the generous aspect of American power" (Hamilton, as cited by Schlesinger A12). Michael Krepon, with the Henry L. Stimson Center, pondered what he called the "neo-Wilsonian language" of the NSS of 2002, and he commented that, "practitioners of realpolitik in this administration have been converted to the civilizing mission, reminiscent of the 19th century and Wilsonian idealism" (as cited by Schlesinger A12). However, despite their disagreement about the internal language of the document, most foreign policy experts agreed that the *NSS of 2002* laid the groundwork for war in Iraq.

Beyond the NSS of 2002, Bush had also given hints of the Bush Doctrine in many public addresses. In his 2002 commencement address to the graduates of West Point, Bush stated, "You will wear the uniform of a great and unique country. America has no empire to extend or utopia to establish. We wish for others only what we wish four ourselves—safety from violence, the rewards of liberty, and the hope for a better life" (Bush, 2002). This speech also started making the arguments for preemptive war, and the hints in this speech were echoed months later in the opening statement of the *NSS of 2002*, which read, "Today the United States enjoys a position of unparalleled military strength and great economic and political influence. In keeping with our heritage and

principles, we do not use our strength to press for unilateral advantage. We seek instead to create a balance of power that favors human freedom" (National Security, 2002). These remarks hinted at what Fukuyama has called the three distinct roles for the U.S. government laid out in the Bush Doctrine: to defend, to preserve, and to extend peace.

Rodham Clinton was making decisions in a world that was different than that during her husband's administration. Gaddis argues that the Bush agenda as expressed in the *NSS of 2002* represented a third redefinition of the United States' role in the world. First, America was destined for "continental hegemony" under the theories of John Quincy Adams. Then with the leadership of FDR, the United States was a leader of a global coalition. Now, the Bush Doctrine marked the identification and elimination of global terrorism as the single most important task to defend the safety of the U.S. people and the world. As a discursive field facing Rodham Clinton, the Bush Doctrine was a political discourse that framed the world as completely different from previous generations. As a rhetor, she had to work within this field as she hark back to the principles guiding her husband's administration. She was forced to accept and react to a United States military that needed to seek out global terrorism to ensure safety for future generations.

The Bush Doctrine became the dominant discursive field in international debates. It was impossible for most rhetors to discredit the worldview it created. Jackson (2005) argues:

> Political discourses are constructed and employed for specific purposes, most importantly, the creation, maintenance and extension of power.

> Discourses are an exercise of power; that is, they try to become dominant or hegemonic by discrediting alternative or rival discourses, by promoting themselves as the full and final truth, and by drowning out the sound of any other discourse. (19)

The Bush Doctrine was such hegemonic discourse. Rodham Clinton may have been the only Senator who was forced to face the realities of the Bush picture while clinging to the pragmatism of the Clinton Doctrine. To be persuasive to her many audiences, she had to respond to both directions. These moves complicated her message, and it made her motives seem disingenuous.

Critical Analysis

Rodham Clinton used three primary texts to justify her positions on Iraq. A precursor appeared in a speech delivered to the Council on Foreign Relations in October of 2000. At this time, Rodham Clinton was both a candidate for the U.S. Senate and First Lady of the United States. Her speech set the tone for her future tenure in the United States Senate. Rodham Clinton told the Council on Foreign Relations:

> There is a refrain…that we should intervene with force only when we face splendid little wars that we surely can win, preferably by overwhelming force in a relatively short period of time. To those who believe we should become involved only if it is easy to do, I think we have to say that America has never and should never shy away from the hard task if it is the right one (as cited by Crowley, 2007, p. 19).

Goodnight (2010) offered an analysis of the votes, and he calls all of them shallow because "each defers power to the President but distances his or her own vote from the ultimate policy outcome, all in the hope of successful message sending to the United Nations" (p. 85). My analysis of Rodham Clinton's views complicates remarks by critics like Goodnight. Rodham Clinton had a firm record of supporting strategic use of the military. She supported these moves even if the outcome was likely a lengthy conflict. All three of her texts on the Iraq war worked in two rhetorical directions. She spoke to past experiences while building on President Bush's worldview. Her rhetoric was bidirectional, and this may have led to confusion; however, it was consistent.

On October 10, 2002, Rodham Clinton offered a direct clarification of her vote for the Iraq resolution. This text set the tone for all of her future communication about this issue. Few media pundits paid attention to this speech. Critically, this was the first attempt by Rodham Clinton to move in two directions. That is, she clarified her war vote with discursive arguments rooted in both the Clinton and the Bush Doctrines. She opened the address by commenting that there have been multiple voices of dissent on the topic of Iraq. She praised debate and protest as bedrock practices in the U.S. political sphere. She stood in the chamber as one of two representatives from New York, the state most affected by the events of September 11, 2001, and it was that role that was defining her vote and her position on the issue.

Rodham Clinton then moved from her opening remarks to a section that strongly referenced the Clinton Doctrine. She first established that her vote was not a move for "immediate unilateral action." She stressed that the administration should continue to

move toward coalitions and international diplomacy. However, she showed her skepticism about this route. She discussed the troubles WJC faced gaining UN support to prevent the ethnic cleansing of the Albanians. She said, “I believe the best course is to go to the United Nations for a strong resolution that scraps the 1998 restrictions on inspections and calls for complete unlimited inspections, with cooperation expected and demanded from Iraq” (Rodham Clinton, 2002). With these claims, Rodham Clinton took a play from the Clinton approach to foreign policy. She mentioned that joint actions are important, but her comments used previous activities to show that she viewed international institutions with a healthy level of skepticism. Her vote became a move to seek the support of other nations, and then move forward after all avenues of diplomacy had been exhausted.

Rodham Clinton then made a second argument to support her vote. She stated, “I take the President at his word that he will try hard to pass a United Nations resolution and seek to avoid war, if possible” (Rodham Clinton, 2002). She then stated, “This is a difficult vote. This is probably the hardest decision I have ever had to make” (Rodham Clinton, 2002). At this moment, Rodham Clinton moved away from the Clinton Doctrine and toward the new Bush Doctrine. In a clever rhetorical maneuver, she used her experiences in the White House to publicly explain why she moved in the direction of supporting the president. WJC faced numerous roadblocks in Congress when he tried to intervene in international affairs. Rodham Clinton had a record of supporting strong executive action when human rights issues are at stake. The Bush Doctrine had become the new discursive field in which all rhetors had to discuss the issue of Iraq. The Bush

administration had laid out a strong campaign for action that was built on the many human rights violations committed by Saddam Hussein and his regime. Rodham Clinton accepted the administration's arguments, and she was forced to defend her position on the Iraq conflict within the debate parameters set by the president.

Rodham Clinton's floor speech also contained bi-directional moves in the concluding section. She first moved in the direction of the Clinton Doctrine by saying:

> My vote is not, however, a vote for any new doctrine of preemption or for unilateralism or for the arrogance of American power or purpose, all of which carry grave dangers for our nation, the rule of international law, and the peace and security of people throughout the world. (Rodham Clinton, 2002)

She immediately followed that section with a move toward the Bush Doctrine:

> Finally, on another personal note, I come to this decision from the perspective of a Senator from New York who has seen all too closely the consequences of last year's terrible attacks on our nation. In balancing the risks of action versus inaction, I think New Yorkers, who have gone through the fires of hell, may be more attuned to the risk of not acting. I know I am. (Rodham Clinton, 2002)

As she offered her final remarks, Rodham Clinton asserted that she preferred the Clinton method to foreign policy. International agencies are best. Coalitions are important. However, peace and security for U.S. citizens were paramount. This allowed her to seamlessly offer her final nod to the Bush Doctrine by signaling that the world has

changed. As a Senator from New York, she had seen that the U.S. citizenry was not safe. It was the job of the president to correct this, so she offered her support to help President Bush meet the dangers as he had described them to the U.S. public. Her vote became about adapting past methods to fit a new situation and a new world.

Rodham Clinton followed her floor speech with several interviews and public appearances. Throughout 2002 and 2003, she continued supporting her vote with moves toward these defining discursive fields of foreign policy. First, in an interview in March of 2003, she showed that she supported a balance between force in the name of protection (Bush Doctrine) and diplomacy (Clinton Doctrine). She stated, " it is preferable that we do this in a peaceful manner through coercive inspection…at some point we have to be willing to uphold the United Nations resolutions…this is a very delicate balancing act" (as cited by Brooks, 2007, February 15, p. 29).

She also continued to support her vote in important public appearances. On December 15, 2003, she addressed the Council on Foreign Relations. She opened that speech by defending her vote for the resolution: "I was one who supported giving President Bush the authority, if necessary, to use force against Saddam Hussein. I believe that was the right vote…I stand by the vote because I think it was a necessary step in order to maximize the outcome that did occur in the Security Council." This statement again affirmed her belief in the vote, and it also moved her public argument firmly into the Bush worldview. However, she immediately buttressed this comment with a move back to the Clinton Doctrine by saying that she thought this vote would allow President Bush to act in the same way as WJC did in Bosnia and Kosovo. She

ended the speech by combining the two Doctrines. She said, "[T]he Clinton administration did attempt to ferret out bin Laden and his training camps. In the years that followed, the government looked for efforts, covert and overt, to try to hit bin Laden, but he was, as he is today, an elusive enemy" (Clinton, H.R., 2003, October 15). With that remark, Rodham Clinton began using the arguments of the Bush administration, that there was an inherent link between Bin Laden and Hussein, and using examples from her past. Her public message became a dance between these two powerful discursive terrains.

Rodham Clinton's public statements remained consistent as the Bush administration escalated the situation in Iraq. However, in early 2007 she became a proponent of withdrawing troops from Iraq. Rodham Clinton officially announced her bid for the United States presidency on January 20, 2007, but she continued to offer statements about the Iraq situation as a Senator from New York. As she proposed that the U.S. government leave the Iraq conflict, she also refused to apologize for her vote. She maintained that at the time it was the right decision, and she professed that although the Bush administration had lied about the conditions, the results were not entirely bad. That is, as her position on Iraq evolved, she still held firm on her vote and her original position.

This new turn in Rodham Clinton's rhetoric took form first in a Senate Floor Speech delivered on February 7, 2007. At this point, The Bush administration was asking for Congressional authorization to escalate troop numbers in Iraq. Rodham Clinton voted against this surge, and she explained her vote by saying, "If you believe

that escalation is the right strategy, then cast your vote for it. But if you believe, as the majority of this chamber believes, that escalation is not the right strategy, then cast your vote against it. But standing on the sidelines is no way to stand up for the troops" (Rodham Clinton, 2007, February 7). She then asserted that there should be no more escalation of the current activity until the administration accomplished four tasks: (1) capping troops, (2) explained to the Iraqis that a lack of action means a lack of funding, (3) a refusal to send more troops until Iraq disarms the militias, and (4) no new troops until the forces in Iraq were given necessary supplies. At this moment, Rodham Clinton was no longer a supporter of the Bush administration. However, in expressing her discontent, she did not move away from her previous belief that the executive should be granted authority and power. This speech showed Rodham Clinton explaining that her 2002 vote was right because it was rooted in Clinton ideals and a firm belief in the worldview created by Bush. She then used her role as a member of Congress, by helping cut off the purse strings, to present a list of demands for the Bush administration to act. She wanted to see action to keep U.S troops and civilians safe, and she wanted the Bush administration to work with allies and Congress to ensure this activity. In Rodham Clinton's narrative, her original position was right, and she expected the Bush administration to use might in the proper way that had been authorized. After Rodham Clinton delivered her floor speech, she began to be criticized for not apologizing for her 2002 vote. In an interview on February 18, 2007, Senator Clinton said she "would rather lose support for her presidential bid than apologize for her vote in 2002 authorizing the military action" (Weisman, 2007, p. A6). She also mentioned in a separate interview, "I

take responsibility for my vote…It was a sincere vote based on the facts and assurances we had at the time" (Associated Press, 2007, February 18, p. A05). This remained her consistent position on the issue of Iraq.

As of 2007, Rodham Clinton stated that her original vote was correct but the war should be ended. This was the most problematic position for her in the presidential race of 2008. She defended her previous actions and laid out the best case for this evolved position in a *Foreign Affairs* article published in the November/December issue of 2007. In this final text on Iraq, she used one more bidirectional discursive move to support her positions. First, she explained why the war needed to end by moving in the direction of the Clinton Doctrine. She wrote that the Bush administration had "squandered the respect, trust, and confidence of even our closest friends and allies." She then said it was time "to reclaim our proper place in the world." These two opening statements moved audiences back to the core tenets of U.S. diplomacy during the Clinton era. Coalitions were important, but U.S. interests were more important.

She followed this statement with her final nod to the Bush Doctrine. She was arguing for Clintonian values in a debate defined by the Bush worldview. She had partially rooted her 2002 vote within this Bush frame. As she promoted a transition in Iraq and international affairs, she also reinforced her consistent belief that the use of force, even the Bush use of force, was not a bad strategy. She wrote, "There is a time for force and a time for diplomacy; when properly deployed, the two can reinforce each other. U.S. foreign policy must be guided by a preference for multilateralism, with unilateralism as an option when absolutely necessary to protect our security or avert an

avoidable tragedy" (Rodham Clinton, 2007, November/December). Rodham Clinton accepted the Bush Doctrine's tone and arguments, but she thought that current actions were not meeting the demands of the global situation. She refused to apologize for her 2002 vote because she rooted that belief in examples from the past and arguments she had received from the Bush people. Rodham Clinton clung to both the Clinton and Bush discursive fields, and although her position evolved and became more nuanced, her approach to foreign policy remained consistent. Rodham Clinton offered a bidirectional but consistent voice on Iraq. It may not have been a rhetorically obvious position, but it was consistent in its moves between two separate schools of public argument about the realities of diplomacy and war.

Concluding Thoughts

Rodham Clinton's partner in the Senate, Senator Charles Schumer, was the Senior Democratic Senator from New York. He also voted for the 2002 resolution. His public arguments were similar to Rodham Clinton's, and he felt it necessary to vote for the interests of the people of New York State, and especially New York City. There were some New York voters who wanted their Senators to vote against the resolution. After the vote, protesters staged a sit-in at Rodham Clinton's Manhattan office. They did not protest at Schumer's office (as reported by Sisk, 2002, p. 8). This public reaction shows the troubled position Rodham Clinton faced in 2002.

After her 2002 vote, Rodham Clinton told *USA Today* that she voted for the Iraq resolution with the "fires of hell" that consumed the World Trade Center in her mind. (Kiely, 2002, p. 1A). The Bush quotation at the start of this chapter contains the best

summary of how the Bush doctrine changed the public debate about international affairs. September 11, 2001, had caused a public shift in arguments. Rodham Clinton was firmly rooted in the ideology of her husband's administration, but she also was a female Senator, with presidential aspirations, who represented a state that was directly attacked by a terrorist organization. She set out an argument that coalitions were best, but the United States had a firm right to protect its citizens and assert its authority and interests in the world.

Rodham Clinton had a consistent voice on Iraq. The gendered reactions and the public anger were in part driven by social expectations and misinterpretations of who Rodham Clinton was as a public leader. Her public arguments did not stop public criticism. She offered a complicated argument. She argued as a policy wonk who was adapting an old strategy (Clinton Doctrine) to a new world (as described by the Bush Doctrine). Brooks (2007) described it best by writing:

> When you look back at Clinton's thinking, you don't see a classic war supporter. You see a person who was trying to seek balance between opposing arguments. You also see a person who deferred to the office of the presidency. You see a person who, as president, would be fox to Bush's hedgehog: who would see problems in their complexities rather than in their essentials…if she apologizes, she'll forfeit her integrity. She will be apologizing for being herself. (p. 29).

Her voice was consistent. It fit her previous beliefs. It fit her new role as a Senator from New York. It also fit how she planned to operate if she was President of the United

States. It did not fit public expectations, and it did not fit gendered expectations. It was confusing, because it moved in several directions. She was consistent in her actions and beliefs, but she was wrong in her public argumentative strategy. She sold her view in a complicated manner. Ultimately, she should have used her own voice from the past to support her new voice in the future. Instead, she navigated between the discursive fields of two presidents and left audiences questioning the authenticity of her motives, her words, and her beliefs. Rodham Clinton believed action was needed in Iraq. She just needed a better method to sell that idea (in her own voice).

Chapter Six
Situating Voice:
Rodham Clinton's 2008 Presidential Campaign Rhetoric

"Even before Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton threw their exploratory committees into the ring, every reporter seemed to be asking which candidate are Americans more ready for, a white woman or a black man?...I think this is a dumb and destructive question. It's dumb because most women are smart enough to figure out that a member of a group may or may not represent its interests…The question is also destructive because it is divisive."

-Gloria Steinem, New York Times, Op-Ed, February 7, 2007

"Gender is probably the most restricting force in American life, whether the question is who must be in the kitchen or who could be in the White House."

-Gloria Steinem, New York Times, Op-Ed, January 8, 2008

In the 2008 U.S. Democratic Presidential primary campaign, voters and caucus-participants were offered two very similar candidates. Both of these individuals wanted to end the war in Iraq. Both had plans to remove troops from Afghanistan. Both wanted to provide some type of health coverage for most U.S. citizens. They were environmentalists, activists, pro-labor, pro-choice and in favor of equality for LGBT members of society. In short, the policy papers and position statements of Senators Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama were aligned with the core principles of the Democratic Party. At best, their political positions were separated by nuanced stances on a few key issues.

In a normal presidential season, voters would have been delighted to choose from two members of the party both speaking to the core values of the base. However, the 2007-2008 Democratic primary stands out as one of the most contentious in U.S. electoral history. Rather than a substantial debate over policy and the future of the party, the electoral discourse focused on identity and culture. The Democratic primary election

of 2008 invented and reinvented a culture war discussion that many U.S. voters thought had long abandoned. It was not a decision about differences on policy. It was a decision about differences of identity, authenticity, and perspective.

There was a difference between the two candidates in the Democratic primary, a difference in degree of experience. Rodham Clinton brought more experience, expertise, and coalitions to the table than Obama. She ran on an incumbent strategy in a political atmosphere that was clamoring for change. Her campaign bet against embracing new marketing techniques and settled on a strategy of brand recognition. Her campaign assumed that the Clinton legacy would bring voters and delegates to her side. Rodham Clinton moved forward with a tone not just of change but of experience and a substantial record. This turned out to be the wrong strategy. This chapter begins with two questions: First, how did a difference in experience become a conversation about cultural identity? Second, if not this woman and this candidate, can a female candidate for the U.S. presidency ever find the voice to mount a successful national campaign?

There are many texts from the 2007-08 primaries that speak to the gendered troubles Rodham Clinton faced in that race. Here I analyze Rodham Clinton's public remarks between December of 2006 and June of 2008. This was her official "campaign rhetoric." During this period, Rodham Clinton was forming and establishing a presidential campaign committee. In previous chapters, I have used historical material to show how Rodham Clinton faced specific gender problems during a specific stage in her public life. Here, I rely primarily on textual analysis to set up the discussion of the gendered trap.

It is not critically productive to explore the commentary from many voices that proved misogyny and sexism are very much alive in U.S. politics. All one need do is type "Chris Matthews + sexism + Hillary Clinton" into a Google search engine and then prepare for some of the most perverse commentary ever delivered under the guise of "news reporting." I intend to show how Rodham Clinton situated her voice in the 2007-2008 primary races through a critical narrative. Dow (2001) offers the most salient explanation of this method. In 1990, the *Western Journal of Speech Communication* offered a debate over approaches to rhetorical criticism, the text, and the role of the critic. The debate began with Michael Leff and Andrew Sachs (1990) giving primacy to the "text." For Leff and Sachs, texts are an artistic creation and critics should analyze the internal nature of these discursive acts. Michael Calvin McGee (1990) responded by describing texts as "fragments." For him, the critic assembles and creates a text from bits and pieces. When does a speech end? When does another start? Do all texts exist in a continuous conversation with previous and future discourses? Finally, Condit (1990) and Cox (1990) entered the debate to synthesize these extremes. Although their works differ, they both asked critics to consider the reception of a text and the way audiences interpret words. For Condit, rhetorical critics should analyze what is done with a text and not focus simply on artistry or reconfiguration.

A decade later, Dow (2001) offered more pragmatic and helpful advice. In a piece that aroused controversy, she offered three proposals for rhetorical critics to embrace and consider which include: (1) texts and contexts are created not found; (2) there is no such thing as the actual audience; and (3) the critic gives authority to the

method. In her own critical work, Dow creates a rhetorical act and is an artist in the truest sense of the word. For her, the critic will create the audience, the text, and the method. We are all creating our own narratives each time we sit down to analyze a moment of rhetorical production.

Throughout this project, I have claimed to be a textual critic. In this chapter, I do not join a specific theoretical debate. My method remains textual criticism but what that means in this chapter is fluid and changing. In this chapter, I work from Dow's notion of criticism, but I also embrace Schiappa's (2008) view that the texts I "create" and approach are sites of "critical inquiry apart from the audience" (p. 29). These are my readings of the speeches, and I do not speculate on the actual audience reception. I privilege the texts of Rodham Clinton's campaign, and I remain aware of the importance of context. Here I approach the situation of the 2008 primary with attention to rhetor, text, context, culture, history, and medium. Thus, my method is less about a specific approach and more about the acceptance of varied perspectives. In the remainder of the chapter, I contextualize the 2008 Presidential race. I then offer a narrative about the official campaign speeches to show how voice flowed as a consistent theme in Rodham Clinton's campaign for the U.S. presidency.

Context of the 2008 Presidential Race: Political and Symbolic Constraints

Rodham Clinton faced a number of political and symbolic setbacks in her bid for the presidency. This section contains a brief political narrative of the Democratic contest in order to highlight major moments in the lengthy campaign and a discussion of the

symbolic violence Rodham Clinton faced. I use the discourse of feminist writers to offer a taste of how some people gendered her campaign.

First, Rodham Clinton faced a difficult set of political constraints. Her campaign started with a lot of hope, and many people assumed that she would be the default nominee. During the 2007-2008 Democratic presidential primaries, journalists were eager to point out the "gender blindness" of U.S. voters. This frame was strategically used to explain Rodham Clinton's frontrunner status and likelihood of winning the general election. Media made sense of Rodham Clinton's early poll numbers by claiming that the junior senator was benefiting from the new public conception that women are both ready and able to lead the most powerful nation in the world. Gutgold (2006) wrote "a majority of Americans say that the country is ready to elect a woman in 2008—and even more said they would vote for one" (p. 2). Case closed! The battle had been fought, the stage had been set, and the U.S. public was ready for their first female president to emerge from a pack of contenders.

This did not happen. The 2008 Democratic primary season was one of the longest in U.S. history. Due to its two-year time span, the race was filled with numerous setbacks, gaffes, and controversies. It started on January 20, 2007, when Rodham Clinton officially announced her candidacy. She broke historical traditions by not delivering an official, live stump speech in a place of geographic importance to her personal biography. By contrast, Obama launched his campaign with a rally in Springfield, Illinois. Rodham Clinton decided to announce her candidacy as a web conversation. The video depicted her sitting in her own living room in Washington, D.C.

She used the video to ask U.S. voters to have an intimate and personal "conversation" with her about the issues that mattered most to the future of the nation. She said "So let's talk. Let's chat. Let's start a dialogue about your ideas and mine. Because the conversation in Washington has been just a little one-sided lately, don't you think? And we can all see how well that works…So let the conversation begin. I have a feeling it's going to be very interesting" (Clinton, H.R., 2007, January 20). She was right. The conversation that followed was quite interesting and perplexing. This webcast was her first official campaign rhetoric, and it set an intimate tone for the campaign that in many ways contrasted with other moments in Rodham Clinton's public career.[37]

When she entered the race, Rodham Clinton was immediately labeled the frontrunner in the Democratic contest. She had the highest name recognition and, at the time, the most money in her fundraising account. Senator Obama entered the race in February of 2007, and he quickly became the challenger to Rodham Clinton's frontrunner status. John Edwards, who arguably never stopped campaigning for the presidency after his 2004 loss, Rodham Clinton and Obama were the three top tier candidates in the Democratic contests.

In March of 2007, Rodham Clinton faced her first symbolic crisis of the race. A viral YouTube commercial titled "Vote Different" was circulated among liberal activists and Democratic voters. The advertisement was a spoof of the Apple, Inc. Corporation's

[37] Following this paragraph, there will be a short narrative of major events in the campaign. Most of this information is common knowledge and does not require citation. However, National Public Radio (Clinton Candidacy) offers a similar timeline that verifies this narrative. It can be found at: www.npr.org/news/graphics/2008/june/clinton_candidacy/hillary_timeline_09.html.

1984 Big Brother advertisement. In the video, clips from Rodham Clinton's "announcement conversation" appeared on a large screen while lemming-like robots marched in time in a dark warehouse. Eventually, a savior, wearing an Obama for America logo, destroyed the image of Rodham Clinton by throwing a hammer into her face. The hammer also silenced her voice. The commercial ended with a variation of the Obama for America logo and the words "Vote Different." This video established a narrative that Rodham Clinton was the conservative candidate within the race. A binary was created for voters. The narrative promoted change and progress (Obama) over conservatism and the status quo (Rodham Clinton). *The Huffington Post* eventually discovered that Philip de Vellis of the Ohio Democratic Party was responsible for the advertisement.

On May 23, 2007, Rodham Clinton suffered her second major setback in the campaign. National Public Radio, the *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post* all ran a story about an internal memo which was circulated among Rodham Clinton's senior staff. The memo encouraged Rodham Clinton to drop out of the Iowa caucuses. The memo, which was attributed to Mark Penn, argued that Rodham Clinton would not receive a significant gain from participating in Iowa for three reasons. First, John Edwards and his Political Action Committee had both been active in Iowa politics since the 2004 presidential election. Edwards finished second in the 2004 Iowa caucuses, and he spent significant time and energy locking down key endorsements in the state. The memo predicted that Edwards would likely win Iowa even though he trailed in national poll

numbers. The memo made the argument that "not even a Clinton" would be able to move Iowans' sentiments away from Edwards.

Second, the memo claimed that Iowa Democrats had a skeptical view of the Clinton brand because WJC had skipped the Iowa caucuses in 1992. WJC chose not to participate because Iowa Senator Tom Harkin (Democrat) was also running for President. WJC felt this gave Harkin an unfair advantage, so he promoted New Hampshire as a more egalitarian playing field. Iowans take particular pride in their first in the nation status. Many voters still had hurt feelings about the 1992 race, and this potentially could have led to lower caucus support for Rodham Clinton's campaign.

Finally, the memo predicted that Obama held an unfair advantage in the Eastern part of the state. Most Iowa Democrats live in Eastern Iowa. In fact, most Iowans live in Eastern Iowa. Because of close proximity, many Eastern Iowa communities share media markets with communities in Illinois. Thus, these Iowans had been exposed to the messaging and branding of Obama while he was running for the U.S. Senate. While the rest of the nation was still learning about Obama, the Democrats of Eastern Iowa had received an accidental front row seat to his earlier campaigns.

The circulation of this memo caused strife within Rodham Clinton's campaign. Media discourses started to circulate that the "juggernaut" has started to grow worried. Rodham Clinton was forced to reassure the people of Iowa that she planned to honor the national tradition. A move away from Iowa would have fed into the vulnerability frame that had gained traction. Rodham Clinton responded by increasing her staff size in Iowa, and she spent late June and early July touring all corners of the state with her husband

and a host of other high profile surrogates. At the same time, two critical biographies, *A Woman in Charge* and *Her Way: The Hopes and Ambitions of Hillary Rodham Clinton* (Bernstein 2007; Gerth & Van Natta 2007), were released. Neither of these books was particularly flattering, and they both provided convenient media frames for journalists

On June 30, 2007, the most significant symbolic shift in the primary contest occurred. For the first time in the race, Obama raised more money than Rodham Clinton in a single quarter. Rodham Clinton still had more available funds than Obama, but the money started to move in the direction of her opponent. Although she remained a diligent and strong fundraiser, she never surpassed Obama in any other quarter of the race.

In the fall of 2007, Rodham Clinton released policy papers on Iraq, health care, and job creation. She outperformed her opponents in all debates, and she became the target of negative campaigning by both Republican and Democratic opponents. In fact, the Republicans started to take it as a given that Rodham Clinton would be the Democratic opponent in 2008. Karl Rove left the Bush White House in 2007, and he publicly voiced his concern that a Rodham Clinton candidacy would be the most difficult message to defeat in 2008. He said he was leaving the White House and returning to the field to influence the Democratic primary.

On November 30, 2007, Rodham Clinton's campaign took another symbolic blow. She became a direct target of physical violence. Campaign staffers in a New Hampshire Rodham Clinton field office were held hostage. An angry U.S. citizen held the staffers at gunpoint, and the event gained national media attention. Rodham Clinton

was forced to shut all campaign operations in Iowa and New Hampshire for about twelve hours. The hostages eventually were released and all campaign staffers survived. Rodham Clinton then delivered a national address in the persona of a concerned mother or parent. She declared concern for the victims, and she offered solace to the nation and her staff.

Her campaign shifted tone in December of 2007. As the Iowa caucuses grew near, the campaign rhetoric became tense and anxiety ridden. The campaign had also experienced several more political and symbolic setbacks. First, Florida and Michigan both ignored the warnings of the national party and decided to move their primaries up in the nominating schedule. This was done for purely structural reasons as neither state wanted to hold two separate primaries for the two different political parties. Because the Republicans of Michigan and Florida both moved their dates to early January, the Democrats were forced to follow suit. Rodham Clinton had strong support in both states, but it seemed likely that neither state would be granted delegates because of rule violations. If this happened, she would struggle to surpass Obama in delegate numbers.

On December 16, 2007, the *Des Moines Register* endorsed Rodham Clinton over Obama and Edwards. They wrote that "her readiness to lead sets her apart from the constellation of stars in her party" (Editorial: Tested, 2007, December 16). However, the editorial also made reference to her Iraq vote by saying that as president, when she makes a mistake, she should "just say so." She also received the *Concord Monitor*'s endorsement on December 29, 2007 (Editorial: Endorsement, 2007, December 29). A week prior to the Iowa caucuses, *The Des Moines Register* predicted that Obama, not

Clinton, would win. They were correct. She finished third to Obama and Edwards, and her candidacy was immediately called into question.

On January 5, 2008, Edwards, Rodham Clinton, and Obama held the first debate after the Iowa caucuses. Rodham Clinton was asked why voters seem to "like" Senator Obama more than her. While answering, she was interrupted by Obama who said he felt Rodham Clinton was "likable enough." This comment set off a firestorm of discourse about the term "likability" as it is often attached to female candidates. On January 7, 2008, an exhausted Rodham Clinton broke from her traditional public persona by tearing up while answering a personal question about the rigors of the campaign trail. On January 8, 2008, Rodham Clinton won the New Hampshire primary by 3 points. Clinton then won Nevada while Obama won South Carolina. The *New York Times* endorsed Rodham Clinton on January 25, 2010 (Editorial: Primary, 2008, January 25). Super Tuesday took place on February 5, 2010. Obama won more states, but Rodham Clinton earned more votes. The contest was called a draw by media, and both candidates pushed forward to Texas and Ohio. Edwards left the race before Super Tuesday. He eventually endorsed Obama.

Rodham Clinton experienced two symbolic turning points on March 4, 2008. First, she was successful in both Ohio and Texas, which was proof for her argument that she was the best candidate to carry crucial swing states. Second, it officially marked a fundraising turning point in the race. The next day Rodham Clinton was forced to announce that she had personally loaned her campaign 5 million dollars. Also, the *New York Times* ran a front page photograph of Rodham Clinton canvassing a San Antonio

neighborhood. It is never good news to see the principal candidate having to search out people to persuade. Rodham Clinton had officially switched places with Obama, and she was now the challenger in the race.

Clinton then won the Pennsylvania primary in April of 2008 even though Obama outspent her nearly 3-1. This gave her a small fundraising boost allowing her to raise $10 million in a twenty-four-hour period. However, Clinton continued loaning her campaign money. She won Indiana, Kentucky, and West Virginia, but she was unable to surpass Obama in the delegate count. She made one final plea to the super delegates, and she received a significant setback when party leaders decided to seat only half of the delegates from Michigan and Florida.[38] Clinton officially lost the delegate race on May 20, 2008. She carried her campaign forward through all the remaining primaries, and she retired her campaign on June 7, 2008.

Rodham Clinton also faced a powerful set of symbolic constraints in the 2008 campaign. As she moved through these contests, she outperformed Obama with two constituencies. First, she was the chosen candidate for white male voters within the Democratic Party. Second, she was also the chosen candidate of Democratic women over the age of 40. Most of these women had lived through the gender battles of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. They had watched Rodham Clinton struggle as First Lady of the United States. They had also been the workers of the Democratic Party for years. It was their support, and people power, that allowed Rodham Clinton to continue her

[38] See the May 21, 2008 "Remarks on Counting Every Vote at a 'Solutions for America' event in Boca Raton, Florida, and the May 28, 2008 "Letter to the Superdelegates." These were the primary documents that built Rodham Clinton's case for party leaders.

campaign in spite of her funding obstacles. It was also their support that moved arguments about her campaign into the public debates about gender.

There was no shortage of voices that added to the gendered constraints Rodham Clinton faced in her presidential bid. Some came from the expected conservative and evangelical wings of the Republican Party. Others came from male media. Supporters of other Democratic and Republican candidates also mentioned Rodham Clinton's sex. In an egregious example, a voter asked John McCain "what do we do about the bitch?" (as cited by Kantor, 2008). Senator McCain simply laughed. However, the most unexpected and gruesome symbolic violence came from the diverse voices of popular feminists. The feminists, not the conservatives and misogynists, produced a host of scathing commentary that placed every hope, fear, and frustration of all public women on the shoulders of Rodham Clinton.[39]

Dowd (2005), a self-proclaimed feminist writer for the *New York Times*, expressed many of the attacks on Rodham Clinton. Years before Rodham Clinton announced her run, she wrote "If she becomes Madam President, she will reinstate 'Hillaryland' in the West Wing…she would be responsible for both betraying feminism when it suited her needs and bolstering it when it suited her needs. And that would show a most manly kind of narcissistic survival skill" (Dowd, 2005, p. 336). Ironically, Dowd's comments repeated the same argument as conservative and proud anti-feminist,

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[39] Trashing is a form of in-group ad-hominem attack. It is used to insult. It is not used to display a difference of opinion. Campbell (1983) defines trashing as "a process by which 'sisters' are punished for deviance through criticism, ostracism, and expulsion" (p. 103).

Laura Ingraham (2000).[40] She wrote, "By reducing womanhood to a political platform, Hillary created the ultimate trap for those who choose to follow her, the trap of groupthink and identity politics" (2000, p. 13). Both of these women set a tone for understanding Rodham Clinton's run even before Rodham Clinton announced her intentions. Dowd, an open member of the political left, and Ingraham, an activist on the political right, both claimed that Rodham Clinton had betrayed all public women with her activities. In fact, Dowd (2005) continued her attacks by writing:

> Hillary seemed more in the tradition of all those widows and daughters on the subcontinent who step in, after their husband or father dies, to lead their nations. At best they are pseudofeminists. Feminism is supposed to be a form of self-reliance, not a free—or even costly—ride on the coattails of the career of powerful male kin. (p. 337)

Unfortunately, these remarks before the campaign were only a preview of what would come.

During the primaries, Nora Ephron described herself as a "Hillary resister." Ephron defined this label by saying it referred to a group of people who believed Hillary would "do anything to win" because she had "taken the concept of triangulation and pushed it to a geometric level never achieved by anyone including her own husband." (Ephron, 2006). Jane Fonda also called Rodham Clinton a "ventriloquist for the patriarchy with a skirt and a vagina" in a public interview about who she planned to support in the presidential race (as cited by Chaudhry, 2007).

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[40] Many would challenge Ingraham's inclusion in a section on public feminists. I share these concerns. I am merely operating with the labels that these authors use.

Eve Ensler, Barbara Ehenreich, Cora Weiss, Katha Pollitt, Margo Jefferson, Alice Kessler Harris, Linda Gordon, Frances Fox Piven, and Susan Sarandon joined the chorus of gendered attacks on Rodham Clinton. These powerful women formed a public group named Feminists for Peace and Barack Obama.[41] The group was an organization to help Obama secure the Democratic nomination. However, the group issued little discourse in support of Obama. Instead, their texts and official documents publicly explained why they had decided not to support Rodham Clinton. The opening mission statement of the group read, "We urgently need a Presidential candidate who understands that 'pre-emptive' attacks on other countries and the reliance on military force have diminished rather than strengthened our national security…We do not believe that Senator Hillary Clinton is that candidate." They made gender an issue by admitting that "choosing to support Senator Obama was not an easy decision for us because electing a woman President would be a cause for celebration in itself and because we deplore the sexist attacks against Senator Clinton that have circulated in the media." However, the group rhetorically situated Rodham Clinton as a traitor to her sex and to feminism. The mission statement took a strong symbolic swing by arguing that a Rodham Clinton presidency would be a continuation of Bush's policies. They wrote, "We are speaking out now because we cannot afford to elect another President who will continue the aggressive, interventionist policies of the present." Rodham Clinton became a Bush-like candidate in this problematic narrative.

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[41] Feminists for Peace and Barack Obama was an internet campaign. The group no longer has an active web presence. An archived copy of their original petition can be found at: http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/nyfeministsforpeace/.

Feminists for Peace and Barack Obama were also joined by Patricia Hill Collins who argued that Rodham Clinton had manipulated ideas about race in ugly ways. Reed (2008), with *The Nation*, cited Collins as saying, "it is such a distressing, ugly period. Clinton has manipulated ideas about race, but Obama has not manipulated similar ideas about gender." Frances Kissling, a leader with Catholics for Free Choice, publicly denounced what she called the "institutional DC feminist leadership" who, she claimed, had neglected issues for victory (as cited by Reed, 2008). Kimberley Crenshaw and Eve Ensler added to Kissling's complaints by writing about a group they labeled the "either/or" feminists:

> Drawing their feminist boundaries in the sand, they interrogate, chastise, second-guess and even denounce those who escape their encampment and find themselves on Obama terrain. In their hands feminism, like patriotism, is the all encompassing prism that eliminates discussion, doubt and difference about whom to vote for and why…Armed with indignant exasperation, this 'either/or' camp converts the undeniable misogyny of the media into an imperative to vote for Clinton. (Crenshaw & Ensler, 2008)

These women then pitched the either/or camp as a primary group to defeat in the battle for the White House. For some feminist writes and leaders, Rodham Clinton's place in the Democratic race was not to be celebrated. It had to be stopped to protect the feminist movement.

Two feminist women offered strong responses to these other leaders. First, Robin Morgan updated her "Goodbye to All That" essay to confront the issues that faced Rodham Clinton. Her new essay read:

> Goodbye to the phrase 'polarizing figure' to describe someone who embodies the transitions women have made in the last century and are poised to make in this one. It was the women's movement that quipped, 'We are becoming the men we wanted to marry.' She heard us, and she has…Our President, Ourselves…I am voting for Hillary not because she's a woman—but because I am. (Morgan, 2008)

Also, Gloria Steinem (2008) used an Op-Ed piece in the *New York Times* to explain that she was tired of Rodham Clinton being "accused of "playing the gender card" when citing the old boys' club, while he [Obama] is seen as unifying by citing civil rights confrontations." She called gender the most limiting identity feature in U.S. culture, and she used the Op-Ed to endorse Rodham Clinton. She wrote, "This country can no longer afford to choose our leaders from a talent pool limited by sex, race, money, powerful fathers and paper degrees. It's time to take equal pride in breaking all the barriers. We have to be able to say: 'I'm supporting her because she'll be a great president *and* because she's a woman'" (Steinem, 2008). Steinem took public grief for this endorsement, but she continued to publicly stump for Rodham Clinton. She provided the most accurate account of how Rodham Clinton was framed in the Democratic contests. Race was visible, and racist acts were rightly criticized and challenged. However, gender had been naturalized and normalized. Symbolic violence waged at Rodham Clinton, like

novelty nut crackers in gift shops, were not seen as sexist. Gender discrimination was invisible, and this was what made it the most limiting feature of U.S. social life.

Textual Analysis

In the remainder of this chapter, I analyze the rhetoric of the Rodham Clinton campaign. I limit my analysis to one commercial and several moments of public address. I use her victory speeches, election night speeches, and her suspension speech to identify how Rodham Clinton situated her own voice during the campaign. The campaign was one of the longest in U.S. history. Rodham Clinton spent two years running for the office. She grew and developed a particular voice as the race progressed, but Rodham Clinton eventually situated her voice within feminist ideals to coherently defend her candidacy. Although there were small traces of this narrative in 2007, her situated, feminist voice did not fully form until her victory in the New Hampshire primary.

Traces of Rodham Clinton's situated feminist voice can be seen in an internet campaign launched by the Club 44 division of her campaign. On August 26, 2007, Rodham Clinton's presidential committee tried to attract and secure a larger female base. Although the junior senator from New York polled significantly higher among women over the age of fifty, both internal and external polls saw her trailing Senators Obama and Edwards among women forty and under. Rodham Clinton's committee used the internet as its primary medium of communication to attract voters in this demographic. The committee's first move was to disseminate a video e-card titled "Use Your Vote." In a metaphoric reduction, the vote became linked to voice in this video. Women were

encouraged to voice support for Rodham Clinton so that she could give voice to women as President of the United States.

Playing with themes attached to suffrage and the first wave of feminism, the commercial used a montage of photographs to place Rodham Clinton in a historical narrative of "firsts" for women. When the e-card was opened, the audience was met with a constant stream of photographs depicting famous public women. Each image sat for about five seconds as a powerful march played. The women included in this "Use Your Vote" campaign were: Madeline Albright (first women to be U.S. Secretary of State), Shirley Chisholm (first African American to run for president), Amelia Earhart (first female pilot to make trans-Atlantic voyage), Rosa Parks (mother of the modern civil rights movement), Patsy Takamato Mink (first Asian American woman elected to Congress), Sojourner Truth (woman's rights activist and abolitionist) [Truth is presented as a drawing and not a photograph], Lucille Roubal-Allard (first Mexican-American woman elected to Congress) Susan B. Anthony (suffragist), Elizabeth Cady Stanton (suffragist), and Geraldine Ferraro (first woman on a national party ticket).

The montage reached its climax with the official campaign headshot of Rodham Clinton. This dramatic peak placed Rodham Clinton in front of the viewer, in a striking black and white profile. Unlike the women before her, Rodham Clinton looked away from the voter. She did not directly engage the onlooker. Her headshot was not looking at the future, nor was it looking directly at the audience to connote the present. Instead, she looked to the past and smiled. She stared in the direction from which the previous images flowed. She looked at the trail that was set by others with approval and

appreciation. The montage made Rodham Clinton a benefactor of previous struggles and triumphs. She became part of a visual narrative concerning a number of "firsts" for all womankind. At the end of the video, the Senator's face came closer and closer to the forefront of the screen until finally her full name appeared with no titles or salutations. The e-card concluded its visual spectacle with three short, declarative sentences: *You've got the vote. Use it. Make History*.

Besides this complex parade of images, the audience was also persuaded with the verbal message of the email. The text of the e-card read:

> On August 26, 1920, after decades of struggle, women finally won the right to vote. For many women, the19th Amendment was only the first step in the battle for equal rights. Women's Equality Day celebrates the women who refused to back down, and fought to ensure our right to vote. Today, we've got the vote and it's our responsibility to use it. Hillary has fought for decades on issues important to women. Now is the time to use our votes to elect a president who will be a champion for us. Join me in supporting Hillary for President!

Part collective memory, part consciousness-raising, and part historical revision, this e-card was the first sign of Rodham Clinton's situated feminist voice.

This Club 44 message existed within a web of gendered discourse within the campaign. First, AFSCME, one of the most vocal labor unions in the Clinton coalition, ran a public messaging campaign that showed Rodham Clinton's face juxtaposed against the previous 43 U.S. presidents. In a direct attack on the verbal messaging of Obama, the

advertisement made claims that this is what "real change looks like." Rodham Clinton's campaign was also filled with numerous supporters and surrogates eager to talk about the important symbolic moment for gender in U.S. domestic relations represented by this candidacy, including: Gloria Steinem, Madonna, Barbra Streisand, Geraldine Ferraro,[42] Representative Stephanie Tubbs Jones, Billie Jean King, and a host of female celebrities and athletes. However, these statements were just traces of how her official feminist voice would start to emerge.

Rodham Clinton's feminist voice really started to emerge during her victory speech after the New Hampshire primary. Before winning the primary, Rodham Clinton started to tear up at a campaign stop. This moment was titled the "Portsmouth incident" by the media, and many publicly speculated that it was staged and inauthentic. Despite that sexist commentary, Rodham Clinton won the New Hampshire primary. Her victory speech, delivered on January 8, 2008, was her first attempt to address the gendered problems she was facing. She opened the victory speech in New Hampshire by saying "I come tonight with a very, very full heart. And I want to especially thank New Hampshire. Over the last week, I listened to you and, in the process, I found my own voice" (Clinton, H.R., 2008, January 8). The remainder of the speech offered the normal congratulations to her opponents and the necessary appeals to party and country. However, she developed a feminist voice in the opening line and directly addressed notions of gender. She opened with a discussion of "her voice" and listening. She admitted that, by listening to voters, her campaign would now speak with her authentic

voice. That voice became the symbolic tool to signify that the campaign might not be an electoral success but her campaigning would still be a continued effort to give voice to the voiceless.

Following the New Hampshire victory, Rodham Clinton participated in many debates in February, but she did not actually deliver another rally speech until her joint victories in Texas and Ohio. Rather than address the concerns that her campaign was ending for financial reasons, her victory speech in Columbus, Ohio, further developed her feminist voice. She opened by saying that her victories in Texas and Ohio were "For everyone…who's ever been counted out but refused to be knocked out, and for everyone who has stumbled but stood right back up, and for everyone who works hard and never gives up" (Clinton, H.R., 2008, March 4). At this moment, Rodham Clinton's voice became more nuanced. She was no longer seeking to win the nomination. Her campaign, and her personal message, was a feminist crusade for the "millions of Americans" who "have not spoken yet." She told the audiences in Ohio that she was "listening to the voices of people across our country" and that she would continue in the race, despite significant odds, to give all U.S. voters a chance to voice their concerns. Her voice grew louder in its efforts of giving voice to others.

As the primaries continued, Rodham Clinton echoed the theme of voice in her Pennsylvania Victory Speech. In this short presentation, she claimed she was continuing to campaign for "everyone who has ever been counted out" (Clinton, H.R., 2008, April 22). She also added to the feminist narrative by dedicating her campaign to the women in their 90s who had be born before women could vote but lived to vote for a female

presidential candidate. She also continued the voice-giving narrative in her Indiana and North Carolina victory speech by telling the voters her campaign was their campaign, and she would continue campaigning to hear "the two remaining states speak." Finally, she further explored the theme of voice in West Virginia by stating:

> We know from the Bible that faith can move mountains and, my friend, the mountain state has moved me. I am more determined than ever to carry on this campaign until everyone has had a chance to make their voices heard" (Clinton, H.R., 2008, May 13)

Every moment in the campaign had become about voice, voice giving, and her true voice as a supporter of the people.

Rodham Clinton developed her voice on the campaign trail, but her voice became salient and defined in the final piece of campaign rhetoric. On June 7, 2008, Rodham Clinton started her suspension speech by saying, "Well, this isn't exactly the party I'd planned, but I sure like the company" (Clinton, H.R., 2008, June 7). After thunderous applause, she officially dedicated her speech to two groups. First, she dedicated the speech, "to the moms and dads who came to our events, who lifted their little girls and little boys on their shoulders and whispered in their ears, 'See you can be anything you want to be'" (Clinton, H.R., 2008, June 7). Second, she offered her campaign to "all those women in their 80s and 90s…born before women could vote, whose cast their votes for our campaign" (Clinton, H.R., 2008, June 7). These opening remarks in the concession speech were the final products of a theme she started in New Hampshire.

Her feminist narrative grew in this speech as she described her "fight" for the nomination in terms of family. First, she said, "I entered this race because I have an old fashioned convention that public service is about helping people solve their problems and live their dreams" (Clinton, H.R., 2008, June 7). She then stressed that she had battled Obama for so long because the Democratic Party is a family, and families go through struggles to grow stronger. Her speech spoke to Obama being the voice of some wings of the party while she gave voice to others. She then brought all sides together by voicing her complete support for Obama's candidacy.

Following the use of family metaphors, she then symbolically moved her campaign into the historical narrative of feminism by explaining all the expectations her candidacy had shattered. She started this section by saying, "Could a woman really be commander in chief? Well, I think we answered that one." (Clinton, H.R., 2008, June 7). Rodham Clinton was right. She had certainly ended the bias that women could not be seen as commander in chief. She also added to the narrative by saying:

> Now, on a personal note, when I was asked what it means to be a woman running for president, I always gave the same answer, that I was proud to be running as a woman, but I was running because I thought I'd be the best president. But…I am a woman and, like millions of women, I know there are still biases out there, often unconscious, and I want to build an America that respects and embraces the potential of every last one of us. (Clinton, H.R., 2008, June 7)

Rodham Clinton broke from the genre of suspension speech rhetoric and used the address to talk about stereotypes that face public women. Her campaign became a crusade for respect. Although she was running for president, Rodham Clinton gave audiences a public example of the unconscious stereotypes that still face many women. And she used her voice to confront those biases.

Rodham Clinton concluded with one last development of her feminist voice. She stated:

> You can be so proud that, from now on, it will be unremarkable for a woman to win primary state victories…unremarkable to have woman in a close race to be our nominee, unremarkable to think that a woman can be president of the United States. And that is truly remarkable, my friends. (Clinton, H.R., 2008, June 7)

She then offered what has become the most memorable line of the entire campaign. After many personal examples, she used the language of the feminist movement to argue "although we weren't able to shatter the highest, hardest glass ceiling this time, thanks to you, it's got about 18 million cracks in it" (Clinton, H.R., 2008, June 7). Rodham Clinton's campaign was encapsulated in this phrase. She started the campaign as the candidate to beat. She quickly became a female, challenger candidate facing numerous symbolic obstacles. She achieved many victories for women in U.S. politics. She had used every victory speech to frame her campaign as a struggle to give voice to all underprivileged people. However, she was ultimately defeated by the invisible biases

that still face all women.[43] So her voice, her campaign, was built as a tool for recognition and symbolism. She described the campaign as a feminist struggle. In many ways, the Rodham Clinton in the 2008 Speech was like the Hillary Rodham of 1992. Her many struggles had often muddled her ability to use her own critical voice. Her campaign was an opportunity to reclaim that. This speech was her moment to make sure her campaign was remembered so that it would no longer be remarkable for a woman to run for President.

Concluding Thoughts

By confronting serious symbolic and material constraints, Rodham Clinton developed an authentic and situated voice while campaigning for the presidency. As her old methods of speaking started to fail her, she used her moment of public address to cast her candidacy within the folds of U.S. feminism. Stansell (2008) wrote:

> What was more remarkable, her candidacy, which started out carefully distanced from feminism and gender issues, over time unintentionally brought feminist ideas about fair treatment to the center of the campaign.

[43] Rodham Clinton also lost the nomination because of the rules of the Democratic Party's primary and caucus systems. First, unlike the Republican Party, the Democrats do not use a winner takes all approach in the nomination system. This severely hampered her success because she won big states where as Senator Obama won small victories, with huge margins, in places like Kansas. Second, Rodham Clinton's victories in both Michigan and Florida were legitimate. However, party leaders decided to disqualify half of the delegates from each state. Senator Obama had as many field operatives on the ground in both states. Media outlets created a powerful narrative that seating the delegates from Michigan and Florida would defy public expectations. Rodham Clinton faced a difficult structural battle. She won in those states. Both states are very important to general elections. However, the Republicans moved up their votes in Michigan and Florida, and it forced the Democrats to also jump schedule. Rodham Clinton would have won the nomination had it not been for the problematic rulings and technicalities.

> For the first time in American history, the desire for a fair deal for women—symbolized by this particular woman—migrated out of feminist identity politics into a presidential campaign and won the interest of a huge portion of the electorate. (p. 34)

Rodham Clinton did not win the Democratic nomination, but she did win a rhetorical battle in 2008. She surpassed fundraising expectations and stereotypes to become the first serious female contender for the U.S. presidency. She claimed in New Hampshire that she "found her voice" while listening to voters. I would argue that she reclaimed an advocate persona and used her campaign rhetoric to give voice to the voiceless. She situated her voice within a narrative of U.S. feminism, and she transformed U.S. politics so that future women will find it a little bit easier to make it to the Oval Office. Her voice joined those of other feminists to make way for a new era in U.S. politics.

Chapter Seven
Voices of Unity:
Gendering a Post-Presidential and Post-Partisan Rodham Clinton

"Can she obey? Can she accept the subservience?"

--Chris Matthews discussing the end of Hillary Rodham Clinton's presidential bid, June 3, 2008[44]

"That is what we will do now as we join forces with Senator Obama and his campaign. We will make history together as we write the next chapter in America's story. We will stand united for the values we hold dear, for the vision of progress we share, and for the country we love. There is nothing more American than that."

--Hillary Rodham Clinton, Remarks to Supporters, June 7, 2008, Washington, DC

In previous chapters of this project, I have discussed the gendered traps that followed Hillary Rodham Clinton on the 2008 presidential campaign trail, but one more prominent situation that Rodham Clinton faced needs to be discussed. As I mentioned in the preceding chapter, February 5, 2008, was a significant date in the 2008 Democratic presidential primary. A number of states held their individual primaries and caucuses to select delegates for the Democratic National Convention. The majority of potential Democratic nominees had exited the race after Rodham Clinton had claimed victory in Nevada and New Hampshire and Obama had claimed victory in Iowa and South Carolina. On Tsunami Tuesday, as it was termed by media organizations, Rodham Clinton and Obama won an approximately equal number of states. The numbers can be spun in several different ways to show that the advantage went to either camp. However, Rodham Clinton continued to make history on February 5 by winning a significant number of major primaries, including California and New York. She also had won enough delegates to continue fighting for the nomination.

[44] Transcripts for the MSNBC program Hardball are available at www.MSNBC.com.

Some pundits and media organizations, however, used the results of February 5 to call for Rodham Clinton to end her campaign. This call intensified with each additional primary, and it continued even after she won major primaries in the large states of Texas, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. For example, after her victory speech in Ohio, the media picked up the commentary from the blogosphere that offered lay and gendered, interpretations of Rodham Clinton's continued campaigning. *Slate* published the writings of John Cole, who remarked:

> Hillary's vanity campaign will continue on, trailing in delegates, trailing in the popular vote, trailing in enthusiasm and money, but not lacking in the firm resolve that only Hillary can save us all from ourselves," (as cited by Smith, 2008).

This voice represented many more who called on Senator Clinton to end her campaign. *Slate* also ran a separate section on its news source called "Hillary Death Watch." Popular writers, party leaders like Senator Kennedy, children of politicians like Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, and media pundits all speculated about why Rodham Clinton would continue to campaign, and many asked or even demanded that she end her efforts.

The speculation about Rodham Clinton's pursuit of the nomination reflected a particular ignorance of U.S. history. No other presidential candidate had received this kind of pressure to end a campaign. Also, throughout the public discussion, most pundits, and the party leaders who had sided with Obama, suffered from historical amnesia. They all acted as if Rodham Clinton was the first presidential candidate to pursue the nomination until the actual convention. Even Senator Ted Kennedy failed to

remember his own aggressive campaign. Not only did Senator Kennedy challenge a sitting president and force the national party to engage in divisive politics during a crucial election year, he also failed to retire his campaign until the party meetings at the National Convention. Senator Kennedy also gave weak support to President Carter in his concession speech. In that speech, Kennedy mentioned the victory of President Carter once by stating, "I congratulate President Carter on his victory here" (Kennedy, 1980). In a side-by-side comparison, the competition between Obama and Rodham Clinton was a much milder form of in-party fighting. However, bloggers like Cole received national attention and helped fuel a theme that Rodham Clinton's campaign was self-motivated, maniacal, and unprecedented.

Rodham Clinton's campaign officially ended on June 7, 2008, with her suspension speech; however, she continued to engage in presidential politics throughout the 2008 presidential election. In the period from June 7, 2008 to November 4, 2008, Rodham Clinton traveled the country offering support for the Obama campaign.

In the summer of 2008 however, Rodham Clinton was surrounded by public discourse that attempted to paint her as the archetypal ambitious, self-motivated shrew with a political agenda that overlooked loyalty to party. Many refashioned Rodham Clinton's trailblazing campaign as a threat to party, tradition, and institution, and her public words and activities during this time received a level of gendered interpretation that forced her into an awkward and rhetorically impossible public position. At the same time, the voice that flowed from Rodham Clinton and her supporters pushed a theme of unification and support for Obama's candidacy that attempted to recast her image, rebuild

the party, and reposition her historic campaign as part of a larger narrative about women's rights. These competing discourses created a hurricane of gendered communicative acts that reached a climax at the 2008 Democratic National Convention in Denver, Colorado.

This chapter focuses on Rodham Clinton's convention speech as the climactic moment of public address during this problematic period. I use the official transcript as provided by the Hillary Clinton for President Campaign. Slight variations in transcriptions of the speech appear in various news sources[45]. However, the version that is most consistent with video recordings of her delivery comes from the official publications of her campaign committee. In this speech, Rodham Clinton blended the genres of post-presidential discourse, concession speeches, and party elder speeches to confront four rhetorical problems. In what follows, I offer a brief overview of the situation, provide an analysis of the four gendered exigencies facing Rodham Clinton, situate my analysis within a disciplinary debate on political parties and genre, and offer a critical analysis of the 2008 convention address.

Pre-Convention Rhetoric and Commentary

Most of the discourse that influenced Rodham Clinton's convention address happened after her suspension speech in early June of 2008. However, a key rhetorical moment from the primary campaign added to the complications of this period. In late February, Rodham Clinton's campaign introduced a political advertisement that aired on

[45] The variations are not remarkable. They include different pauses and some do not account for phrasing changed Rodham Clinton may have made during the actual performance. The official campaign version of the speech is the most accurate when compared to video footage of the address.

local television stations in Texas and Ohio. The media quickly named the advertisement the "3 AM ad"[46] and compared it to similar ads such as the Johnson Daisy Spot and the Mondale advertisements of 1984. The advertisement depicts a small child sleeping. Then a voiceover reminds the viewer that there are dangerous entities in the world that might disturb the future of this child. Although these groups are not identified, the voiceover implies that these groups include terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda. The voiceover reminds viewers that there is a phone in the White House that must be answered by someone with knowledge and firsthand experience. The advertisement then shows Rodham Clinton answering the phone and dealing with the world's problems as the small child rests safely in her bed.

The advertisement symbolically makes the case that Rodham Clinton has more foreign policy experience to lead the United States through tough international crises. The advertisement was probably the most significant attack the Rodham Clinton campaigned used against Obama. Rodham Clinton's campaign was able to use this commercial as a launch pad to seriously question Obama's ability to handle world problems. Beyond starting a discussion about Obama's credentials, Rodham Clinton also encouraged media outlets to comment on the intent and symbolism of the advertisement. For example, Alexovich (2008) worried that the advertisement conjured fear and worry. Patterson (2008), in the *New York Times*, called the advertisement racist. He claimed that the Rodham Clinton campaign was using "us vs. them" tactics to play to the worst fears

[46] Copies of the 3AM advertisement are still available on YouTube.

of U.S. voters. Many other commentators asked if it was dangerous, and some compared it to previous attack advertisements.

Although Rodham Clinton was victorious in Texas, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, she was unable to surpass Obama in the total delegate number. The 3 AM ad is credited in part for her victories, and her campaign did a significant amount of damage to Obama's foreign policy credentials. However, she continued the race as promised. After her win in Pennsylvania, Rodham Clinton asserted that she would not leave until every U.S. state and territory had the opportunity to participate in the election. Her advisors also told the press that several super delegates had yet to cast their votes, and these people could ultimately tilt the balance of the delegate numbers.

Despite these factors, calls for Rodham Clinton to leave the race grew louder. Christopher Beam's "Hillary Death Watch" on *Slate* became quite nasty. Pundits with the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, and politico.com all published essays on "how to quit a campaign." In one of her more scathing moments, Camille Paglia (2008) wrote an essay for *Slate* entitled "She Won't Go Easy." Paglia asserted that nothing in Rodham Clinton's past should make anyone believe that the junior Senator from New York would ever end her campaign for president. She also called the previous life of both Clintons "Tawdry."

Following these aggressive demands, Brooks (2008) in the *New York Times* wrote an essay about what he called the "long defeat" of Rodham Clinton. Balz, Kornblunt, and Bacon (2008), for the *Washington Post*, took the discourse a step further by writing an article about the party leaders and officials who had called on Senator Clinton to quit.

After the South Dakota primary, as promised, Senator Clinton ended her campaign in early June at Baruch College in New York. She then offered a formal concession speech in Washington, D.C, and she pledged to put her full support behind the new Democratic nominee.[47] It was a quick and firm endorsement, but it was still not enough for most media outlets. In fact, Matthews on CNN made yet another sexist comment by asking if Rodham Clinton would be able to be "subservient" to the new leader of the Democratic Party.[48]

After a brief cooling off period, the opposing presidential campaigns held a Unity week to bring the supporters of Rodham Clinton and Obama to together. At this moment the significant rhetoric surrounding the convention speech began. Critically, it is interesting that Rodham Clinton and Obama began their moves toward unification before anyone had described Rodham Clinton's specific role at the upcoming party convention.

Unity Week began on June 28, 2008, with a rally in Unity, New Hampshire. The site was chosen not only for its name, but Rodham Clinton and Obama each had received exactly 107 votes in the town's presidential primary. The two Senators flew on the same flight, had matching motorcades, and wore the same colors. Gail Collins (2008) described the event by writing, "Hillary Clinton is so united!" (p. A23). She also reported that "Hillary has been saying that her supporters are moving through the five stages of grief." However, Collins felt that at the rally Rodham Clinton had "invented some brand-new sixth stage of chipper serenity." (Collins, 2008, p. A23).

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[47] The previous chapter of this dissertation gives a lengthy analysis of the context and content of this speech.
[48] The full Matthews's quotation appears at the beginning of this chapter.

Both Rodham Clinton and Obama offered remarks of mutual praise at the rally. The senior staff of both campaigns mixed together at various locations at the rally. The chief advisors of Obama and Rodham Clinton were photographed having dinner together the night before the event. Rodham Clinton struck a particular mood in her remarks by saying, "Unity is not only a beautiful place, it's a wonderful feeling, isn't it," and she continued, "I know what we start here in this field of unity will end on the steps of the capitol when Barack Obama takes the oath of office" (as cited by Zeleny, 2008). Obama praised Rodham Clinton for her efforts, and he applauded what she had accomplished in her campaign.

Media outlets offered divergent interpretations of Unity Week. In an interesting turn of phrase, *The New York Times* called it a "day of choreographed unity" (Zeleny, 2008). The uses of the dance and artistic terminology are attempts to cast the event as staged and inauthentic. Maureen Dowd (2008, June 29) offered a review of the rally in which she seemed to be excited that a protestor broke up what she termed the "the banality of unanimity." A Rodham Clinton delegate named Carmella Lews, repeatedly yelled "Hillary, Hillary, Hillary" at key moments of silence. She also sat in the front row during Obama's speech and said, "I wish I had ear plugs." (as cited by Dowd, 2008, June 29). After the rally, Rodham Clinton and Obama moved into separate roles. He began as the chief Democratic candidate. She started traveling the country, and she ultimately held more rallies for her former opponent than any defeated presidential candidate has ever held for a former competitor.

Despite these aggressive moves toward party unity, media sources immediately began a conversation about Rodham Clinton's convention role and the potential floor fight from the "Party Unity My Ass" (PUMA) movement. The PUMAs, a term the movement selected, were a fragmented collection of several groups devoted to making Rodham Clinton the party nominee. They had no central leader, were not affiliated with the Rodham Clinton presidential campaign, and many were not delegates to the party convention.

In early August of 2008, Senator Obama took his family to Hawaii for a brief vacation from the campaign cycle. Dowd (2008, August 13) used this moment to propagate the "cat-fight" narrative by implying that while Obama was away, "Hillary was busy planning her convention." Always subtle in her literary allusions, Dowd (2008, August 13) made the assumption that "Hillary's orchestrating a play within the play in Denver. Just as Hamlet used the device to show that his stepfather murdered his father, Hillary will try to show the Democrats they chose the wrong savior" (2008, August 13). Dowd continued her literary moves by using another pre-convention column to write a fictional conversation between Rodham Clinton and John McCain. In it, Dowd described "a clandestine meeting…between two senators with one goal," which is to overtake "the one." (Dowd, 2008, August 20).

In early August there were negotiations between the Clinton and Obama camps. Rodham Clinton had been awarded almost 1,700 delegates in the various caucuses and primaries, and these delegates were traveling to Denver to cast their votes. However, the party had a vested interest in showing the U.S. public a unified convention. Also,

Rodham Clinton and her feminist followers were intent on recording the record-breaking number of delegates and primaries she had won. Commentators like Dowd chose to write about how Obama had to "grovel to Hillary Clinton's dead-enders" (as mentioned by Dowd, 2008, August 3).

The actual convention took place in late August. Despite many apocalyptic prophecies, the convention proceeded with few glitches. Rodham Clinton did hold a few separate rallies for her supporters, and she listened to their concerns. She also used an official business meeting to completely release her delegates. That is, Rodham Clinton gave her supporters the agency to vote for whomever they wanted during the floor vote. Dowd (2008, August 27) offered a column from the actual convention in which she noted that the feeling was "so at odds with the early thrilling, fairy dust feel of the Obama revolution." Michael Murphy, a Republican strategist also at the convention, noted that the convention hall seemed to be filled with "submerged hate" (as cited by Dowd, 2008, August 27).

Rodham Clinton took the stage in Denver, Colorado, on August 26, 2008. She wore a bright orange pantsuit, and her daughter, Chelsea Clinton, introduced her. In the same fashion as most presidential candidates and former presidents, Rodham Clinton was introduced with a biographic video. Chelsea Clinton narrated the video, and it told a feminist version of Rodham Clinton's life. The video covered the obstacles overcome, the precedents she set as first lady, and it included a brief interview with WJC who was identified with the humorous biography line, "Hillary's husband." The convention crowd flashed matching signs that said Hillary and Obama on one side and Unity on the

other. WJC sat in the balcony of the convention hall near Michelle Obama, and Chelsea Clinton joined her father after she offered the introductory remarks that the next speaker was her "mother and her hero, Hillary Rodham Clinton."

Gendering Unity: Four Problems that Divided Obama and Clinton

Rodham Clinton confronted four gendered problems as she appeared on the stage in Denver, Colorado. Each of the problems helps to explain the particularly difficult gendered position in which Rodham Clinton was enmeshed in the summer of 2008. The first problem, of course, was filled with the residue of all other gendered chapters in her life. Rodham Clinton was forced to confront the rhetorical problems that arose from her connection to WJC.

WJC stood as a symbolic problem for the Democrats in 2008 for several reasons. First, as the most recent former president from the party, he was the party elder. President Carter could also play this role, but Carter did not have equivalent star power. Political conventions include the participation of several types of political figures, but the party always uses a series of stock speeches from party elders to bring legitimacy to the anointed candidate. That is, members of the old guard have to give their blessing and assurances that the new party leader is committed to the group's cause. In his capacity as a former president, WJC should have played this role for the Democrats.

Unfortunately, WJC was unable to perform this role at the 2008 convention because of his behavior during the 2008 primaries. WJC aggressively campaigned for his wife, and in doing so he raised a serious amount of public debate about his role as a party leader or advisor to the nominee. Senator Kennedy, another party elder, called President

Clinton and voiced his anger that the former president was attacking the credentials of Obama. In a report for National Public Radio, Michelle Norris (2008) summarized this behavior by stating, "From defending his wife, to marginalizing Barack Obama, to charges that he's played the race card, Bill Clinton's behavior has been widely seen as damaging to his wife's campaign. And there are also questions about whether the long and often fractious campaign may affect his legacy."

Although his behavior may be viewed as acts of wife protection and chivalry, his behavior was problematic enough that many party insiders questioned his legitimacy and commitment to party. WJC had also become a rhetorical problem for Rodham Clinton because the Obama campaign won the campaign talking points about the 1990s. Obama and his surrogates talked about the Clinton years as a move to the middle. They often referenced the term "triangulation," and they cautioned voters from returning to an era they classified as being marked with scandal and centrist politics. Rodham Clinton had used examples of success stories from her husband's administration to build her own personal résumé and make the case that she was best suited to lead the country. The arguments were discredited because of the successful framing efforts of the Obama campaign.[49] In short, the history and legacy of the Clinton years were in jeopardy in the

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[49] First, in October of 2007, Obama gave an interview with *The New York Times*. He insisted that Clinton represented an old brand of Democratic politics that he hoped to change. He used the word triangulation as an ill, and this story was picked up and further discussed by Fox News. Coverage of this example can be found in the October 2007 article by Bruns with Fox News. Second, Obama also frequently made veiled references to "old political" styles in his Iowa and South Carolina victory speeches. After winning South Carolina, he noted, "But there are real differences between the candidates. We are looking for more than just a change of party in the White House. We're looking to fundamentally change the status quo in Washington. (Cheers, applause.) It's a status quo

symbolic history of the party. Rodham Clinton had to use her speech to atone for her husband's behavior, and she had to restructure her husband's legacy for the sake of both of their public résumés.

Reporters were not eager to let the conflict surrounding WJC vanish. First, many cable news outlets ran stories that the Obama camp wanted to vet the President's speech. It was also reported that the Obama advisors wanted complete control of the teleprompter and microphone during his presentation. Healy (2008a) reported that friends of the Clintons went on record saying that "Mr. Clinton remains angrier than people realize about the Obama campaign's portrayal of his wife as deceitful and of his administration as middling and his political tactics as, at times, racially charged." Healy (2008a) indicated that Rodham Clinton would need to praise her husband to make up for the lack of praise he will receive from the Obama camp.

Rodham Clinton rhetorically sat in a weird place as the only rhetor who could actually fix this problem. However, it was problematic in terms of gender because the problem existed solely because she is married and sexually connected to WJC. His outrageous acts of hostile masculinity are a direct result of the marriage bond that connects him to Rodham Clinton. Her first problem tasks her with reestablishing President Clinton as the rightful party elder while remaining strong in her continued support for the Obama candidacy.

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that extends beyond any particular party. And right now that status quo is fighting back with everything it's got, with the same old tactics that divide and distract us from solving the problems people face, whether those problems are health care that folks can't afford or a mortgage they cannot pay." Finally, Obama attacked Rodham Clinton before the Pennsylvania primary by saying, "We've got to get out of the typical pattern of politics" (Reid, 2008)

Rodham Clinton's second rhetorical problem involves the contextual information surrounding the 3 AM advertisement. In order to be seen as a credible commander in chief, Rodham Clinton was forceful on defense issues during the campaign. Social stereotypes of a gendered nature forced Rodham Clinton to create a tough commander-in-chief image for public consumption. However, in doing this she exposed the Achilles heel of the Obama candidacy. Now, Rodham Clinton is forced to speak as a party elder to convince her delegates and U.S. audiences that Obama can, in fact, answer the phone in a moment of international crisis.

The third problem tasked Rodham Clinton to use the speech to silence the public charges that she was not loyal to Obama or the Democratic Party. That is, the speech faced a rhetorical problem of authenticity. Many voters and media asked whether Rodham Clinton was really loyal to the party and to Obama. Before her speech, Weeks (2008) with National Public Radio commented that when she entered the convention hall "how she speaks to both groups will set a tone for unity, or disunity, as the party points toward the November election." He also commented that "She—and her husband, former President Bill Clinton—have sent enough wavy signals that their support for Obama has been questioned" (Weeks, 2008). She also had to deal with the notion that a significant portion of the actual convention audience was not "unified." Going into her speech, a joint USA Today/Gallup poll showed that about thirty percent of Rodham Clinton supporters were not planning to vote for Obama (as cited by Weeks, 2008).

Also, the unity worry continued with significant and strange public chatter about her campaign's use of the term "suspension." Political committees that need to continue

fundraising after they have ended formal campaign operations use this term. Presidential campaigns are million dollar enterprises, and it requires a significant amount of money and time to stop these organizations. A suspension is a financial classification that allows campaign leaders to sort through legal and financial matters after the formal persuasion has stopped. Several campaigns have used this tactic. At the time of Rodham Clinton's suspension, John Edwards also held his campaign in suspension. There was no chatter about these facts. It is not hard to see this through a gendered lens. For example, Morse writes:

> Ever since Mrs. Clinton declared she would "suspend her campaign" which was done in the view of most observers, rather dubiously to say the least, whispers have been circulating that the Clintons are aiming to find some way, any way, to take Mr. Obama down at his own convention. (Morse, 2008, A17)

Morse and others imply there is something vindictive about this normal fundraising strategy male candidates had used for decades.[50]

Not to be outdone by Morse, Dowd (2008, June 8) added to the authenticity problem by penning, "how much Hillary Clinton can help Barack Obama will depend on how good an actress she is." She also said, "For months, Hillary has been trying to emasculate Obama with the sort of words and themes she has chosen, stirring up feminist

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[50] On March 9, 2000, John McCain said, "I am suspending my campaign so that Cindy and I can take some time to reflect on our recent experiences, and determine how we can best continue to serve the country, and help bring about the changes to the practices and institutions of our great democracy that are the purpose of our campaign." Full text of the speech can be found at: http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=85254

anger by promoting the idea that the men were unfairly taking it away from the women" (Dowd, 2008 June 4). In other words, Rodham Clinton participated in a Unity rally, held campaign events with and for Obama, introduced the candidate to her fundraisers, suspended her campaign, and released her delegates at the convention; nonetheless, media commentators propagated a narrative that she was not committed to party unity.

Cocco (2008) with *The Washington Post* offered the lone moment of reflective commentary about Rodham Clinton's position. She called Rodham Clinton the "cheerleader in chief" (Cocco, 2008). She also noted:

> Hillary Clinton will be damned if she looks too methodically perfect, too much the purveyor of practiced routine and not enough the cheery personification of enthusiasm. She'll also be damned is she's too exuberant, too obviously raising her voice in unbridled exhortation for the team. She will either be deemed too cool or all-too-cagily warm. (Cocco, 2008, p. A13)

Rodham Clinton faced unusual pressure to prove herself committed to party and purpose with the Denver speech.

Finally, Rodham Clinton faced the problem of convincing her most loyal supporters to join team Obama. Randolph (2008) made the apt observation that many of the delegates, especially the women who had worked through the Second Wave of feminism, "saw Hillary Rodham Clinton as their reward, a final acknowledgment that it was worth all the bras burned and lawsuits filed and marches on all male Washington." Healy (2008a) summed up the problem by noting she had to encourage Democrats to "put

aside their loyalty to her and unite behind Mr. Obama." His comments speak to the idea that Rodham Clinton was forced to move the campaign away from personality and back to policy issues. Many experts talked about this duty as offering "psychological release" for her former campaign supporters. Rodham Clinton herself described the process as the stages of grief, and it seemed that her speech would need to offer a catalyst to move the Rodham Clinton supporters to a moment of resolution.

Party, Genre, Discourse, and the Academic Literature

An analysis of the 2008 convention address adds to the academic commentary on issues of political party, genre criticism, and their relationships to gendered discourse. Beyond being in a gendered trap, Rodham Clinton's situation threatened established party organization. That is, one energetic group of people worried that she would start a floor fight for the nomination and another equally energetic grouped hoped she would so they could leave the Democratic Party with her. Although there is no evidence that Rodham Clinton wished to split Democrats, there was a symbolic worry that she might harm party identification. Very little separated Obama and Rodham Clinton's policy choices, and many people clung to the personality and not the substance of her campaign. It seems some of the gendered violence she received during the summer of 2008 is a direct result of the challenges her efforts brought to traditional notions of party identification. Furthermore, she dealt with this situation by molding three distinct genres of public address.

Rhetorical theorists have ceded much of the research about political parties to political scientists. Scholars of U.S. government in political science have written

extensively on the nature of political party operations. However, very little of this literature speaks to the symbolic and discursive power of political parties. Most political science literature addresses the primacy of parties. E.E. Schattschneider (1942) writes, “democracy is unthinkable save in the terms of the parties” (p. 1). Rossiter (1960) followed two decades later by stating, “no America without democracy, no democracy without politics, no politics without parties, no parties without compromise and moderation” (p. 1). Finally, Ostrogorski (1964, 1974) writes that U.S. political parties are becoming cult like and that the “the spirit of the party, like that of fetishistic patriotism, is made up of sectarian contempt and dislike for those who are outside the fold, and of mechanical attachment to those on the inside” (1974, p. 409).

Political science research also capitalizes on the theme that the two-party system is in jeopardy, is vital to the government, and is worth saving. Lowi (1998) writes that “the two party system has long been brain dead,” that it has been “kept alive by support systems like state electoral laws that protect the established parties from rivals and by public subsidies and so-called campaign reform (p. 3). Other scholars claim that political parties are suffering, need to be revived, are important to democracy, and are central to governing (see Cohen, Fleshner & Kantor, 2001; Green & Shea, 1999; Monroe, 2001; Price, 1984; White, 1992).

Scholarship from communication studies that considers the parties falls into one of three categories. First, a few rhetorical scholars have offered case studies of particular election seasons that have witnessed novel party behavior. These offer interesting examples of important historic moments, but they fail to theorize beyond the specific

example. Primary examples of this type includes Barefield's (1970) study of Republican keynoters, Christine Harold's (2001) analysis of Ralph Nader and what she calls the "green party virus," Blankenship, Fine and Davis's (1983) pentadic approach to Republican presidential debates, Pfau's (1988) study of inter party conflict within the Democratic party, Kathleen Diffey's (1988) study of the1854 Kansas-Nebraska bill and the independent Democrats, and Benoit's (2004) comparison of Republican and Democratic message types.

Some rhetorical scholars have studied rhetors who wrote about political parties. These studies seek to illuminate the persuasive nature of a particular author rather than offer significant understandings about party structure. Stephen Browne's (1991) analysis of Edmund Burke's commentary on political parties and Finnegan's (2003) article on John Dewey's call for a third party are the most salient examples of this trend. Finally, some communication scholars consider voter communication and behavior as related to political party identification. Stempel, Hargrove, and Stempel (2007) offer a classic example of this type by examining party identification as it relates to belief in conspiracy theories about the events of September 11, 2001.

Beyond these three types, some rhetorical scholarship offers important groundwork on which to build ideas about the communicative acts that sustain and create party identification. Benoit and Hansen (2004), citing the issue ownership theory of Petrocik (1996), claim that the "Democratic Party 'owns' such issues as education, health care and Social Security; the Republican Party, on the other hand, owns such issues as national defense, crime, and foreign policy" (p. 144). They offer a significant study to

show that presidential candidates will often cede certain issues because the general voter tends to assume that each party is built for a specific set of issues. What is interesting about their study is that they note that voters tend to give foreign policy concerns to Republican candidates. However, it is a difference on foreign policy abilities and the preparedness to be commander in chief that was at the heart of the Obama-Rodham Clinton party conflict in 2008.

Farrell (1978) used political conventions as his texts to claim, "Whether any political convention effectively initiates its chosen candidates, and offers an effective strategy for gaining and using power will depend on actual performance of the candidates themselves" (p. 301). Murphy and Burkholder (2004) follow Farrell's claim and argue:

> Political parties craft themselves through their chronic discourse and justify their existence to a socially reflexive electorate. Those people no longer take party affiliation for granted; instead they sift through that identity not only in terms of other parties but also in terms of other outlets for political action—unions, social movements, churches, interest groups, and so on (Burkholder and Murphy, p. 131).

That is, political parties use repetitive forms of political communication, like conventions, to keep the faithful active and engaged. This becomes even more salient when the national primaries make the national convention a moment to "legitimize" rather than select a candidate (see Trent and Friedenberg, 2004, p. 49-52).

The 2008 convention with tensions between Clinton and Obama presents an opportunity not only to think about gender but also to consider the rhetorical construction

of party identification. Rodham Clinton navigated her rhetorical problem by blending the tools of three distinct rhetorical genres. In order to quell the fear that she was not committed to the cause of Obama, Rodham Clinton used the genre of concession speeches. However, to rebuild her image, the image of her husband, the image of Obama, and to pacify her supporters, she also spoke as a party elder and in a post-presidential style. Randolph (2008) noted, "what chagrins some of Mrs. Clinton's supporters…is that she is suddenly in the role of elder statesman, a veteran who has done her part and earned her place—as role model for others." The Clintons would play a multi-faceted role at the 2008 DNC.

Rhetorical scholarship has been prolific in its explanation of the generic approach to criticism. Genre criticism allows rhetorical critics to think about form and audience expectations. It prompts a conversation about form and reception. Campbell and Jamieson (2008) show that "a generic perspective…empowers critics to ask how well an individual work is adapted to achieve its ends," and it "facilitates the identification of outstanding examples of a given type" (p. 19-20). Jones and Rowland (2005), citing the earlier work of Campbell and Jamieson (1977) and of Rowland (1991), agree that genre criticism allows critics to see how a speaker will use a specific form for a specific reason. Rodham Clinton used the genre of elders[51] and post-presidential speeches and the

[51] Lee (1989) describes the elder speech by writing, "retired office holders account for what was done and not done; they explain the use and the misuse of power; they describe doctrines followed and doctrines forsaken. In practicing the art of political justification, they are required to consider their actions against some higher standard of morality" (p. 453).

discourse of concession speeches[52] to deal with her gendered environment, to calm fears that she threatened the party, and to emphasize party unity.

'No way, No how, No McCain': Rodham Clinton as Party Elder

As I have noted, Rodham Clinton entered the speaking situation in Denver with a host of feminist, political, and pragmatic problems. The coverage of the presentation started before she ever took the stage in Denver, Colorado. First, the associated press ran a story twelve hours before the presentation showing campaign consultants holding multiple wardrobe options up to the lights of the stage set. Although all politicians employ style consultants to consider the nuance of color and lighting, the use of such talents by Rodham Clinton became a moment for national conversation.

Trent and Friedenberg (2004) remind rhetorical critics that nomination conventions are necessary because they "provide legitimization to the party's nominee" (p. 56). As the presidential primary process has become longer and more contentious, the need to use the nomination process to repair the candidate and build party unity has also drastically increased. In previous election cycles, the process of legitimizing and granting authority to the new candidate has typically been the task of party elders such as past presidents, first ladies, or previously defeated candidates. The 2008 Democratic primary created a need for a convention that restored authority to Barack Obama's ability to lead the party to victory, but the two most popular party elders, Rodham Clinton and

[52] Corcoran (1994) describes the concession speech by writing, "conceding defeat is a theme composed in a minor key, sounding the tragic undertones of high political drama" (p. 109). And there are four elements to a concession speech (1) congratulate the winner, (2) a call for unity with the chosen candidate, (3) a praise for the democratic system, and (4) a pledge to continue to work (p. 115).

WJC, were directly responsible for doubts that had been cast on the new candidate's credentials.

Rodham Clinton used the persona of an elder and the tone of a concession speech to offer themes of closure and unity, to recreate a Democratic history that is reverent of the past and respectful of the future, and to give voice to the feminist struggle that her campaign symbolized to many second wave activists. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson theorize that at times, many public advocates will find utility in organically fusing the elements of several genres to meet the situational demands of their specific situation (Jamieson and Campbell, 1982, p. 146). These moments are typically called "rhetorical hybrids," and understanding of these presentations is rooted in Aristotelian conceptions of genre that remind critics that style and form are dictated by audience and the sort of decision they are being asked to make or action they are being encouraged to perform (Jamieson and Campbell, 1982, p. 146). Rodham Clinton used a hybrid, and she was the only rhetor who could adequately stress the urgency of unity and heal the Democratic Party as it attempted to stop John McCain from winning the general election.

First, Rodham Clinton's presentation met the demands that were left by her suspension speech of June 7, 2008. In that presentation, which the campaign committee considered the official end to her presidential aspirations, Rodham Clinton made the rhetorical mistake of not offering an endorsement of Senator Obama until she had been speaking for approximately six minutes. She began the suspension speech by saying, "Well, this isn't the party I planned but I sure like the company" (Clinton, H.R., 2008,

June 7). From that point, she spent the early moments of the speech detailing her personal memories from the campaign trail, many of which involved her interactions with families, mothers, and young children. She then ended the section of memories by offering noting, “Today, as I suspend my campaign, I congratulate him on the victory he has won and the extraordinary race he has run, and throw my full support behind him.” With that claim, Rodham Clinton told her supporters that she planned to work as hard for his campaign as she had for her own and she tried to symbolically end her campaign committee’s work.

Although it seemed to be a sincere tactic, the use of the word “suspension” and the delayed endorsement within the speech provided pundits and commentators with enough fodder to spend the two months leading up to the convention talking about a potential floor battle between the candidates. Thus, Rodham Clinton used her moment as the new party elder to end any idea that she wanted to derail the convention or stop the progress of Senator Barack Obama. She opened the convention speech by saying that she was proud to stand before the crowd as “A proud mother. A proud Democrat. A proud American. And a proud supporter of Barack Obama” (Clinton, H.R., 2008, August 26). Unlike the suspension speech, Rodham Clinton did not waste any time endorsing or acknowledging the success of Senator Obama. She also added extra emphasis to her endorsement by placing her role as a supporter in a succession of items that culminated in that particular identity. Each of the parallel statements built off the other leading to her support of Obama being above her role to family, country, job, or party. She used a climax construction to make it absolutely clear that her campaign had ended.

She then worked from this symbolic creation of finality to address public speculation that she was hoping for a floor battle at the convention. Rodham Clinton played with the notions of “fighting” and “competition” to create a cause that would unite her supporters and those already in the Obama camp. Immediately after the endorsement she stated:

> Whether you voted for me, or voted for Barack, the time is now to unite as a single party with a single purpose. We are on the same team, and none of us can sit on the sidelines. This is a fight for the future. And it's a fight we must win. (Rodham Clinton, 2008, August 26)

The rumors of infighting and challenges to delegates had already tarnished Rodham Clinton’s presentation before she spoke. However, as the signs that were given to the immediate audience in the convention hall predicted, the theme she rhetorically aimed for was one of unity and togetherness. In a clever moment of rhetorical transcendence, Rodham Clinton took the larger public theme of fighting and transformed it into a method of action that could unify both camps within the Democratic party of 2008.

Finally, Rodham Clinton used her presentation to unify the party and reinforce the end of her own campaign with two of the most persuasive and symbolic sections of the entire speech. Both sections were geared primarily to the members of the audience who had supported her in the primary race. Each accomplished different tasks. First, in a direct plea to her former supporters, she said:

> Barack Obama is my candidate. And he must be our President. Tonight we need to remember what a Presidential election is really about. When the polls have

> closed, and the ads are finally off the air, it comes down to you -- the American people, your lives, and your children's futures. (Clinton, H.R., 2008, August 26).

With this statement, Rodham Clinton asserted that she was no longer supporting her own candidacy but had personally transformed herself into a supporter of her former opponent. She then moved the audience to follow her by avoiding the use of “you and I” language and instead opting for the more collective and unifying pronouns of “we” and “us.” The statement of endorsement was not a moment when “she” remembered for “herself” what presidential elections symbolize. Instead, she subtly said that “we,” both her supporters and her former candidate identity, needed to remember the larger goal. With this, she helped to move her supporters into the larger “we” of the Democratic Party that she hoped to move to victory in the November presidential race.

Finally, Clinton offered a direct call for unity to her supporters at the convention by asking them to take a moment to reflect on the work of the previous eighteen months. Toward the end of the speech Rodham Clinton said:

> I want you to ask yourselves: Were you in this campaign just for me? Or were you in it for that young Marine and others like him? Were you in it for that mom struggling with cancer while raising her kids? Were you in it for that boy and his mom surviving on the minimum wage? Were you in it for all the people in this country who feel invisible? (Clinton, H.R., 2008, August 26)

Rodham Clinton used rhetorical questions in this final section to turn the tables on her supporters. The 2008 primary left egos bruised at all levels of party activity. Top

fundraisers felt shunned from convention planning, President Bill Clinton was not given a prime-time speaking slot in Denver, former Clinton staffers were removed from the payroll of the party or were terminated from the ranks of the DNC, and many individual volunteers and supporters lost friends and colleagues as they waged a ground campaign to win endorsements for Rodham Clinton. Presidential campaigns require an incredible material and symbolic sacrifice from all who choose to participate. Rodham Clinton's campaign had asked for a tremendous amount of work from those that supported her campaign. That sacrifice and struggle builds a sense of personal connection to the candidate that is hard to quell and forget.

No other public figure at the convention could ask former Clinton delegates and supporters to join Obama's team except Rodham Clinton, and because Rodham Clinton spent so much time building a personal connection with these people, it was a particularly laborious task for her to accomplish. This section of the speech is the most emphatic, symbolic ending of her campaign. With it she rhetorically accomplished two very important tasks. First, she crafted a succession of rhetorical questions that called for a moment of psychological inquiry at the individual level. The only way to move a fierce advocate into another camp is to ask them to take a moment to reflect on their core beliefs and assumptions. With the question, "were you in it for me?", Rodham Clinton made her supporters remember that presidential elections start as movements for change. They are built on ideals and programs, and candidates run because they want to enact those programs to improve the lives of others. She ran, not because she had a personal desire to be president, but because she felt she could bring a team of individuals to

Washington that would enact the programs needed for change. This opening rhetorical question made the audience members remember that the cause had not died even though the personality behind the campaign had been transformed into a new role.

Second, Rodham Clinton strengthened the use of rhetorical questions by using coded language from her presidential campaign strategies. In the line of questioning, she asked the audience to remember a marine, a mother struggling with health care, and a family with financial problems. She then asks, "Were you in it for all the people in this country who feel invisible? (Clinton, H.R., 2008, August 26). For approximately six months during the presidential primary, Rodham Clinton's persuasive team had encouraged Democratic activists to support her candidacy with the "campaign of invisibles." She ran with three promises. First, she would end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Second, she would provide universal health coverage for all Americans. Finally, she would spur job creation through the use of green technologies. Rather than attack her Democratic opponents, Rodham Clinton ran ads that claimed President George W. Bush had created an environment in the United States that had resulted in a large, forgotten class of invisible people. This theme became the mantra of the campaign, and it was a coded term that would not be missed by her supporters in the audience. By ending the rhetorical questions with a mention of the "invisibles," Rodham Clinton reminded her supporters that unity in party and support for Obama was the only way the promises of her campaign had a chance to be realized. It is a clever moment that moved her message, one that her supporters clung to, onto the shoulders of the newly anointed Democratic nominee.

Rodham Clinton also mimicked the strategies of elder speeches to further move the party and her supporters into the Obama Camp. In particular, the techniques typically associated with an elder speech helped her rebuild the cultural capital of her husband's legacy. Both Rodham Clinton and WJC had used nostalgia for the 1990s as evidence that her administration would be a return to an age of prosperity. The Obama campaign did a powerful job of recasting the 1990's as an era of conflict, scandal, and dysfunction. To this end, Rodham Clinton uses this moment to transcend the primary battle, remake her husband's image, and then cast that light on to the new nominee. She noted:

> And when Barack Obama is in the White House, he'll revitalize our economy, defend the working people of America, and meet the global challenges of our time. Democrats know how to do this. As I recall, President Clinton and the Democrats did it before. And President Obama and the Democrats will do it again. (Clinton, H.R., 2008, August 26)

This moment did the necessary persuasive work to rebuild the past. It also offered a positive prediction for the future.

Televised coverage of this speech emphasized the elder role Rodham Clinton played. During the presentation, WJC was seated in the balcony directly above the podium. Typically, either WJC would have introduced Rodham Clinton or he would have had a more direct speaking role in conjunction with her talk. Instead, he sat quietly in the podium. After Rodham Clinton made use of the above quotation about his legacy, she paused and made eye contact with WJC. The camera then provided a close up image of him mouthing the phrase "I will always love you." Rodham Clinton smiled, and she

moved to the next section of her speech. However, with that symbolic interaction, the Clinton bond and Clinton legacy was rehearsed and rebuilt for national audience. In that rebirth, Rodham Clinton was then able to be the ideal party leader to anoint Obama as the keeper of the party's ideology.

Finally, Rodham Clinton used the closing moments of the speech to situate her campaign and presentation with a larger feminist narrative. She stated:

> And I know what that can mean for every man, woman, and child in America. I'm a United States Senator because in 1848 a group of courageous women and few brave men gathered in Seneca Falls, New York…and so dawned a struggle for the right to vote that would last 72 years…and after many decades—88 years ago on this very day—the 19th amendment guaranteeing women the right to vote would be forever enshrined in our Constitution. (Clinton, H.R., 2008, August 26)

This statement was followed by her pronouncement that "My mother was born before women could vote. But in this election my daughter got to vote for her mother for president" (Rodham Clinton, H.R., 2008, August 26). Her use of succession strategies and elder strategies opened the way for this final thematic element. After successfully dealing with the crisis of party and the crisis of history that faced her at the podium, Rodham Clinton took a moment to consider the final gendered problems that perplexed her audience. No, she was not successful in the election. However, her work and the work of her supporters were meaningful. She made that known, and it was after dealing with the other constraints that she inhabited a space that allowed for this pronouncement.

It was almost as if she stood in a post-presidential space but also a place that was post-gender. She offered a voice of experience for the betterment of her party.

Her campaign meant something in the fight for gender equality and that has been recorded. She used her place and her time to mark the Democratic struggle, the candidacy of Obama, and her suspended campaign, which all worked for common goals. She was able to conclude the presentation by making partisan ideology the tool through which gendered equality might one day be achieved. And that was the climax of this moment of gendered public address.

Concluding Thoughts

Genre criticism is about understanding particular rhetorical choices that are meant to move an audience to a particular action. My criticism does not hinge on effects research, but it might be an interesting question to ask, "Did it work?" Republican and Democratic commentators offered praise for the presentation. Many called it the best speech of her public career. The air of defeat left the convention hall, and the Clintons left Denver the next day after WJC's speech. Rodham Clinton continued to campaign for Obama through the general election. However, many wonder if her presence on the ballot would have produced the same results?

CBS News conducted exit polling on McCain supporters to determine if Rodham Clinton had lingering support in the U.S. electorate. As voters left the polls, they were asked if they would have voted differently if Rodham Clinton had won the Democratic nomination. The survey came to two conclusions. First, 52% of the voters claimed allegiance for Rodham Clinton giving her a hypothetical 7-point victory over Senator

McCain. Also, a startling 16% of self-identified McCain voters responded that they would have voted for Rodham Clinton in a hypothetical McCain-Clinton run off (as cited by Ververs, 2008).

Despite these numbers, media commentators abandoned the Obama-Clinton fight narrative after her presentation. *The New York Times* reported that both Rodham Clinton and WJC's performances at the convention "put the final dagger" in the heart of the journalistic narrative that the Clintons wanted to steal Obama's convention. The editorial board of *The New York Times* mentioned that "one of the hardest-to-kill story lines of this convention [2008, DNC, Denver, Colorado] has been about the Clintons: that they do not accept Barack Obama's victory and that they are scheming to make trouble for his candidacy" (Editorial: Clinton Soap, 2008). They went on to write that "Hillary Clinton did her part to bury the story Tuesday night with her stemwinder of a speech," and they called WJC's speech "Strikingly unegotistical" (Editorial: Clinton Soap, 2008). Healy (2008b) reflected the sentiments of the editorial board by claiming that Rodham Clinton had successfully reaffirmed "her support for Mr. Obama in soaring and unconditional language."

Rodham Clinton's 2008 Democratic Convention speech marked a critical moment in her gendered life. She provided a post-presidential performance that successfully navigated the disciplining barriers of party, gender, and politics. It set the stage for her successful role in the Obama administration, and it silenced most speculation about her "predicted intent" to constantly challenge the Obama presidency. It was one of the most successful navigations of gender in her rhetorical career.

Chapter Eight
Feminist Voices in a Post-Hillary Political Context: Thoughts on Voice, Agency, and Rhetoric

"It's always been okay for women to sing the blues. Just not good for us to win. We all know deep in our hearts that if we want to be loved we have to lose."

-Gloria Steinem,
as told to Rebecca Traister (2010, p. 298).

"Most of what I know about what I do today I learned from her. She has become the best public servant our family has produced. I am very proud of her."

-President William Jefferson Clinton, 2009
as cited by Van Meter (2009)

This project used the life and rhetorical record of Hillary Diane Rodham Clinton to understand the relationship between gender and rhetorical agency. Although these concepts were explored, this project ultimately posed more questions than answers. An examination of Rodham Clinton's life is simultaneously inspirational and heartbreaking. Her personal achievements have symbolized the true victories of the feminist movement, and her failures and struggles signify that there are still prejudices to challenge, stereotypes to shatter, and expectations to alter. Rodham Clinton has lived an extraordinary life, and her rhetorical texts allow a small window into how she has expanded roles and opportunities for future political women. Her life has been this project's "transcendental site" on which to explore methods of inquiry. So questions are good. It just means there is still more work to be done, and it means that there are still more questions to be asked. With that, this chapter poses a few more ideas on how rhetoricians might continue to think about political women, feminism, and the new era of U.S. politics.

Each chapter of this project explored a specific moment in which a great opportunity led Rodham Clinton to challenge public expectations with her powerful voice. The project opened by calling Rodham Clinton the most misunderstood figure in U.S. politics. Originally, I claimed that the impetus for this project was my interest in how Rodham Clinton failed to win the U.S. presidency. However, this was an oversimplification of the true goals of this project. I start this conclusion with the two questions that drove this analysis. I am not sure I have answered either of these questions in this project, but I offer them here to explore what has happened and to engage future rhetoricians who also seek to understand the symbolic fields open to political women.

First, in *Masculine Domination* Bourdieu (1998) investigates the origins of universal male domination. He asserts that any attempt at understanding this oppression puts the critic in the unfortunate position of using "modes of thought that are the product of domination" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 5). The goal then, is to find "an analysis capable of giving a different orientation both to research on the condition of women, or, to speak more relationally, on relations between the sexes, and to the action aimed at changing those relations" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 116).[53] Following this advice, I used Rodham Clinton as an important site on which to test theoretical understandings of agency and rhetoric. However, I hold that potent and ubiquitous symbolic violence has become so "naturalized" that is seems daunting and idealistic to suggest that the patriarchal nature of

[53] This quotation is found in the conclusion of *Masculine Domination*. Hull (2002) and other scholars who have reviewed Bourdieu's book, rightly criticize that the loving dyad becomes the manner through which to subvert domination. Hull (2002) writes, "Feminist readers may be skeptical that domination can be thoroughly expunged from heterosexual romantic relationships" (p. 352). I sympathize with these concerns.

society might be dismantled. My first question going into this large analysis was: what are the origins of misogyny and patriarchy, and why do they endure? Or to use the language of Bourdieu, why is masculine domination a symbolic and material reality? Rodham Clinton's public life has been a constant experiment with these concerns.

Beyond my theoretical interests, I also had a political and personal drive to write this project. Hull (2002), in her review of Bourdieu, writes, "long-term political action will be required to dismantle masculine domination, and it must start from the recognition of the complicity of the embodied and institutionalized aspects of domination" (p. 352). This work grew from my thoughts on Bourdieu, and the practical implications of his work that are identified by Hull. I was led to the subject matter, and to the texts, by my political convictions. I have always been inspired by the political efforts of Hillary Rodham Clinton. I am a feminist, and I wanted to write a feminist project. One of the most vibrant memories I have from the 2008 presidential campaign trail occurred in Minneapolis, Minnesota. It was the night before Super Tuesday. I was in the field office making phone calls to key constituencies, and I paused for a brief moment. I was tired, and I looked around at the staff and at the volunteers. As a white male, I was a significant minority in that room. Women, younger and older, were working the phones, drawing maps, and planning election day events. Many had brought children who sat in the corner playing while the rest of us worked. And then the moment of inspiration happened. One young girl picked up a poster and walked over to her mother and said, "Look mom, I can be president." At that moment, I put down my phone and left the office for the evening. It was a serendipitous turning point for me both as a political

worker and a rhetorical critic. I sat in my car, and I struggled with what she had said. I was so happy that she now had a role model. The young girl could now live in a world where she visualized Madam President, but I also worried Rodham Clinton would not win. And I worried what message that might send to that very same girl.

This story symbolizes the second question that drove this project. It is one that I struggle with to this day. I pragmatically ask, if not this woman, then who? By the time the young girl held up the poster, Rodham Clinton had been the victim of so much gendered symbolic violence that media outlets had already started calling for the end of her campaign. I had walked past Hillary Clinton novelty nut crackers. I had heard jokes that challenged her right to run. I had watched a résumé, that was the envy of every other presidential candidate, become a liability. That moment in the campaign office was when I embraced the protean nature of agency, and it was a moment when I realized the true importance of symbolic victories. Gloria Steinem once remarked that "if you can't see it, you can't be it." Rodham Clinton would not be the President of the United States. She had every material resource needed to achieve the presidency, but she had lost her bid for the White House because men and women, on the right and left, had allowed sexist commentary to pass as news. Her candidacy was entertainment; it was not legitimate. It was spectacle. It was dramatic tragedy. And so, I left the office that night hopeful that the young girl would grow up thinking she could be president but wondering if that symbolic victory was true. Rodham Clinton's campaign did survive for many months after that evening, and she changed perceptions, but I worry that there is not another

Rodham Clinton in the wings. And so I ask, will a woman ever be President of the United States?

This chapter develops in three final sections. First, the concept of voice was the unifying theme of the project, so I offer some final thoughts on this theoretical term. Second, I comment on the notion of post-feminism and the future of feminist politics in a post-Hillary world. Finally, I end with commentary on Rodham Clinton's post-presidential role as U.S. Secretary of State.

Voice, Agency, and Rhetoric

Roland Barthes (1975) claimed "I am interested in language because it wounds or seduces me" (p. 38). Voice is always about language. It is about words, and it is about texts. As a critic, I am called to certain voices. I am seduced by their meaning, and I am intrigued by the possibilities of their artistry. As a concerned critic, I realize that words are not always pretty. They hurt. They demean. They belittle. They ignore. This project has shown they can inflict symbolic violence on those in any position. Theoretically, this project has been about voice, agency, and rhetoric, and it is important to reflect on new horizons for other scholarship on these topics.

First, voice has inconsistent definitions among the community of rhetorical scholars. It is an important concept that begs for more interpretation. Texts are the sites from which voices emerge. Rhetors will develop a voice within a speech or an essay. Rhetorical critics should start to think about what it means for a specific rhetor to develop a consistent or meaningful voice across their entire career. I have attempted this with my analysis of Rodham Clinton, and I consider such projects are rich fields from which to

challenge many disciplinary understandings of rhetoric. I am not suggesting a return to the study of great speakers, nor am I being nostalgic for the days of William Norwood Brigance's (1943) collection of great moments in U.S. public address. Instead, I think there is something to be said for studies that holistically consider the entire rhetorical record of a single rhetor and ask: What can be learned from this life? What does this person offer our field? What can we say about how this individual adopted roles, engaged others, and spoke for responses?

Second, voice is intimately tied to rhetorical agency. A rhetor must have access to public stages to be able to develop and use voice, but agency is best understood in terms of roles. Rhetors must play roles that are intelligible to audiences. When someone plays a role that does not fit a perceived expectation, the audience reaction can be uncomfortable and unforgiving. This has been illustrated by reactions to Rodham Clinton's performances. All roles, even the most prestigious and powerful, have downsides. Weak rhetors will perish in attempting to navigate the difficulties of role expectations. Strong rhetors will face these expectations. Talented and artistic rhetors will transform a role into a new and accepting place from which to persuade audiences. Role models show what is possible, but they also have the ability to open up spaces for what is acceptable. Although Rodham Clinton struggled with many of the roles her agency afforded, she always left every public position she touched with a new frame. Her career might be described as a constant moment of role-giving. This has left future public women with powerful rhetorical agency.

Finally, this project is about rhetoric and rhetorical criticism. The best place to think about gender and power is at the linguistic level. How do words shape our realities about roles and expectations? Words do work. They create reality. Each chapter employed a distinctive method of rhetorical analysis to understand language. Like Barthes, I was drawn to certain texts as I examined the political life of Rodham Clinton. Her texts spoke to me, and they illuminated the power of the symbolic. If role is truly inescapable, and I believe that it is, then how might humans use rhetoric to create fresh voices and new spaces from which to persuade? Rhetorical acts are opportunities to craft distinctive voices that both utilize and give agency. Rhetorical critics must show how persuasive, strategically situated discourses can begin to dismantle the gendered constraints that dampen the U.S. political system.

Feminism in a Post-Hillary Political World

Beyond theory and rhetoric, this project has been a feminist analysis. Pollitt (2006) writes that "the power of feminism, whether or not it goes by the name, still resides in its capacity to transform women's consciousness at the deepest possible level" (p. 11). Feminist politics must continue to work for this type of transformation. One of the interesting elements of Rodham Clinton's life, an element that was not covered by this project, is the post-feminist frame that was applied to her candidacy. Rodham Clinton helped draft this frame by distancing herself from her sex and gender very early in the presidential race. Many women, feminists included, were quick to argue that we

were living in post-feminist era.[54] Many even said that a woman in the White House was not needed. For some, the United States was somehow beyond gender.

The irony of this frame is that nothing could be farther from the truth. The same media outlets that used this post-feminist frame also allowed male contributors to treat misogyny and sexism as news. Fortini (2008) argued that "Hillary Clinton declared her candidacy, and the sexism in America, long lying dormant, like some feral, tranquilized animal, yawned and revealed itself. Even those of us who didn't usually concern ourselves with gender-centric matters began to realize that when it comes to women, we are not post-anything." She was right. Rodham Clinton's campaign for the presidency brought sexism to the forefront of political discussion. The United States was not beyond gender. Instead, gender was the silent, naturalized force at the root of all social discrepancies, and it was nearly impossible to challenge. The post-feminist frame further naturalized gender roles and gender difference in unfair and infuriating ways. This frame might be the biggest roadblock that will keep a female candidate from every winning the U.S. Presidency.

Mary Vavrus (2002), working from Dow (1996), gives the best understanding of news coverage of political women and the post-feminist frame. She writes:

> Media coverage of women in electoral politics is significant for the commentary that it provides media audiences about feminism and femininity at particular junctures; about idealized gender roles and

[54] Consider Susan Faludi's observation (2008) "many daughters of a feminist generation seem pleased to proclaim themselves so 'beyond gender' that they don't need a female president."

> transgressions from these; about the media's investments in particular constructions of femininity and feminism; and about the representational process itself—a process that has, historically, generated both progressive and hidebound models of gender. (Vavrus, 2002, p. 2)

For Vavrus, the news coverage of political women offer sites for media and rhetorical scholars to test concerns about gender roles. However, the same coverage can often complicate gender roles for the public because post-feminist ideologies make the continued work of the feminist movement seem futile. In the words of Vavrus, post-feminism "works to construct media audiences not as critically informed publics prepared to organize against oppressive conditions but as individual consumers for whom freedom to chose is of paramount importance as an abstract principle" (p. 30). For Rodham Clinton, the post-feminist frame may have distracted particular constituencies from the symbolic importance of her campaign. The news frame told a story that the United States was so "beyond gender" that it was not necessary to see Rodham Clinton's run as a continuation of feminist politics. In this news environment, voters became individual consumers. Rodham Clinton was not a feminist icon; she was merely one choice in this aggrandized, post-feminist climate that was normalized by national news outlets.

One of the more important symbolic moments of the race occurred when Obama delivered a speech on race in the United States. Obama had to deliver this address in response after a viral YouTube video of his pastor raised suspicions about his views on race and politics. The speech was a success, and it rehearsed important values about community, forgiveness, and acceptance. It challenged the racial biases that still faced

candidates of color. Kristoff (2008) remarked that one of the missed opportunities of the 2008 presidential campaign was that Rodham Clinton did not give a similar speech. Like Kristoff, I too would have enjoyed that speech, but I counter his request by saying she would never have had the opportunity or moment. Unlike issues of racial bias, and this is not to compare the two, gender discrimination is still naturalized. It is still normalized, and texts that challenge this notion are received with hostility. Feminist writers Henneberger and Lithwick (2008) said they were not endorsing Rodham Clinton because "her life—is rooted in grievance and Obama's life is in getting past grievance." Their incorrect observation proves my point. Rodham Clinton, or any other public feminist, does not have the opportunity to move past grievance because grievance has not been acknowledged. While many are calling for post-feminism, there is still much consciousness-raising to accomplish. The hard, symbolic work of the first wave has not yet been achieved. To give a speech on gender that is the equivalent of Obama's speech on race would require an audience that was at least conscious of the gendered obstacles that still plague U.S. women.

Mundy (1999) has argued that empowering women means "empowering their personal lives. Their bodies. Their bedrooms. Their daily routines. Their checkbooks. There is no way around it. The personal is political." She is correct. And this is what Rodham Clinton's long campaign for the presidency started to do. Lizza (2008) wrote that "Clinton may be criticized for staying too long in the race and for attacking Obama in ways that his supporters will consider nefarious and desperate. But no one is entitled to a Presidential nomination...he may thank Hillary Clinton for making him a better

candidate" (Lizza, 2008). Rodham Clinton did make Obama a better presidential candidate, but she also suffered a lot of blows that made voters start to come to terms with their normalized notions about gender. Many writers have argued that feminist politics are starting to fade because there is no longer "a coalescing cause" (Faludi 2008). Some saw Rodham Clinton's campaign as a site on which feminists could (re)organize for change, and I agree, for a moment it was. But not every feminist joined her campaign, and many had good reasons for supporting other candidates. However, the victory that comes from all the symbolic violence and defeat is that attacks on Rodham Clinton illustrated that there is still an important cause to fight. There must be a constant struggle to make gender a prevalent, and valued, frame. This frame must be used until it is no longer needed. The post-feminist narrative did nothing but further normalize sexism. Rodham Clinton's campaign shattered the belief that the United States was post-feminist. Future feminists have to remember this reality, and they must work to alter this reality in a post-Hillary political climate.

Her Sustained Voice: Rodham Clinton as U.S. Secretary of State

There is still rhetorical theorizing to complete on the issue of voice, and feminist politics still needs to challenge gender frames; however, rhetorical theorists interested in the life of Rodham Clinton still have moments to explore. This project started with her role as First Lady and ended with her run for the presidency. However, as predicted, Rodham Clinton has continued to shatter expectations and open new roles by serving as President Obama's Secretary of State. She has used this role to bring needed attention to the plight of global women, and Rodham Clinton is to be credited for making the

development and protection of women a necessary means by which to ensure global security.[55] She has thrown herself into the job, and she has been universally praised for her accomplishments. Even before she took office, former critics like Maureen Dowd (2008, November 16) wrote that "it's a cool idea, Hillary Clinton as secretary of state." Since being Secretary of State she has been positively featured by major U.S. publications that are quick to frame her approach to diplomacy as "The Hillary Doctrine" (What Hillary, 2011; Lemmon, 2011; Hirsh, 2010; Klein, 2009;).

Rodham Clinton has only faced one gendered controversy in her time as Secretary of State. She was completing a 2009 tour of Africa, and she was asked by a college student what her husband thought about a specific policy. She quickly responded, "Wait, you want me to tell you what my husband thinks? My husband is not the secretary of state. I am. You ask my opinion, I will tell you my opinion. I am not going to be channeling my husband" (as cited by Lopez, 2009).[56] The video of this moment went viral on YouTube. Ironically, it happened at the same time her husband traveled to North Korea, on behalf of President Obama, to retrieve two U.S. journalists who had been put in prison. Media asked if she had been upstaged by her husband. It was suggested that she was wrong to lash out in public. Headlines called her "Testy Hill" and "Hill I wear the Pants" (Goldenberg, 2009). But ironically, many others became her ally. Capehart (2009) wrote, "Clinton was right to be upset about being asked that kind of question in a

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[55] Warner (2009) writes, "Women's issues are being framed by this administration in terms of realpolitik: U.S. security depends on women's empowerment."

[56] It was later revealed that the student had asked what President Obama thought on the subject. The question was incorrectly translated. Rodham Clinton apologized to the student, and met with him after her presentation.

country and continent where male supremacy reigns unchallenged." And here is the continuation of the story this project has told. Rodham Clinton has always been an advocate for individualized voice, but the public is only accepting of that fact when she is in the helpmate roles, like Secretary of State. Much like being a U.S. Senator, Secretaries of State are parts of a team and so these perfectly acceptable comments are more warmly received.

Rodham Clinton has also used her time as Secretary of State to continue giving voice to disempowered people. Often these moments come as a shock to the international community. She has drawn needed attention to women's issues, but she has also raised awareness of other important issues of discrimination. In one of her largest addresses as Secretary of State, she surprised diplomats by celebrating international human rights day by rewriting parts of her Beijing, China, speech. However, rather than further explore feminist issues; she used the moment to demand rights for LGBT peoples. In a section that is almost identical to her 1995 address, she said:

> It is a violation of human rights when people are beaten or killed because of their sexual orientation, or because they do not conform to cultural norms about how men and women should look and behave. It is a violation of human rights when governments declare it illegal to be gay, or allow those who harm gay people to go unpunished…No matter what we look like, where we come from, or who we are, we are equally entitled to our human rights and dignity. (Rodham Clinton, 2011, December 6)

She continues to give voice in important ways. Her rhetoric offers the field more than just a site on which to think about gender. She constantly creates important moments of public address. The field needs to give more attention to her words and her moments of consciousness-raising. She is one of the most important rhetorical figures in U.S. history.

Concluding Thoughts

One year into President Obama's term, media still capitalized on the Obama-Clinton rivalry. For instance, headlines would often point out facts like "Clinton's favorable ratings at 62 percent, and Obama's at 56 percent" (Sirica, 2009). Yes, this was true. It is also true that Rodham Clinton is out of domestic politics, and this makes her more favorable to U.S. voters. Beyond this reality, these headlines also offer one final glimpse that gender continues to be the invisible force that organizes U.S. perceptual processes. Rodham Clinton has accomplished so much, but her public career is still somehow viewed as mere entertainment. She has now traveled the world as a diplomat, and she has negotiated some difficult tensions with global stakeholders. Unfortunately, this is not what makes news. Instead, she stormed pop culture in 2012 as the star of a Tumblr page named "Text from Hillary." Adam Smith and Stacy Lambe use a photograph from *The New York Times* to offer "tongue-in-cheek" fictional conversations between Rodham Clinton and other celebrities (Dowd, 2012, April 10). They are funny images, but they also trivialize her work. It is hard to imagine this type of humor being directed at a male diplomat who had negotiated trade deals with the Chinese.

Traister (2010) argued that Rodham Clinton's new popularity reflects "a depressing truth: that it was easier to embrace this woman in a state of diminished power,

once she had lost the big prize, when she was no longer threatening the chances of the cool guy (p. 298). And this is the point; it is cool to like Rodham Clinton when she herself is not in a position of executive leadership. Alex Joseph (2008) wrote that he felt alone as a college-aged supporter of Rodham Clinton's presidential run. He was viewed as an outcast, and he said many of his peers tried to understand why he would work for Rodham Clinton when Obama was clearly cooler. But is he? And isn't she? They are the same people. They are hard working, intellectuals who want to make a difference in the lives of others, but Obama is loved while Rodham Clinton is tolerated when she is in a position to help. Elliot (2010) argued that "women watch her and what we see is a version of ourselves; the version that held her nerve as she followed through on the theories of De Beauvoir/Greer/Steinem et al. It's as if this woman is herself an artwork, 'making what appears to be impossible, possible.'" Elliot is right, but Rodham Clinton also reminds audiences that gender is still a factor, and it must still be met with questions and critiques.

Chapter two and four of this project illustrated that the role of First Lady of the United States produces unrealistic expectations that will forever constrain the persuasive texts of women who land in that position. It is the most complicated rhetorical role for a political woman. However, while chapter two and four illustrate limits, chapter three illustrated that a creative use of voice can open up new spaces and opportunities for future First Ladies. Rodham Clinton made it easier for Michelle Robinson Obama, and Robinson Obama can now make it easier for the women who follow her. Finally, chapters five, six, and seven show how political expectations still challenge women who

seek full participation in the political sphere. They show that Rodham Clinton made a space for women's voices, and it will now be easier for future women to talk about important national issues.

Levinson (2008) argued that Rodham Clinton's run "made it easier for other women." Collins (2009) further wrote that "by the time the final primaries rolled round, the nation had gotten used to the idea of a woman as a presidential candidate" (p. 380). I am not sure I completely agree. Rodham Clinton symbolized that a woman could be president, but her defeat shows that U.S. voters are still not ready for the female candidate who can achieve the presidency. To be President of the United States, a person has to fight. Rodham Clinton showed U.S. voters what a female president might look like, but U.S. voters showed the world that political candidate and public woman are two roles that are not easily conflated. This will come with time. Like the other women who have sought the presidency, Rodham Clinton helped to start building this important role, but she achieved a new symbolic victory. She left a residue. Her candidacy will not be forgotten. As she reminded supporters, the true story of her run is that it will no longer be as big of a spectacle to have a serious, female contender for the White House.

Voice is always about choice, and choice has been the hallmark of Rodham Clinton's life. Mundy (1999) argues that "Hillary Clinton symbolizes not choice but the limitations of choice. What she illustrates is that we are inevitably the product of other choices we've made; that once we make a choice, we lose other choices; that some choices are, frankly, lousy; and most of all, that choices sometimes clash." Rhetoric is an artful practice that responds to roles. Rhetorical texts build on the past while

contemplating the future. Rodham Clinton has skillfully set a path that opens new doors and new opportunities for future political figures. She also leaves U.S. culture with a reminder that life is about growth and opportunity. It is about being open to the possibilities of being vulnerable. At times, reactions to rhetorical acts may be strong and vigilant. However, in the end artful discourse will win and rhetoric will change minds. Rodham Clinton has forever altered the political landscape. It will be exciting to see how her voice continues to grow, and it will be amazing to watch a future Madam President benefit from what Rodham Clinton has accomplished. So, yes, I believe a woman will be president of the United States. It will come as we continue to challenge each other to move beyond discourses that normalize and afford everyone the agency to develop his or her own voice.

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