

MRS. PRESIDENT?
**The Image Construction of Senator Clinton as a Feminine Presidential
Contender**

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Abstract

There is no doubt that Senator Clinton has accomplished many successful feats in her life, from working on the Children's Defense Fund to twice being named one of the 100 most influential lawyers. Yet most people recognize Senator Clinton for her status as former President Clinton's wife. The media has become fixated on the idea of the senator as a female presidential candidate. However, most journalists refer to Senator Clinton differently than other potential candidates. My research has demonstrated that Senator Clinton is repetitively written about in stereotypical feminine terms. By analyzing articles written about Senator Clinton as a presidential candidate I have shown that she is placed into stereotypical gender roles, creating an image of her success as a being due to charm and connections, not intellect and ability.

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Introduction

On November 7, 2006, Democrats around the country joined together in celebration when they learned that they had taken back a Congress long controlled by a Republican majority. But Democrats were not the only group to achieve success that day. Women also had a reason to celebrate. By taking back the House, Democrats set an historic event into motion. Representative Nancy Pelosi was sworn in as Speaker of the House in January 2007 as the first woman to ever hold the high political office.

Traditionally, males have been the gender to hold high political offices, including that of the Presidency of the United States. This concept upholds stereotypical gender roles that once dominated the minds of the American public: that men belonged in the working world and women belonged at home, raising the children. As the ideas behind feminism have grown more socially acceptable, traditions have begun to change. Women have joined the workforce, including many who have won political seats in the United States. One office, however, has continued to remain dominated by men. The office of the presidency has never been held by a woman, but that may be about to change. If nothing else, the first serious threat of change has arrived.

Hillary Rodham Clinton, current Senator of New York, is running for president in the 2008 election. Her announcement has sparked controversy, not only because Senator Clinton is a woman, but also because she is considered a polarizing figure. Neither side can deny however, that Senator Clinton has accomplished much in the political world, despite the stereotype that women are not as capable as men when it comes to political matters. Many news articles about Senator Clinton have been written, some positive, others negative. Yet most refer to Senator Clinton differently than other potential

candidates, placing her in a female gender role. Analyzing articles written about Senator Clinton as a presidential candidate demonstrates that she is placed into stereotypical gender roles, creating an image of her success as a being due to charm and connections, not intellect and ability.

According to Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw (1972), the media has the ability to frame information the public receives from a certain perspective. Traditional forms of media, such as newspapers and television, can influence how individuals view situations, especially politics. Thus, understanding how the media interprets gender roles is vital to understanding how the public perceives a presidential candidate. I have analyzed how media about Senator Clinton is affected by her gender. For the purposes of this study, I have narrowed the media field to magazine and newspaper articles, though I believe the sample is representative of the media in general. The writers of articles discussing Senator Clinton as a potential presidential candidate have a great deal of power and can influence how the general public perceives the idea of a female president. These select reporters, writing for well-read newspapers worldwide, make up an important group of people, as they are the creators of the message that reaches the public.

The audience to which the writers speak is very diverse. A general description of the audience encompasses people that read the political newspaper or magazine articles. More specifically, there are several factions of the audience that could be influenced by the message of the articles. One of these is the American public. Since the medium of the message is written, the audience would have to be literate, most likely educated middle or upper class individuals who read newspapers with a large circulation, such as *The New York Times*. Also included in the audience are similarly educated British and Australian

citizens, who share the English language. The articles discuss the concept of a woman in a leadership role that has traditionally been held by a male. Therefore, professional women who hold Senator Clinton in high regard also are part of the audience. Finally, the audience includes members of both the Democratic and Republican parties, as well as other politically minded individuals who take an interest in the 2008 election.

In this paper, I analyzed how Senator Clinton is placed into stereotypical gender roles. I first outlined a brief history of Senator Clinton's background and qualifications. Next I covered the current research in the field of feminism and politics. Finally, using feminist criticism, I analyzed articles selected from Lexis Nexis discussing Senator Clinton as a potential presidential candidate. These articles are broken down into eight categories which relate to feminist roles and which reveal significant stereotyping in political literature. These eight categories are divided into two subgroups. The first section includes articles written about Senator Clinton prior to her announcing her campaign for the presidency. The categories observed include Sexualized Attributes, First Lady/Wife, Career, and Potential Male Attributes. The second section includes articles written after the senator's announcement and contains the same kinds of stereotypes included in the first section, as well as three new categories, Resume, President Clinton's Help and President Clinton's Harm.

Chapter 1: From Babysitter to Senator A Brief History of Hillary Rodham Clinton

In order to fully understand the context of the situation, it is necessary to have a basic background of Senator Clinton and understand why she is so unusual as both a woman and a politician. According to Norman King's biography of Hillary Clinton, "The Woman in the Whitehouse, The Remarkable Story of Hillary Rodham Clinton," the senator was born on October 26, 1947 in Chicago, the first of three children (1996). From a young age she displayed attributes of ambition and achievement that were uncommon for the traditional families of the 1950s. As a child she found herself organizing sports tournaments, creating a children's circus, and even organizing a babysitting group to watch migrant workers' children (King, 1996).

Senator Clinton has been greatly influenced by her faith. A Methodist, she would do lay preaching from time to time, even teaching adult Bible classes (King, 1996). Gail Sheehy (1999) writes in her book, "Hillary's Choice," about a significant person in the senator's early life. Reverend Don Jones was a youth minister who greatly influenced the senator during her teen years. He introduced her to issues, causes, and movements of the time and encouraged her to involve herself in social action. Jones' leadership caused her to take an interest in social problems. She met Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. when he traveled to Chicago to speak.

In 1965 Senator Clinton attended Wellesley College, majoring in political science with a minor in psychology (Sheehy, 1999). Her time at Wellesley allowed Senator Clinton to develop a worldview of social issues, as well as gain a sense of independence and personal empowerment. She was involved in a number of activities and movements, including being the president of both the student body and the College Republicans.

Senator Clinton's time in college opened her eyes to stereotypes and racism in the country. She became a democrat, throwing herself into working to elect Democrat Eugene McCarthy president (King, 1996). In 1968 when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated, Senator Clinton was personally affected. Wearing a black armband, she marched into Boston in protest (King, 1996). Such an action demonstrated that she had developed awareness for the needs of others, and this translated into her writing. As with everything she did in college, Senator Clinton wrote her thesis on poverty with a sense of strength and ease. So much so that her thesis advisor distinctly remembered her work as "objective and highly pragmatic, not at all radical, and was directed to finding practical solutions as to what would work to fight poverty" (King, 1996, 18). Senator Clinton graduated in 1969 with the highest honors and gave the first student commencement address ever given at Wellesley. Her speech received an impressive seven-minute standing ovation (<http://www.Senator Clinton-rodham-clinton.org/education.html>).

The activities the senator undertook during her undergraduate years show the strong, independent woman that feminists around the world admire. Her actions demonstrate that she is not afraid to voice her opinion. In many situations, her actions do not fall into the category of the stereotypical woman; the woman who is meant to stay home, raise children, and be sexually appealing. Senator Clinton portrays herself as the opposite of these ideals as her life continues.

After graduating from Wellesley, Senator Clinton attended Yale Law School. She entered her first year as one of 30 women and served on the Board of Editors of Yale Review of Law and Social Action (King, 1996). Her interest in children's issues was piqued. She volunteered at the New Haven Hospital, assisting doctors in cases of child

abuse. According to Gail Sheehy (1999) in "Hillary's Choice," it was at Yale where she met and worked with Marian Wright Edelman, founder of the Children's Defense Fund. Edelman eventually led the senator to declare that her goal in life was to work to protect children. She met Bill Clinton during her second year of law school. At the same time, she began volunteering for the Yale Child Study Center to research brain development in young children (King, 1996).

To understand how the media portrays a skewed image of Senator Clinton, a total understanding of her merits is necessary. Thus, a detailed look at her career accomplishments will help to define a woman whose success falls into a category stereotypically reserved for males.

After graduating from Yale, Senator Clinton became a full-time lawyer for the Children's Defense Fund (Sheehy, 1999). During the Nixon Watergate scandal, she was one of 43 attorneys handpicked to advise the Judiciary Committee of the United States House of Representatives. She worked to prepare impeachment proceedings against President Richard Nixon (King, 1996). When Nixon resigned, she took a teaching job at the University of Arkansas Law School, where Bill Clinton also happened to be teaching. According to Senator Clinton's (2003) biography "Living History," they married in 1975 and moved to Little Rock, Arkansas. There she joined the Rose Law Firm and became the first woman ever to make partner.

Though Senator Clinton became the First Lady of Arkansas in 1978 when Bill Clinton was elected governor, she continued to practice law and be involved in politics. For the eleven years Governor Clinton was in office, she involved herself in many areas, mostly focused on children and education. She served as chair of the Arkansas Education

Standards Committee (Sheehy, 1999). There she fought against great opposition for higher testing standards for new teachers. She also gave advice to the Arkansas chapter of the Home Instruction Program for Pre-School Youngsters. Working with the Rural Health Advisory Committee, she helped to create the program, “Arkansas' Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youth,” that focused on preschoolers’ literacy rates by teaching parents how to help their children learn (Sheehy, 1999). She served as chairperson for the board of the Children’s Defense Fund and of the New World Foundation. Co-founding the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, her primary mission was to help children (Sheehy, 1999).

In 1980, Senator Clinton gave birth to her only child, Chelsea (Clinton, 2003). The same year, her husband lost his re-election campaign for governor. Two years later, he announced his intention to run again, this time with a successful result. Around this same period, the senator chose to begin referring to herself as Hillary Rodham Clinton (Clinton, 2003). Throughout the governorship of her husband, she continued working for the Rose Law Firm. She was twice named by the National Law Journal as one of the 100 most influential lawyers in America. She also was named Arkansas Woman of the Year in 1983 (Clinton, 2003).

When Bill Clinton was elected president, Senator Clinton continued to be an independent-minded individual, causing her to be compared to former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, who was also often criticized for voicing strong opinions. According to Donnie Radcliffe (1999) in “Hillary Rodham Clinton; The Evolution of a First Lady,” “The public scrutiny under which any First Lady must exist seemed to be ratcheted up for Senator Clinton. She became a lightning rod, criticized for everything from hairstyles to

health care reform” (266). She actively supported the Administration’s health care plan that called for universal coverage. This plan and her involvement with it caused uproar in Washington. The response of the public represents the gender issue that is prevalent in the media. “A president’s ‘closest advisor’ was traditionally a male and not infrequently a male relative, such as Milton Eisenhower or Robert Kennedy” (Radcliffe, 1999, 273). The traditional stereotype of only men being acceptable advisors put Senator Clinton in the position of being different.

In 1998, speculation about an affair led to the impeachment of President Clinton, causing the senator and others to testify to the special prosecutor about their relationship (Clinton, 2003). Though the incident caused President Clinton to publicly admit to having an affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky, the senator chose to stay with the President. Some criticized her for being power-hungry, while others admired her for staying in the relationship (Radcliffe, 1999).

In 2000 Senator Clinton announced her intention to run for the open senate seat in New York State (Clinton, 2003). Many were concerned that the scandal of a few years prior would cause a political failure. According to Edward Klein (2005) in “The Truth About Hillary,” she used the situation to cast herself as a sympathetic victim and martyr. As a member of the Senate, Senator Clinton at first took a low profile, learning the traditions (Radcliffe, 1999). Now an active member, she was recently re-elected to her second six-year term in office.

In January of 2007, Senator Clinton announced her intention to run for the presidency of the United States via her website. In the weeks since her announcement, she has been working endlessly to raise money and spread the word about her campaign.

At the end of the first fundraising quarter Senator Clinton had set the record for the all-time amount of money raised during the first quarter by any primary candidate.

Senator Clinton defines herself in terms of her personal accomplishments, not those of her husband. Her Senate website biography did not mention her status as a former first lady until the missing fact was pointed out by journalist Joel Achenbach (2006). Senator Clinton is a very accomplished and determined person. The media, however, sends mixed messages about her accomplishments by often putting them into terms of gender.

Chapter 2: A Look to the Past History of Women and the Presidency

Though Senator Clinton's bid for the presidency has been making news worldwide, she is not the first woman to run for President of the United States. She is joining a long tradition of women who have become presidential candidates.

According to Lisa Marie Hogeland (1999) in "Feminism, Sex Scandals, and Historical Lessons," the first woman to run for president did so over 130 years ago. In 1870, Victoria Claflin Woodhull announced in the *New York Herald* that she was seeking the office of the president in the 1872 election. Though women had not yet even gained the right to vote in the United States, the prominent newspaper owner became known as the first woman to run for president. Her campaign never gained the momentum that Senator Clinton's campaign has gained this year, however she used her status as a candidate to gain the right for women to address Congress. Woodhull became the first woman to speak before Congress when she lobbied for women's suffrage (Hogeland, 1999).

According to Sally Wagner (1996), Belva Ann Lockwood ran for president soon afterwards, in both the 1884 and 1888 elections. On the Equal Rights Party ticket, Lockwood was a prominent lawyer known for being the first woman to argue a case before the United States Supreme Court. Passionate about racial and economic justice, Lockwood continued the tradition of women stating their case for equality, even as women continued to be prevented from voting (Wagner, 1996).

In 1964 Republican Senator Margaret Chase Smith became the first woman to run for president on a major political party's ballot (American Women Presidents, 2007). Refusing campaign donations and only campaigning in the early states where she knew

people would vote for her, she won 224,970 votes during the election, 3.8 percent of the vote. Though she came nowhere near winning the Republican nomination, she became the first to represent a dominate party and demonstrated the potential that a female candidate could be elected (American Women Presidents, 2007).

Exactly 100 years after Woodhull ran for president, three women joined the small group of female presidential candidates, all on the Democratic ticket. Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, Congresswoman Patsy Mink, and Congresswoman Bella Abzug all announced their campaigns for the 1972 presidential election (American Women Presidents, 2007). It was Congresswoman Chisholm who dominated, campaigning in 14 of the 21 primaries and even winning 152 delegate votes at the Democratic National Convention. To this day no woman has surpassed Chisholm's record number of votes in the primary election (American Women Presidents, 2007).

Democratic Congresswoman Geraldine Ferraro (New York) became the first woman to run for vice-president of the United States. A former district attorney with several years experience in the House, the Congresswoman was chosen as a running mate by presidential candidate Walter Mondale. Though the team did not win the election, Ferraro did debate then Vice-President George Bush Sr. in a nationally televised debate (American Women Presidents, 2007).

Republican Elizabeth Dole was considered the first serious female presidential candidate when she announced her campaign for the 2000 election. A former cabinet secretary for the departments of transportation and labor, Dole withdrew from the election before the primaries began. However, her aggressive campaign style and

likeability has created the idea that a woman as president is possible in the near future (American Women Presidents, 2007).

Finally, in 2004 Democrat Carol Moseley Braun ran for president of the United States. The former U.S. senator was listed on more primary ballots than any other woman before her. Braun continued to fight for the concept that a woman can belong in the office of the president (American Women Presidents, 2007).

Though Senator Clinton is not the first female to run for president of the United States, she is the first former first lady to enter the political sphere so aggressively. Therefore, analyzing how she is portrayed in gendered terms displays the bias the media has against women in political roles.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

This research involving Senator Clinton is part of a larger body of research, which looks at both feminism and politics via the media. It was necessary to analyze previous research on presidential elections and candidate image to understand how the senator's situation fits into the body of research. Numerous scholars have studied the link between the media and presidential election cycle. Some did so by focusing on how the media presented a certain image of a political candidate. William Benoit, Kevin Stein and Glen Hansen (2005) analyzed *The New York Times'* coverage of presidential elections from 1952-2000. They wrote in "New York Times' Coverage of Presidential Campaigns" that the coverage of candidates tended to portray the character of the individual, more than discuss policy issues. Also, the overall messages about the characters of individuals tended to be negative, even as the individuals presented themselves in a positive light. The researchers concluded that the focus on character results in the lack of knowledge voters hold about issues, thus influencing the outcome of the election.

Bruce W. Hardy and Kathleen Hall Jamieson (2005) studied the link between the media publishing polling results and a candidate's image in "Can a Poll Affect Perception of Candidate Traits!" They found that in the 2004 election, an unusual character trait, stubbornness, was applied to the candidate, President George W. Bush. Because of polling data eventually published in newspapers, the public image of Bush and his ability to lead was slightly altered. The agenda-setting ability of the press was demonstrated by the research, and while the label did not result in significant voting differences, it proved that the public can often rely on the media to present a candidate's image.

Patricia Moy, Michael Xenos and Verena Hess (2005) analyzed the influence late-night comedy had on the image of presidential candidates in the 2000 campaign in “Priming Effects of Late-Night Comedy.” While perceptions of the candidates did not change from discussion of the candidates, it did change once candidates appeared on a late night show. For example, after George Bush appeared on a show, viewers rated him as much more trustworthy and likable than non-viewers. There was less of a change in opinion after an appearance by Al Gore, suggesting that the appearance of lesser known candidates can greatly influence the audience’s perspective of the individual. The study suggested that as the lines between entertainment and news continue to blur, late-night comedy shows could help to improve the image of a presidential candidate.

Julia Fox, James Angelini, and Christopher Goble (2005) performed a content analysis of television news coverage of the 1988, 1992, 1996 and 2000 presidential elections. They concluded in “Hype versus Substance in Network Television Coverage of Presidential Election Campaigns” that the media tended to focus on hype as opposed to genuine news stories. Studying both the audio and visual components of the news, they concluded that in both cases hype dominated. At times when the audio did cover a story with factual information, the visual aspect of the story remained focused on the hype. This distracting technique prevented much of the important information from being relayed to the American public. The study demonstrated the power the media has as a gatekeeper, determining the information which the American public receives and that which it does not receive. Such power allowed the media to create images of the candidates which may not be entirely accurate.

Media also had the ability to influence character perceptions in political campaigns, as many researchers have found. Benjamin G. Bishin, Daniel Stevens & Christian Wilson (2006) studied the effect of character on the 2000 presidential election in “Character Counts, Honesty and Fairness in Election 2000.” By analyzing how voters perceived presidential candidates’ characters and for whom they voted, the researchers were able to determine the importance of character perception. Specifically looking at truthfulness and fairness as characteristics, they studied exit polling to conclude that character evaluations play a significant role in determining voter choice for the presidency. For example, they found that when the perception of presidential candidate George Bush shifted from trustworthy to untrustworthy, the likelihood that a voter would support him drastically decreased. The study showed the impact of image and perception on a presidential election.

G. Mitchell Reyes (2006) studied the influence of political advertising on a presidential candidate’s character in “The Swift Boat Veterans for Truth, the Politics of Realism, and the Manipulation of Vietnam Remembrance in the 2004 Presidential Election.” Examining the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth, a group formed in 2004 to prevent candidate John Kerry from being elected, Reyes found that advertising can influence the perception the public has of the candidate. The ads portrayed Kerry as an untrustworthy and politically questionable individual, accusing him of receiving his war medals illegitimately and having a distorted view of the past and present. Reyes concluded that by using media to portray Kerry as unfit for the presidency, the public was unable to see the political motives behind the ad, and thus unable to accurately determine the trustworthiness of Kerry’s character.

Reviewing research that involved political image and character helped to create a basis for discussing Senator Clinton's image. In order to understand Senator Clinton as a feminist figure, however, it is also necessary to define feminism. Sonja K. Foss (2004) wrote in "Rhetorical Criticism; Exploration and Practice" that the most traditional view of feminism was a focus on "achieving equality for women with men and the development of opportunities for women without the constraints of gender expectations" (152). Rooted in "choice and self-determination," feminism could be a large movement or personal action, but focused on the liberation of women, or in more recent times, any oppressed group of individuals (154).

Many scholars addressed the state of feminism, some specifically have analyzed how it has changed since its initial definition. Stacey Sowards & Valerie Renegar (2004) wrote in "The Rhetorical Functions of Consciousness-raising in Third Wave Feminism" about "third wave" feminism, an emerging movement which looked at feminist thought using consciousness-raising to critically evaluate our cultural situation. "Third wave feminists share their stories, listen to others' stories, consume popular culture in ways that they find empowering, and create new vocabularies to enhance their own lives, but these activities do not necessarily lead to social activism in its traditional forms." (548). The newly developed form of feminism did not promote a shared feminist agenda, but "private, internal dialogue and self-persuasion" (549).

Scholars have studied feminism in relation to politically active individuals. S.G. Larson & L.M. Andrade (2005) addressed what caused women in the House of Representatives to receive news coverage in their article, "Determinants of national television news coverage of women in the House of Representatives, 1987-1998." Using

structure variables, member activities, and member leadership, they determined the most valuable cause of coverage. They concluded that running for higher office, media market size, political party, and seniority increased the news coverage about a woman politician. Working on women's issue bills also increased the news coverage for a woman. Interestingly enough, the amount that women representatives worked on other pieces of legislature was irrelevant, only women's issues were covered to a greater degree.

Elisabeth Gidengil and Joanna Everitt (2003) analyzed how news coverage of female politicians differed from that of male politicians in language style in the article "Talking tough: gender and reported speech in campaign news coverage." They found that the media presented female politicians' speech as much more aggressive and negative than the speech of male politicians. They concluded, "as novelties, their words and actions are subject to more analysis and interpretation, and their combative displays attract disproportionate attention. The traditional news frames, in short, result in sex-differentiated coverage, and this hurts, not helps, women's chances of electoral success" (228). In their analysis, they also found that women voters tend to respond more negatively to aggressive language, though this is the way the media presented women politicians. Thus, the likelihood of women supporting women lessens as well. This could greatly impact Senator Clinton in her 2008 campaign. Already a contentious figure, the media may present her as too aggressive, even as she is presented in feminine terms.

Bonnie Dow and Mari Boor Tonn (1993) looked at Ann Richards, former governor of Texas, and how she used rhetoric in the article "'Feminine Style' and Political Judgment in the Rhetoric of Ann Richards." They found a philosophy of feminine style, relying on anecdotes and "stressing the utility of using practical wisdom

in judging truth” (298). Richards often used self-disclosure and emotion in her speaking engagements, putting herself in the role of nurturing mother. Finally, the feminine role Richards undertook is evident in her use of a family model as an outline for political progress. Senator Clinton, also recognized as a strong female politician, may portray similar characteristics.

As Senator Clinton is a controversial and simultaneously much admired public figure, much as been written about her from a feminist perspective. Karrin Vasby Anderson (2002), in “Hillary Rodham Clinton as “Madonna”: the role of metaphor and oxymoron in image restoration,” analyzed Senator Clinton from a Madonna perspective. She particularly looked at how Senator Clinton used apologia to change her image after the disaster of her health care reform plan. Often seen as too pushy and demanding in the White House, many wondered how she managed to become elected to the United States Senate. Anderson (2002) pointed out the feminine changes which occurred in Senator Clinton during the last years in the White House, including more pastel colored clothing and a Jacqueline Kennedy type haircut. Her book, “It Takes a Village and Other Lessons Children Teach Us,” about childrearing and welfare, portrayed a nurturing and mothering side of Senator Clinton, and this feminine depiction of a woman was what helped restore her tarnished image. Finally, speaking on an international front, Senator Clinton presented herself as a feminine figure through the guise of the Madonna.

In “‘Rhymes with Rich’: ‘Bitch’ as a Tool of Containment in Contemporary American Politics,” Karrin Vasby Anderson (1999) found that when the mother of the Speaker of the House, Kathleen Gingrich, called Hillary Clinton a “bitch,” it had an impact on the way the American people viewed Clinton. The word caricatured Clinton’s

political identity, influencing how she was received by the public. A gendered term, it frames women in a negative light and Anderson concluded that it represents a fear of women in the political spectrum.

Sandy Nichols & Michelle Wolf (2000), in “News Media Construction of Womanhood in the 1990s: A Feminist Critique of the Rhetorical Contest between Hillary Clinton and Elizabeth Dole for First Lady During the 1996 Presidential Campaign,” looked at media images of Elizabeth Dole and Senator Clinton during the 1996 presidential election when their husbands were candidates. The study found that news coverage reinforced traditional gender roles. The media created a dominant culture that marginalized women in the public realm. Media portrayal gave males the power over action in the political arena, emphasizing a gender stereotype.

Shawn Parry-Giles (2006) analyzed how Senator Clinton’s image has changed during her conversion from first lady to senator in the article “Mediating Hillary Rodham Clinton: Television News Practices and Image-Making in the Postmodern Age.” Studying three television documentaries, he found that when Senator Clinton was seen as a weak victim of her husband’s infidelity she was popular, but when she tried to gain political power, her image was much more negative. They conclude “within the coverage of [Hillary Clinton] a troubling depiction resonates: we are to fear women with power yet admire women with the status of victim” (222). Such images of women can vastly alter a political campaign for a female candidate.

As this paper has examined Senator Clinton as a possible presidential contender, it is necessary to look at how gender stereotypes filter into presidential campaigns with female candidates. Shawn Parry-Giles and Trevor Parry-Giles (1996)

wrote in “Gendering politics and presidential image construction: a reassessment of the ‘feminine style’” about the dangers of ‘feminine style’ in rhetorical discourse. They argued that such a style can hide the masculine hegemony that is occurring in politics, leaving the patriarchal system in tact. Specifically analyzing presidential campaign films, they argued the films assign masculine characteristics to leadership capabilities, as well as put women as secondary in the political process.

Karrin Vasby Anderson (2002) agreed that women are marginalized when it comes to the presidency in her article, “From spouses to candidates: Hillary Rodham Clinton, Elizabeth Dole, and the gendered office of the U.S. president.” Looking at the media coverage surrounding Hillary Clinton and Elizabeth Dole during their respective 2000 campaign elections, Anderson (2002) found that while Clinton was helped by her gender during her run during her Senate campaign, Dole was arguably hurt by her gender during her presidential campaign, as people found it difficult to imagine a woman in the presidential office. Anderson (2002) concluded that while women may be making gains in other areas of the political realm, the public continues to consider the presidency a masculine position.

The media can also vary its portrayal of a politician. Erica Scharrer (2002) did a content analysis of 343 newspaper stories that looked at Senator Clinton’s transition from first lady to senator and wrote an article entitled “An “improbable leap”: a content analysis of newspaper coverage of Hillary Clinton’s transition from first lady to senate candidate.” In order to see if gender made a difference in the transition, Scharrer (2002) used Mayor Giuliani as a comparison. “This study finds that when Clinton was framed as performing traditionally supportive and ‘soft-news’ oriented roles, she was rewarded with

positive news coverage. When she forayed into independent political activity, with the Senate race as an important example, she was punished with negative coverage” (403). Thus Senator Clinton is pushed into a negative light if she does not maintain a stereotypical gender role.

As is established by current research, the media has the ability to shape the images of candidates. As Senator Clinton is a female known for her independence and strength, placing her into a feminine gender role could significantly change her image. In order to analyze the current situation, we must first discuss Feminist criticism and the artifacts relevant to the study.

Chapter 4: A Discussion of Feminist Criticism & Artifacts

As a woman, Clinton is in the minority in the senate. She is also one of very few women ever to have seriously contemplated a run for the presidency. Analyzing how her gender influenced news coverage helped to explain the stereotypes in the political system. Therefore, I used Feminist criticism to analyze the news coverage of Senator Clinton speculating on a possible presidential run.

Feminist criticism is defined by Sonja Foss (2004) as a method meant to help scholars engage in research relating to domination. By intervening in the ideology, scholars hope to challenge unconsciously accepted norms. "Feminist criticism is the analysis of rhetoric to discover how the rhetorical construction of gender is used as a means for domination and how that process can be challenged so that all people understand they have the capacity to claim agency and act in the world as they choose" (157). Gender, in particular, has associations with it that have been ingrained into our culture. Men are often associated with terms such as powerful, dominant, strong, and intelligent. Women, conversely, are often associated with terms such as weak, inferior, and dependent. Meant to be nurturing and supportive, women are associated with mothering skills, as opposed to intelligence in the career field. Sonja Foss and Cindy Griffin (1992) write that researchers working from a feminist angle believe that "most theories of rhetoric are inadequate and misleading because they contain a patriarchal bias - they embody the experiences and concerns of the white male as standard, thereby distorting or omitting the experiences and concerns of women" (331).

Men and women are stereotyped into specific roles and rhetoric often follows this social norm. Rhetoric, then, often portrays gender in differing terms. By analyzing how

the terms differ from masculine to feminine, scholars such as Bonnie Dow (1990) challenge the traditional depiction of gender. In analyzing the “role of women within popular culture, as producers, products, and spectators” feminist scholars determine the misleading stereotypes of gender (262). They then have the ability to analyze the effects stereotyped rhetoric can have on social construction of reality.

I have analyzed the media surrounding Senator Clinton’s presidential campaign using Feminist criticism. Studying the portrayal of the campaign from a Feminist perspective is important because stereotypes exist in the media. In order for voters to make an informed decision about whom to support for president, they must be able to recognize possible stereotypes that are portrayed by the media. Such stereotypes occur in all types of media, from television to blogs. I focused solely on print media, where many educated individuals receive information about the political sphere. However, print media can be taken as a representative sample of the media overall.

In order to collect news coverage of Senator Clinton that specifically addresses her possible bid for the presidency, two separate searches of Lexis-Nexis database were carried out. The database is a research tool used by many scholars to find articles covering news, politics, industry, and general medical topics, etc. Compiling articles from sources such as major papers, journals, magazines, newsletters, policy papers, and abstracts, the database has a wide variety of media coverage of political events. Though the database cannot be defined as explicitly non-biased, it contains enough of a variety of major American sources that it is not outwardly biased towards one political party. Thus, it is an acceptable way to obtain a sample of news articles relating to Senator Clinton.

The database was first searched using the terms “Hillary Clinton” and “presidential election” on November 9, 2006, prior to Senator Clinton’s candidacy announcement. Instead of conducting a simple search, I specialized the search in two areas to narrow the field to more relevant sources. The first search included General News with a focus on Major Papers. The second search, again with General News, focused on Magazines and Journals. Two separate searches were conducted in order to find as many major articles relating to Senator Clinton and the presidency as possible that were published on a national or international level, as opposed to local papers and magazines. Citizens of the United States can access larger news sources more easily than local ones from other areas, and thus these have more influence over general public opinion across the country or other English-speaking countries. While almost certainly some articles about Senator Clinton’s potential presidential run were missed by this survey, the articles that were found represent a general viewpoint that can be analyzed as a representative selection. It is important to note that not all articles found in the search were used for analysis. Only articles specifically mentioning Senator Clinton’s campaign were analyzed. Those that simply mention Senator Clinton’s name in conjunction with a different election or make no detailed comments about her merit as a candidate were discarded. In order to guarantee that the articles used were time relevant, the search was restricted to articles written after the 2004 presidential election through the date of the search.

The second search was carried out after Senator Clinton announced her candidacy. This search included articles from the day of Senator Clinton’s announcement on January 21, 2007 to the day of the search, January 30, 2007. The database was once

again searched for “Hillary Clinton.” Because of her recent announcement, there was no need to include the “Presidential Election” term, as most of the articles located focused on her recent announcement. Two searches were conducted on the second day, again with General News with a focus on Major Papers and then a focus on Magazines and Journals. Once again, not all articles in the database were used, as many included similar information. However, the articles selected are a representative sample of articles published about Senator Clinton’s bid for the presidency.

Chapter 5: Before the Announcement

The analysis of Senator Clinton as a stereotyped gender occurred in two distinct parts. I first analyzed articles written about Senator Clinton before her announcement about running for president and then analyzed articles written after the senator's announcement. The first articles speculate about her as a presidential candidate during her Senate term, but are written prior to any official announcement on her part. The categories were created from the repeating ways the senator was stereotyped as a female. Four distinct categories emerged during the analysis of the artifacts of the first section. The first of these I will call Sexualized Attributes. This category looks at coverage that discusses the physical aspects and sexuality of Senator Clinton. This may include areas such as dress, hairstyle, appearance in general, and sexual appeal. A focus on appearance indicates a gender stereotype, as male attire is not often discussed when analyzing prospective presidential candidates.

The second category, First Lady/Wife, analyzes how Senator Clinton is discussed in the media from a marital perspective. As Senator Clinton was first known on the national scene because of her husband's presidency, she may often be associated with President Clinton. The two have worked together on many political levels. However, since her election to the senate, she has created a position for herself as an important political figure without President Clinton. Should she be elected president, the title would be hers alone. Thus, looking at how the news covers Senator Clinton as a wife and former first lady demonstrates that she is stereotyped as a woman riding on her husband's coattails.

The third category, Career, includes all news discussion of Senator Clinton from a career perspective. How Senator Clinton is portrayed in her career impacts her potential for election. The media portraying her in solely feminine terms impacts her ability to be elected to a male-dominated seat.

Finally, Potential Male Attributes will include all terms that describe Senator Clinton in relation to a presidential run that seem to present her as a masculine figure. Such gendered terms could build Senator Clinton a strong image, as opposed to a weak, feminine image. Whether a strong image is advantageous to the Clinton campaign will be analyzed later in the paper.

Pretty Woman Walking Down the Street: The Sexualized Portrayal of Senator Clinton

One major stereotype of gender is the concept that women are meant to look physically attractive, both through actual physical appearance and choice of dress. Intertwined with this is the idea of the woman as the sexual creature, whose job is to please her husband. Senator Clinton is presented in the media as a sexual creature whose job is to woo the public into voting for her through charm and looks.

Tina Brown (2005), of *The Spectator*, uses numerous references to sexuality and appearance that make Senator Clinton appear as the stereotypical sexual woman in her article "Can anything stop Hillary?" To begin with, Brown describes Senator Clinton's dress and appearance. She writes that Senator Clinton's haircut was a "chic" and "functional bob" and that her clothes allowed her to "deftly avoid the fashion police in the power woman's burka, a black Armani pantsuit" as she used "flattery and guile in the female playbook" to bend political players to her side (18). The elaborate description of

Senator Clinton's hair and wardrobe implies that she used her feminine looks and sexuality, not her intelligence, to make political deals. Such a description puts Senator Clinton into a gender role; that of the traditional female using good looks to make up for her lack of brains.

Even when not relevant, other journalists have chosen to mention what Senator Clinton is wearing. The article "Doubting Hillary" by an unknown writer in *The Economist*, for example, describes her as "decked out in an orange trouser-suit" as she spoke at a conference in D.C. about America's future (1). Not only are none of the other speakers described in terms of their clothing, but the use of the term "decked out" implies her clothing is more important than her ideas. Thus, her gender is emphasized even when irrelevant to the situation.

Not only is Senator Clinton's physical image emphasized, but she is also presented as a sexualized creature. Discussing Senator Clinton's attempt at a political move from the strong Democratic left to a more centrist position, Brown (2005) writes that Senator Clinton has "worked her behind off in the backwoods wooing farmers and townsfolk upstate" (18). The mention of Senator Clinton's 'behind' immediately focuses the public on the senator's physical body, not her work as a politician. The idea that Senator Clinton has to woo voters to her side presents an image of the traditional charm a woman must use on her husband to get her way. It gives an impression that Senator Clinton is not capable of convincing people she has moved towards a more centrist viewpoint solely based on her merit and credentials. Unlike a male who stereotypically can use strength as a persuasive method, Senator Clinton must resort to other, more feminine methods.

Brown (2005) even puts Senator Clinton into gendered terms as she describes her prior to her senate election. She writes that “in the last days of the Clinton presidency I was one of six publishers who went to see her in the White House in a beauty contest to win her memoirs as First Lady” (18). She writes that Clinton “looked exhausted” and “the small attentive smile she always wears on the job was strained” (18). Describing the bid for a memoir of Clinton as First Lady as a beauty contest immediately puts Senator Clinton in the role of a female, whose job is to look as attractive as possible. The fact that she describes Senator Clinton as looking tired and without the “attentive smile” shows that even in stereotypical terms, Senator Clinton is failing. A woman should always appear attentive, as her job is to listen, and Senator Clinton cannot even manage that. Brown (2005) does not stop there, but continues to write that Senator Clinton “started pitching the book to us without any of the bonding and interpersonal foreplay you would have gotten with President Clinton” (18). The sexual connotation with “foreplay” and Senator Clinton’s lack of attention to it presents Senator Clinton as a woman who has failed at her job, sexually pleasing her husband, or in this case, pleasing the publishers. While Brown (2005) is reflecting on an event which occurred prior to Senator Clinton’s senate election and possible campaign for president, the memory is placed within an article discussing her possible election campaign. Showing her “wooing” the public and then discussing her failures as a woman, Brown (2005) presents an image of a person not capable of handling the office of the presidency. And she acknowledges that others agree, writing that another leading weekly, *The Nation*, had “kissed her [Senator Clinton] off last week” – yet another use of terminology presenting the idea of the female being dismissed (19).

Holly Yeager (2006), of the *Financial Times*, also presents Senator Clinton as a sexual being in “Unusual new friends help Clinton shed her liberal past.” Discussing the idea that Rupert Murdoch was planning on holding a fundraiser for Senator Clinton, Yeager (2006) refers to the newly formed relationship between the two as a “careful courtship” (7). She writes that Senator Clinton has “also courted high-profile Republican politicians” and that her “‘strange bed fellows’ tactic” was hurting her from a liberal perspective (7). Again, Senator Clinton is referenced as using sexuality, not intelligence, to gain success. While certainly male politicians can also be described this way, in combination with other physical descriptions, the image of the senator is one of a less capable female.

As Ezra Klein, of the *Los Angeles Times*, writes in “The job she should want” that success for Senator Clinton in the Senate depends on “odd bedfellows” and Senator Clinton is the “rarest of creatures, able to conjure partisan passions when elections beckon but also to resurrect constructive relationships when legislation needs to be passed” (13). Calling Senator Clinton a “rare creature” presents her as an illusive and mysterious being, not quite human. This description, followed by her changing alliances, creates an image of Senator Clinton as a woman willing to use her sexuality as the key to getting what she needs through passion, not as an independent leader.

The sexual references emphasize Senator Clinton’s gender, undermining her ability to show her strengths from a non-gender related perspective. For example, during the catastrophe of the Katrina flood in New Orleans, John Heilemann (2005), of the *New York Magazine*, wrote of Senator Clinton in sexualized terms in “Katrina and the Clintons.” Referring to the mess of Katrina as an advantage for Senator Clinton because

it demonstrated the inefficiency of the Bush administration, Heilmann (2005) wrote “that Hillary has jumped so lustily into the Katrina fray isn’t terribly surprising” (3). The image of ‘lust’ implies that Senator Clinton thinks with her heart, not her head. Indeed, when it comes to Senator Clinton being successful, the terms most often used revolve around sexuality and passion, not intellect (E. Klein, 2006; R. Cohen, 2006).

A focus on Senator Clinton’s physical and feminine attributes separates her from other presidential candidates by emphasizing her gender. Implying that she must use charm and appearance to be successful in the workplace gives her an image of a weak female. Such a presentation undermines the senator’s ability to demonstrate her intelligence in a competitive political atmosphere.

In the Kitchen: How Senator Clinton Becomes the Traditional Wife

Stereotypical gender roles place the husband as the provider and leader of the family, while the wife stays home to keep house and raise the children. Many feminists hold Senator Clinton in high regard for supposedly defying gender role stereotypes. Her impressive list of accomplishments, including her job as a United States Senator, appears to place her in stereotypical male territory. However, the media continues to portray her in terms related to her role as a first lady, as well as the wife of former President Bill Clinton.

The most blatant way the media stereotypes Senator Clinton as a wife is the continual labeling of her as the “former first lady.” Half of the articles examined as artifacts label Senator Clinton as a former first lady. Nearly all of the articles mention Senator Clinton as a first lady in one degree or another. However it is *how* the article

discusses the position that at times can infer a gender stereotype. Because she has already experienced living in the White House via her husband's presidency, it makes sense that a reference about Senator Clinton's past time in Washington would be mentioned when discussing the possibility of her running for president. Many articles refer to her time in the White House as a first lady, as well as how she was viewed by the country at the time and how this would affect her presidential potential. However, several of the articles refer to Senator Clinton as the "former First Lady" as a title, not as a discussion of her past experience, labeling her as a female counterpart to a male leadership role.

For example, Sarah Baxter of *The Australian* discusses the idea that Senator Clinton might be too risky of a candidate for the Democrats in "Democrats fear Hillary too risky." She writes "Mike McCurry, Mr. Clinton's former press secretary, fears the 2008 campaign could be brutal for the former first lady" (12). In the opening line to the third paragraph, she refers to Senator Clinton as a first lady, but has yet to mention that Clinton is also a senator. Because the article is published in an international source, it is more likely that readers will recognize Senator Clinton as a former first lady, not in her current position as a senator. However, it is also important to write about situations in present tense, which this reporter has failed to do. Thus, the label has undermined Senator Clinton's capability not only as a senator, but also as a presidential contender. It is not her former time in the White House that will get her elected, but her experience in the political arena without President Clinton, including her work as a senator. By first referring to her as a former first lady, the senator is labeled as a wife, promoting the stereotype of the husband as the powerful figure.

The labeling of Senator Clinton as first lady in half of the articles is also surprising because of the way she earned the title. The first lady was never an official job to which Senator Clinton was elected, but a role won due to the success of her husband. Conversely, the title of senator was very much a job to which she was elected. After six years out of the White House, it is not surprising that the media refers to her time as a first lady, but it is surprising that many continue to “label” Clinton as a first lady even before mentioning her official title of senator.

Even those articles discussing Senator Clinton in terms of her time as first lady use other methods of gender stereotyping the potential presidential contender, most often by referring to her in terms of her husband. Thomas B. Edsall of *The New Republic* writes of Senator Clinton in terms of her relationship with her husband, even as he analyzed the tumultuous political relationship between Howard Dean and Senator Clinton in “The grudge.” “This time,” he writes, “it is the Clintons who are the insurgents, but insurgents who represent the Democratic establishment” (10). The article continues labeling Senator Clinton’s career in terms related to the couple, not just to her alone. Portraying the Clintons as a political team implies that Senator Clinton needs President Clinton in order to succeed in the political realm.

Indeed, Richard Cohen of the *Washington Post* believes that not only does Senator Clinton need President Clinton to succeed, but she herself might be the cause of a failure. He writes in “Hillary gets an address wrong” that a restoration to the presidency might be possible. “After all, if the Bushes could do it – one mediocre, the other incompetent – then why not the brilliant and dazzling Clintons? The answer may be Senator Clinton herself. She can bore a grateful nation” (A21). Such description leaves

President Clinton the sole political leader in the relationship, and Senator Clinton a bumbling wife that belongs at home, who even with the help of a successful husband may still fail in the career world.

Philip Sherwell of the *Sunday Telegraph* wastes no time in labeling Senator Clinton in terms of President Clinton. He titled his article “Clinton enters White House race – this time for his wife Senator Clinton repositions herself to steal Republicans’ thunder and builds a war chest for the 2008 presidential campaign” (025). Listing former President Clinton first implies that he is the strong leader, the one to be watching in the press. The title puts Senator Clinton in the position of the weaker wife, needing President Clinton’s help to build a war chest. Sherwell (2005) also uses the tactic of referring to the Clintons as a team. When explaining how Senator Clinton was recently attacked in a biography by Ed Klein, he writes “The Clintons are fighting back,” once again creating the gender stereotype that Senator Clinton cannot handle bad press on her own and needs her husband to protect her (025).

Yeager (2006) writes that “[Senator Clinton] is every bit the political heir to Clinton” and that “it’s pretty clear that she just wants to run the kind of campaign her husband ran in 1992” (7). Presenting Senator Clinton as an “heir” implies that should she be elected, it would be a position bestowed upon her due to her husband, not because of her own capabilities. Such language, including that of running a similar presidential campaign to President Clinton’s, does not put Senator Clinton in the role of a successful woman. Instead, it creates the idea that the presidency would be handed to her as an inheritance, much like women in the past have come into political jobs through inheritance after their husbands’ deaths.

Even writers seeming to portray Senator Clinton in terms unrelated to gender include subtle messages. Adam Harvey of the *Herald Sun* writes in “Hillary’s power play” about a fundraiser hosted by Rupert Murdoch. The language seems to present an independent Senator Clinton. “President Clinton and Hillary are rarely seen together any more, in what is seen as a calculated political move to avoid tainting Hillary’s campaign” (91). For once, it appears that a writer is acknowledging that Senator Clinton is a capable politician, and that her relationship with her husband could actually hurt, not help, her political career. Yet again the writing turns to gendered terms. “The only thing that Hillary Clinton lacks these days, it seems, is a date with her husband” (91). Even the concluding sentence implies gender roles. “And in January 2009, she might be back in the White House, getting reacquainted with her husband over dinner” (91). Harvey (2006) implies that something is missing in Senator Clinton’s life because she is lacking a date with her husband. Again, this relies on the stereotype that a wife depends on the husband for companionship. Concluding the article with the implication that her life will be fulfilled not when she is president, but when she can finally have a dinner date with her husband, returns to the concept that a woman is not complete without a man on which she can depend. The description also implies that the Clinton marriage might be in trouble. Again, this puts Senator Clinton in the stereotyped role of a woman achieving ultimate failure: the failure of her marriage.

The continuous inclusion of Senator Clinton’s relationship with President Clinton indicates that without the connection, she might not be as powerful. Subtly indicating that a man is necessary for a woman to achieve success puts gender role limitations on Senator Clinton’s accomplishments. Yet by examining her past, it is evident that Senator

Clinton was a successful and unusual woman long before President Clinton became president. However, since the general audience does not have an extensive knowledge of Senator Clinton's background, they are left with the impression that her success results from the success of her husband.

**It's A Man's World:
Senator Clinton in the Workplace**

Traditional gender roles place males as independent caretakers, going to work everyday to provide for the family. Women, on the other hand, are traditionally meant to stay at home, lacking the necessary skills to compete in a career field. Analyzing how the media portrays Senator Clinton's career demonstrates whether she is placed in a traditional, stereotyped gender role or if she is acknowledged for her success based on her own merits.

Andrew Stephan (2005), of the *New Statesman*, describes Senator Clinton as working hard to present herself as a potential presidential candidate in "America-Andrew Stephan watches Hillary get into gear." He writes, "she is working so furiously hard that she collapsed on stage before giving a speech" (1). Such a description does not demonstrate the hard work that Senator Clinton has put into a campaign, but portrays a weak woman, not capable of handling the tasks of presidency if she cannot even handle the run to be elected. He finishes the article by discussing a potential run by Condoleezza Rice, saying "these two women fighting it out for the White House: now *that* would be entertaining" (2). The description of two women physically fighting presents a 'mud wrestling' sort of image, demeaning to both women and implying that a run for president for either of them would be entertainment, not serious politics. The implication is that any

woman running for president would be for the purpose of public entertainment, not the work of a serious politician and a future world leader. Thus, Senator Clinton is described as not belonging in the field of presidential nominees.

Kathryn Jean Lopez (2006) of the *National Review* also portrays Senator Clinton as out of place in the presidential election in “HRC Opportunity Society.” Describing the heat Republicans are taking on recent political moves, Lopez writes that “Hillary should be writing thank-you notes” (1). Lopez writes that the White House would be Senator Clinton’s not because of her accomplishments, but solely because of Republican mistakes. At the same time, she invokes an image of the perfect wife, sitting at home writing thank-you notes, not a hard working woman who has the ability to run the country. Such imagery takes away Senator Clinton’s ability to appear as an equal in the world of politics.

Jonathan Alter (2006) of *Newsweek* also writes about Senator Clinton’s career in feminine terms in “The Clinton Battle Plan.” Discussing her ability to have long-term vision for the country, Alter writes “Hillary is still too often what one of her biographers, Michael Tomasky, calls the ‘Laundry Lady,’ reciting a laundry list of worthy ideas that don’t yet add up to a compelling vision” (26). Specifically repeating the nickname ‘Laundry Lady’ implies that Senator Clinton belongs in the domestic sphere, and cannot handle the task of creating a worthwhile vision for the country. Alter emphasizes her gender by using strong feminine language instead of describing the situation differently.

Many of the articles discuss an imagery shift Senator Clinton has made during her time in the Senate; now focusing on a centrist presentation as opposed to a leftist one. Brown (2005) addresses this, writing “the snippy feminist who nearly derailed her

husband's first presidential campaign by scoffing that she didn't just 'stay home and bake cookies' can now be presented as the Butter Queen of the Empire State" (18). She describes Clinton's actions as all "homey practicality since she got out of the White House" (19). Describing Senator Clinton's image as a senator in terms of "homey" and "Butter Queen" gives an image of femininity to her. Brown (2005) compares Clinton to a traditional housewife, which makes her seem safer to the voting audience than an image of a woman performing a man's job.

Kathy Kiely of *USA TODAY* also creates a feminine image of Senator Clinton in "Democrats give Hillary Clinton early lead for president" where she describes Senator Clinton as "a best-selling author and the only former first lady ever to be elected to office" (1A). While the intention may have been to applaud Senator Clinton for succeeding at being elected even with an unusual past, she instead undermines Senator Clinton's success. First mentioning Senator Clinton as a best-selling author, instead of senator or even first lady, puts the emphasis on her as a writer. This quality is highlighted, not her achievement from a feminist standpoint as the only first lady elected to office.

Sarah Baxter, of *The Australian* writes of Senator Clinton's role in the Senate as a forger of political alliances. Interviewing Mike McCurry, Clinton's former Press Secretary, she writes of Senator Clinton, "According to Mr McCurry, she is enjoying the role of consensus-maker" (12). While the role of mediator may be an admirable one, it also can contain gender stereotypes. A traditional female, as a mother, is meant to help settle disputes among children, as well as remain a devoted listener to her husband. Other articles confirm the image of Senator Clinton uniting others. Adam Harvey (2006) writes

“her Senate career has been remarkable for its lack of controversy. As First Lady, she divided Americans with her oversized role....Yet as a junior New York senator she’s managed to win support” (B07). Senator Clinton’s description fits this image; that of a patient woman/mother figure dedicated to solving differences among individuals.

Harvey (2006) continues to describe Senator Clinton’s career in feminine terms. “Her mild positions are beginning to anger the left of her own party. A week ago in Washington, she tiptoed between slamming President George W. Bush’s policies on Iraq and standing by his refusal to set a date to withdraw US troops” (B07). Harvey (2006) is discussing the fact that Senator Clinton seems to have suddenly taken a more centrist stance since her election to senate, perhaps gearing up for a presidential run. However, using terms such as “mild” and “tiptoed” creates an image of weakness and insecurity. The description reflects a female unsure of her situation and not capable of a leadership role, instead depending on a traditional male to make decisions.

Though Senator Clinton’s new, centrist stance may have been a purposeful image shift, the media portrays it as a weakness. The seeming lack of decision-making skills coupled with the intention of uniting the Senate creates an image of a female unable to keep pace with the tough, traditionally male workplace. The media presents Senator Clinton as a needy female who does not belong in the workplace as she is too mild and not aggressive enough for the political realm. This image is ironic, as the Senator Clinton from President Clinton’s presidential years was known as just the opposite, tough and overbearing.

**A Mile in His Shoes:
Senator Clinton's Potential Masculine Attributes**

In order to fully analyze the artifacts, it was necessary to do so from the perspective of a masculine stereotype as well. Because Senator Clinton is seen by much of the public as a powerful and divisive person, she is also written about in gendered terms that imply masculine characteristics. If masculine characteristics appeared as frequently as stereotypical female characteristics, then it would be fair to assess the articles as not creating a stereotypical image that could influence the political process. However, this was not the case. Here, I present how Senator Clinton is stereotyped as a male. While this may at first appear to be a counter-argument to my analysis of the media presenting Senator Clinton in feminine terms, I will eventually demonstrate that even when she is written about in stereotypical male terms, subtle nuances cause her to remain perceived as a female.

Two repeating messages appear throughout the articles that seem to have masculine attributes attached. The first is the continuous reference to the money Senator Clinton has in her war chest for the 2006 senate re-election, and speculation that this money is actually being raised for a 2008 presidential campaign. Either way, the amount of money being raised by Senator Clinton is proclaimed as impressive. Robert Schlesinger of *Campaign and Elections* writes in "Plotting the cash path" that "news that Senator Clinton, D-N.Y., had raised \$ 6 million from April through June sent shockwaves through the political circles" (19). He calls her skills "apparent fund-raising invincibility" that in the past "would have almost certainly made her the party nominee" (19). Nearly all of the other articles also mention Senator Clinton's war chest one way or another, from simply noting she has been campaigning to marveling at the massive amount of

money raised. Such descriptions place Senator Clinton into a masculine stereotype, as a powerful man who is capable of going into the work field and finding success. Placing her as a potential threat to other Democrats running for a presidential election puts her on a level playing field with males. It gives the impression that Senator Clinton is strong and belongs in politics, not just in the home. Such images are usually assigned to males.

The other common description of Senator Clinton is that of her as a war hawk. Philip Sherwell (2005) of the *Sunday Telegraph* points out in “Clinton enters White House race” that “she has maintained a robust stance on national security, stood by her support for the invasion of Iraq – to the dismay of the Democrats” (025). The tough stance she has taken on Iraq has caused her to become labeled as a “ ‘hawk’ by calling for the army’s numbers to be increased by 80,000 soldiers over four years” (025). Many of the articles claim that Senator Clinton’s view on Iraq comes as she tries to reposition herself towards a more centrist stance, angering many of her former allies. “Ms Clinton’s hawkish stance on the war on terror, Iraq and Iran has infuriated the anti-war movement. Molly Ivins, a left-wing commentator, wrote last week that she would not support her for president” (Baxter, 2006, 12). Others agree that this could isolate Senator Clinton from the Democratic Party. Paul Harris of the *Observer* writes “she has adopted a hawkish stance, firmly against any withdrawal of American troops. ‘She’s not listening to her constituents when it comes to how they feel about the war in Iraq,’ said a spokeswoman for Code Pink, a woman’s anti-war group” (39).

The labeling of Senator Clinton as a hawk is significant in gender terms. However, it is important to note that it is not the definition of ‘hawk’ that is important, as both men and woman can be pro-war. What *is* relevant is that Senator Clinton is taking a

stance on the war not supported by the majority of her constituents and followers. Therefore, when the term 'hawk' is used, it presents an image of a strong-minded individual who knows exactly what she believes is right, even if others disagree. The description of Senator Clinton as following her own mind creates a gender stereotype of a man as a leader, not a woman who is meant to listen to her husband. Instead, Senator Clinton appears as a masculine figure, who knows what is best for his country more than those not in his professional career of politics. Senator Clinton falls into this stereotype and is presented as a leader who belongs in the political realm.

While the two descriptions of Senator Clinton at first appear to present her in masculine terms, it is necessary to analyze what is coupled with the descriptions in order to understand their impact. To begin with, a third description of Senator Clinton is also often included: her work on the issue of abortion. Sherwell (2005) for example, mentions Senator Clinton's views on abortion *before* mentioning her hawkish Iraq position. "Most significantly, the strongly pro-choice Mrs. Clinton has put the emphasis on reducing abortions by preventing unwanted pregnancies" (025). The description continues for two paragraphs, while the mention of her position on Iraq comes later in the article, and is only one sentence. While it is important for the audience to know Senator Clinton's work surrounding a controversial issue such as abortion, placing it before her stance on the Iraq war gives the impression that to Senator Clinton, the issue of abortion is more important than the issue of the war. Written a year after an election where the Iraq war played a significant role and at a time when much of the world has become disillusioned with the war, it puts Senator Clinton in a weaker position to her male counterparts by mentioning a woman's issue first. Especially unusual is that this article comes from a British

newspaper. Since the United State's policy on Iraq influences the British much more than our domestic policy on abortion, placing the abortion stance first firmly puts Senator Clinton into the female category. Thus, even as she is presented in a masculine role she is dominated by female stereotypes.

Her hawkish stance on the war is also questionable in other ways. From a masculine perspective, choosing to go against the traditional democratic stance on the war makes her appear strong and independent. However, it is often written that her stance is an attempt to gain more centrist support. Because the articles mention her hawkish stance in relation to a move towards a centrist viewpoint, Senator Clinton takes on a gender role of a woman attempting to win by pleasing others; the others, in this case, being those in the center who disliked Senator Clinton prior to her conversion to more modest stances. Thus, she no longer appears an independent thinker, but a weaker figure bending to others' beliefs and opinions.

The issue of money also can place Senator Clinton in a female role. It seems to portray her as powerful. Statements such as "She's got the money," made by Harvey (2006) of the *Herald Sun* seem to present her as a winner. However, this interpretation can also go both ways. The amount of money Senator Clinton has collected has placed her in the race, but perhaps not because of her capabilities as a leader, but simply because she has the money. Indeed, when the journalists speculate about Senator Clinton's likelihood of election, it is the money they mention first, not her credentials. With this interpretation Senator Clinton does not look powerful, but appears as relying on the support of money to succeed, not her own merit.

Certainly, any male politician could also be placed in the position of being labeled on money, not merit, or changing to a hawkish stance to win support. Alone, the labels do not necessarily create a stereotypical gender image. However, what is unique about Senator Clinton's situation is that this label is combined with the numerous stereotypes mentioned previously (image, wife, etc). Thus, while alone the money or the hawk issue could be of little relevance from a gender standpoint, in combination with other gender stereotypes, it creates an image of Senator Clinton as a weaker female.

There is one final difference between the way Senator Clinton is presented as in stereotypical masculine and stereotypical feminine terms. When written about in feminine terms, the description of Senator Clinton is always changing. She goes from a housewife, to timid, to dependent, to something completely new and different. The same does not occur when Senator Clinton is placed into a masculine gender role. There is a pattern throughout the artifacts when Senator Clinton is described in masculine terms that include her hawkish stance and large war chest. Such a pattern indicates that the writers of the articles are simply repeating those images of Senator Clinton. The random descriptions that occur when Senator Clinton is described as a stereotypically feminine demonstrates that the images are created by the writers themselves, not taken from other sources. Thus, though perhaps unconsciously, Senator Clinton is presented overall as a stereotypically feminine, even as she is written about as a potential presidential candidate.

Chapter 6: After the Announcement

I have examined how Senator Clinton was presented in the media prior to her announcement about running for president. The media's presentation of Senator Clinton remained stereotyped as she publicly campaigned for the presidency. The second section of analysis will also be divided into four subsections based on repetitive topics found in the articles. In the post-announcement period, many of the gender stereotypes remained the same, such as labeling the senator as a former first lady. Because they have already been discussed, I re-address these stereotypes in a short section in the beginning. There is also a broader focus on the senator's political experience as well. These new patterns have emerged repetitively. I will focus mostly on the three new patterns.

The first category is a mixture of Gender-Related Material which occurred both prior to the senator's announcement and again as she campaigned for the presidency. The continual emphasis on the gender of the senator puts her into the role of a female celebrity, not that of a capable, strong, responsible presidential contender.

The next section, Resume, includes articles that list a basic outline of Senator Clinton's past political experience. In order for an article to not have gender biases description, the article should list Senator Clinton's personal political experience and expertise, not just the time she spent in the White House with her husband. A resume that ignores many important parts of her career or focuses instead on her husband's career demonstrates a gender description of Senator Clinton.

The final two sections, President Clinton's Help and President Clinton's Harm, focus on Senator Clinton's husband. Many articles suggest Senator Clinton is helped by her husband's well-known name and that his contacts will help her to win the campaign.

Other articles imply that because of his tumultuous time in the White House, President Clinton will hurt the senator's chances at being elected to the position herself. Because the senator is married to a former president, it is expected that most articles will mention the senator's husband when discussing the campaign. However, if the articles imply that Senator Clinton is only in the race because of her husband's past political experience, the audience receives an image of a woman incapable of winning on her own. At the same time, many articles discuss the difficulties the Clintons had in the White House, speculating that Senator Clinton could never win because of her husband's scandals. The examination of the articles that imply whether Senator Clinton is hurt or helped by the legacy of her husband exposes gender-related stereotypes which need to be addressed.

It's Raining Woman: Gender-Related Material about Senator Clinton

Most of the gender stereotypes which occurred in articles in the first section also occurred post-announcement, during her campaign. The following are an assortment of stereotypes that create an image of the senator as an inferior, weaker political candidate because of her gender.

Andrew Sullivan of *The Australian* immediately refers to Senator Clinton in gendered terms in "New, sensible Hillary much harder to hate," describing her as "Lady Macbeth" and explaining "there were as many ways to despise her as she had hairstyles" (11). The senator is labeled as the Shakespearean character whose main role as a wife was to commit a murder her husband was not capable of performing. The character of Lady Macbeth meets an unhappy fate, suicide, after her guilt takes control of her actions. Lady Macbeth is traditionally seen as an evil and manipulative person. By implying that

Senator Clinton is a modern day Lady Macbeth, Sullivan (2007) creates an image of the senator as a wife first and foremost, one that is not capable of handling the power of the presidency. The mention of her hairstyles is also problematic. Once again appearance takes the place of intelligence and capability when describing the senator. Focusing on her hairstyles over time instead of her accomplishments implies that Senator Clinton's importance involves physical image, not independent ability.

Michael McAuliff (2007) of *Daily News* writes about the senator from a gendered perspective. His headline reads "Hillary makes herstory" (3). The three word phrase emphasizes the senator's gender in more than one way. To begin with, referring to the senator as Hillary, as opposed to by her last name, is more informal. Most articles refer to other presidential candidates by their last names, Obama, Edwards, etc. This more formal usage is a sign of respect towards the candidate. Using the senator's first name makes her appear less powerful and important and allows the title of Senator to disappear. Also, the play on the word 'history' to 'herstory' directly points out the senator's gender. While catchy headlines may help to sell newspapers, this is a way of placing Senator Clinton into a different category than all other presidential contenders, one that makes it more difficult to win. The image of Senator Clinton is that of an unusual spectacle when she is specifically labeled by her gender. Instead of being a competent politician she becomes an interesting and unusual specimen, thus limited by her gender.

Kenneth Bazinet (2007) of *Daily News* notes Senator Clinton's loss of big-ticket donor George Soros to Senator Obama using gendered terms. The gender stereotyping begins in the headline, which reads "Moneyman Soros dumps her for Obama" (4). The term 'dumps' implies a romantic relationship between the senator and Soros, not a

business relationship. The middle school language of ending a relationship, “dumps,” puts Senator Clinton in the position of a scorned lover, not a presidential contender losing support. Apparently the loss of support does not stop Senator Clinton, who “had hoped to woo him back” (4). Again, just as a teenage girl in love hopes to charm her ex-boyfriend into dating her again, so the senator wishes to ‘woo’ back Soros. The use of sexualized terms and comparison to a romantic relationship creates the image of Senator Clinton as a broken-hearted female, using her charm and sexuality to try and regain her lost supporter.

Michael Goodwin (2007) of *Daily News* emphasizes Senator Clinton’s gender by attempting to applaud her for her efforts in “Clinton’s off and running from day 1.” He begins with “Love her or hate her, you have to say Hillary Clinton knows how to make an entrance... You could hear strains of Helen Reddy’s anthem of ‘I am woman, hear me roar’” (4). Describing the senator as making an entrance by entering the presidential race gives the public an image of the senator entering a party or an event, not a race for the most important office in the country. The use of the musical reference blatantly labels the senator as a woman, implying that she is different in some way than other candidates. While it is true that Senator Clinton’s gender does distinguish her from her competitors, the article focuses on that distinction, limiting the audience from viewing the senator as anything but a woman. Goodwin (2007) continues attempting to flatter the senator, all the while focusing the public on her gender. He writes “as opening shots go, that one’s got more brass than anything a man has ever dared say” (4). Again, the use of gender limits the audience’s perspective. Not only is the senator compared to a man, but the use of the term ‘brass’ also implies that the senator has male genitalia. Goodwin (2007) applauds the senator by trying to create a masculine image for her. Such an image implies that the

political field is a man's arena, and a woman must use masculine tactics to be successful. Finally, Goodwin (2007) writes "the notion that she is too calculating and cautious to a fault are her biggest obstacles to the Oval Office, especially for a woman during war" (4). While it is refreshing to read that the senator's biggest obstacle is not her gender, Goodwin brings up the issue once again. Mentioning that Senator Clinton is a woman running for office during a war implies that women do not naturally belong as leaders during war. This creates a stereotypical image of women as weaker, needy creatures while men are the strong, protective ones.

Michael Daly (2007) of *Daily News* created a stereotypical gender role for Senator Clinton in "Again at pit of despair." He opens the article with "the person currently the most likely to become our next President arrived at Ground Zero yesterday in a long black coat and a lavender zip-up sweater" (13). Daly (2007) began the sentence in an unbiased manner, not implying gender at all. However by the end of the sentence the audience is well aware of which candidate Daly (2007) is describing. Without even using terms explicitly labeling gender, Daly (2007) manages to place Senator Clinton into the stereotypical female role, where clothes matter more than a person's experience. In fact, he describes the senator's outfit before even explaining what the senator is doing, or why she is there. Thus the public perceives that the image of the senator physically is more important than her actions. Daly (2007) fully develops the stereotypical image of Senator Clinton by describing her reaction to a story about 9/11. "Clinton's eyes were welling as [the boy] asked for something on behalf of all those who are still affected by 9/11" (13). While certainly a serious and sensitive topic such as 9/11 might cause any candidate's eyes to well, regardless of gender, the combination of the two descriptions

create a stereotypical role for Senator Clinton. She appears as a woman, concerned about her looks and emotionally sensitive to difficult situations. This image gives an impression of a weak woman unable to handle serious and sensitive situations.

At times, descriptions of Senator Clinton put her into the category of celebrity, not serious politician. Sarah Baxter (2007) of *The Australian* writes in “First lady for president” about the senator’s announcement regarding her potential candidacy. Baxter (2007) quotes campaign chairman Terry McAuliffe saying “She has the name recognition, the money, the glitz that goes with all this – she’s got it all”(11). The inclusion of the quote emphasizes an image of Senator Clinton as a well-known individual with money, somewhat like a celebrity, de-emphasizing her experience as a politician. Baxter (2007) writes herself that Senator Clinton has “almost as much celebrity power as ‘Hillary’, who, like Madonna and Britney, needs no second name” (11). Comparing the senator with popular singers puts her in the same category. Suddenly she is reduced to a familiar celebrity, not an intelligent woman with a high position in the government of the United States.

Thomas M. DeFrank of *Daily News* also refers to the senator as a celebrity in “Republicans party over prospect of Hil as nominee.” Discussing her impressive assets, DeFrank (2007) includes her “rock-star appeal, enormous name recognition...and a trailblazer pedigree” (3). Mentioning the ‘rock star appeal’ first, he gives the impression that the best the senator has to offer is popularity in a musical sense. This coupled with money and name recognition again place the senator in terms of celebrity, not in terms of a political leader. The image of glitz and glam create creates a stereotypical Hollywood female role of superficiality: beautiful, but lacking intelligence.

At times, it is not the celebrity power of the senator, but the obvious lack of the senator's image which makes her appear inferior. Daren Briscoe (2007), of *Newsweek*, writes in "Net Roots Gets Meta" about presidential candidates on MySpace. Many candidates have created MySpace profiles, allowing individuals to become online 'friends' with them to help spread the message about their campaigns. In the article, Briscoe (2007) mentions the number of friends different candidates currently have, including Senator Barack Obama at 48,000 and Senator Clinton at 25,000. Underneath the article are pictures of five of the candidates with short facts about their MySpace profiles. Interestingly enough, all five of the picture are of men: Senator Obama, former Governor Mitt Romney, Governor Bill Richardson, Senator Sam Brownback and Representative Ron Paul. The article only mentions two of the five pictured and the only person not pictured that the article discusses is Senator Clinton. The lack of a picture for Senator Clinton makes her appear less important and inferior to the men pictured, though in fact she has thousands of more friends than all but Senator Obama. Because Senator Obama is both pictured and discussed in the article, he appears superior and a more worthy candidate than Senator Clinton, whose blatantly missing picture puts her at a serious disadvantage.

Though the individual references about Senator Clinton may not develop her image into a gender stereotype, the media has continuously referred to the senator in gendered terms. This pattern of coverage emphasizes gender, and thus stereotypes the senator as a weaker female. A focus on celebrity status, clothing and hair, and other domesticated references portrays Senator Clinton as a candidate with less intellectual ability.

An Application for President Please: A Look at Senator Clinton's Resume

Stereotypical gender roles create the image of women as less important in the workplace, working under someone else, while men are often put into leadership positions working for themselves. Such positioning implies that men are more capable and meant to lead, while women are better at following. Many articles list presidential candidates' previous job and academic history. In order to assess that Senator Clinton is stereotyped by the media, it was important to examine how the media portrayed her previous work experience.

Tina Moore (2007) of the *Daily News* concludes the article "Humble start to amazing journey" with a checklist of major events and accomplishments in the senator's life. The list at first appears to be flattering to Senator Clinton's ability. It mentions her Wellesley commencement address, her Yale Law time, and her work for the House Judiciary Committee. However after 1975, where Moore (2007) notes that the senator marries her husband, all of the dates relate to her husband's career. In 1978 he is elected governor, in 1992 she helps him survive a sex scandal during the presidential campaign, in 1993 "Bill appoints Hillary to a lofty position in his administration to overhaul the country's health care system" (6). It is not until 2000, when Senator Clinton wins her senate seat, that she is mentioned as an individual again. For 25 years Moore (2007) creates an image of Senator Clinton that is only related to her husband's career, not mentioning the work the senator accomplished on her own in her law practice while simultaneously serving as Arkansas' first lady. Not only does the omission leave out relevant experience the senator has in relation to being an accomplished presidential

candidate, but it also places her as inferior to her husband in her work ability, as her career appears to have depended on him.

Jerry Zremski (2007), in his article “Clinton enters race for presidency” in *The Buffalo News*, bases all of Senator Clinton’s life accomplishments around her husband. Except for the first two sentences, which include her birth and a brief mention of her education, Zremski (2007) begins writing about the senator’s life in respect to her husband, beginning with “she attended Wellesley College and Yale Law School, where she met her husband-to-be” (A1). With no mention of her high academic achievements during her education, the public is left with the impression that the only thing she accomplished was marriage, though she actually graduated at the top of her class. Zremski (2007) skips all of the senator’s early accomplishments, writing solely about her husband’s election to president in 1992. “He was elected to the first of two terms as president in 1992, but even in his first campaign it became clear that she would be no ordinary first lady” (A1). Yet Zremski (2007) does not explain why she was not ordinary during the campaign, except that she refused to spend her time “baking cookies” (A1). Leaving out all of the senator’s personal accomplishments creates an image of her as a less important figure in the workplace than her husband, relying on him for career advances.

Stefanie Balogh (2007) of *The Daily Telegraph*, in “Hillary unfurls her primary colors as she declares: I’m in” writes even less about the senator’s accomplishments in the small resume-like list at the end of her article. In eleven words, she covers the time from the senator’s birth to her graduation from law school in just one bullet point. Yet her marriage in 1975 receives its own bullet point. The only mention of her career

accomplishments includes her time as first lady and her time as senator. Though the second does make her appear more independent, the lack of detail, coupled with the amount of time focused on her husband, again creates an image of the senator as only having accomplished things with her husband's guiding hand.

Toby Harnden (2007) of *The Daily Telegraph* writes in "Race for the White House is wide open" a short resume list for each presidential candidate. With the exception of Senator Clinton, all of the candidates included are male. The males, it appears, receive somewhat detailed histories. John McCain, a Republican contender, is an "Arizona senator with military career as US Navy pilot and Vietnam prisoner of war for more than five years. Ran strongly against Bush in 2000 as outsider maverick, but lost out in the bitter campaign after lambasting the religious Right" (17). Harnden (2007) mentions Barack Obama's time as the "first black editor of the Harvard Law Review" and John Edwards' experience as a trial lawyer (17). Yet when he writes about Senator Clinton, he shortens her experience to being a former first lady and winning a senate seat in 2000. Not a very impressive history considering almost all of the candidates have won a senate seat. Not only does her resume lack much of her personal job experience, it is also several words shorter than any of the other resumes. Such a presentation creates an image of the senator as qualified only because she was married to a president, not based on her own merit. Thus the senator is described as a stereotypical female, dependent on her husband's career for her own success.

Steven Thomma (2007), of *The Advertiser*, writes about Senator Clinton's experience in "I'll make history: Clinton." Just as the bullet point resume in other articles has omitted several of the senator's accomplishments, Thomma's also passes over

important experience. After a brief mention of her education, Thomma (2007) skips straight to the senator's marriage and then her husband's time as president. While he does write that the senator has "pursued universal health insurance reform and women's rights," he fails to explain how (12). Thomma's failure to mention the senator's own accomplishments and failures with women's rights and healthcare diminishes its importance. Once again the senator's career appears in terms of her husband's success.

Nancy Benac (2007), of *The Courier Mail*, creates an image of Senator Clinton in gendered terms. To begin with, the article is titled "Time for the first lady to step up," not only implying that the senator's success is based on her husband's presidency, but also failing to point out that Senator Clinton is no longer a first lady, but a United States senator with many accomplishments of her own. Though writing about the senator's early life in unbiased terms, after the mention of the senator's marriage in 1975, Benac (2007) focuses on Senator Clinton only in terms of her husband's career. She writes that after their marriage, "for the next quarter-century, Rodham was the one to give ground – even on her name" (22). While the fact that the senator changed her name to help her husband win politically is an interesting fact, the senator did not just sit idly by for the next twenty-five years. In fact she won many awards during her time in Arkansas, as noted previously. However, Benac (2007) writes of the senator as a "political spouse," when in fact Senator Clinton gained a lot of her own experience. Benac's (2007) does not acknowledge Senator Clinton's independent accomplishments, once again creating an image of a needy female, dependent on the career success of her husband.

Finally, Thomas Sutcliffe (2007) of *The Independent*, writes of Senator Clinton in gendered terms in "A political soap opera with a twist in the tale." Comparing the stories

of Senators Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, Sutcliffe (2007) writes that “Clinton’s storyboard is a little more complicated – though the notion of a gender experiment in capacity for high office must be in there somewhere” (30). Placing Senator Clinton in a storyboard of experimentation diminishes her capability to present herself as the accomplished equal of Senator Obama. Her resume is suddenly based on her gender. The idea that a woman running for president would be an experiment creates an image of the senator solely as a woman, not as an accomplished individual.

The articles outlining Senator Clinton’s history in a resume-like style omit many of her accomplishments. Such an outline creates an image of the senator as inferior to other male candidates, who appear to be independently accomplished. The gender stereotyping of a woman relying on a man’s career success appears when the senator’s resume lacks her own experiences but relies on her husband’s political career. When omissions occur the senator is placed into the stereotypical role of holding a lower position at work, while her boss, in this case her husband, dictates what needs to be done.

**Gold Digger:
How Senator Clinton Is Helped By Her Marriage**

Senator Clinton has the tremendous advantage of name recognition because of her husband, a previous president of the United States. President Clinton’s connections could be invaluable to the senator and help her to win the presidency. However, a presidential candidate cannot win on connections alone. Voters also judge a candidate’s merit and ability. News articles that only refer to Senator Clinton’s likelihood of election in terms of her husband’s power place her in a diminished role and stereotype her as a wife, not a politician.

Steven Touma (2007), of *The Daily Telegraph*, writes in “So can Hillary Clinton really be president?” about the possibility of Senator Clinton winning the presidency. Listing her “political advantages – cash, fame and the Clinton brand name” Touma (2007) describes the senator in terms of her husband (17). Writing more in detail, Touma (2007) explains that the senator has the advantage of a “yearning for the seeming peace and prosperity of the Clinton ‘90s,” implying that the senator might win because of her husband’s presidency. Even when discussing the political advantage of a large campaign chest Touma (2007) writes in terms of the senator’s husband, explaining that much of the money comes from “her husband’s friends in Hollywood” (17). Touma (2007) contrasts Senator Clinton’s advantages with a few other candidates. For example, he mentions John McCain, his experience in Vietnam, and his opinion on the Iraq war. When discussing Mitt Romney, Touma (2007) writes about his governorship and experience with the 2002 Winter Olympics. Yet when writing about Senator Clinton’s advantages, he only mentions her husband. Thus, the senator is placed into the stereotypical gender role of dependence, as the male candidates appear more experienced and capable.

Kenneth R. Bazinet and Michael McAuliff (2007) of the *Daily News* write about Senator Clinton’s electibility in “Tough road ahead for Clinton.” Mentioning her determination to win, the two analyze her assets. While the senator is lagging behind in some states, “she can bank on lingering love for her husband’s administration” states the article (6). Not only will lingering love be an advantage, but the man himself. “As long as her husband doesn’t stumble, he will be a major asset” (6). While such predictions may be true, writing about the senator in terms of her husband, and not mentioning other

assets presents the public with an image of a woman solely at an advantage because of her husband, not her intellect, ability, or experience.

Andrew Sullivan (2007), of *The Australian*, writes of the sensibility Senator Clinton appears to maintain in her role as a senator in “New, sensible Hillary much harder to hate.” Writing about the senator in negative terms, he explains his dislike for the woman who “married her way to power” (11). While the middle of the article contains a fair assessment of the senator’s actions during her first term, the image of the senator is built from the initial descriptions. Sullivan (2007) creates an image of a weak woman who would be nowhere without her husband. In fact, when the two were married, Senator Clinton’s career was just as impressive. The fact that she successfully practiced law at a prestigious firm during her husband’s governorship proves her independent ability. Yet with five short words, Sullivan (2007) manages to erase any experience the senator has had but for the success of her husband, creating the stereotypical gender role in which the woman looks to marry a successful man to be seen as successful herself.

Rupert Cornwell (2007) of *The Independent* writes about Senator Clinton in terms of the former president in his article, “Could Hillary Clinton really become the next US president?” Beginning the article discussing her early announcement about forming an exploratory committee, he comments that “Bill Clinton did not formally launch his victorious 1992 campaign until September 1991” (30). Immediately pointing out the difference between the two builds an image of the senator based on what her husband did during his campaign. The inclusion of the word ‘victorious’ also implies that just as the beginning of her campaign started differently than her husband’s, it might also end differently as well. Cornwell (2007) continues to write in terms of the former president.

Commenting on her strengths as a senator, he writes of “a mind to match her husband’s” (30). Yet Cornwell (2007) also points out his awareness of the relationship between Senator Clinton and the former president, “Bill overshadows everyone, including his wife” (30). While the statement may be true at public occasions, the media has made it true in print as well. By writing mostly in terms of comparison, the media has put Senator Clinton into solely female terms, limiting her ability to appear strong and independent.

Even a brief mention of the president can place the senator in the terms of a weaker wife. Peter S. Canellos (2007) of *The Boston Globe* immediately stereotypes the senator in his article “’08 campaign draws on the careful Clinton centrism.” Beginning with “there was something, well, Clintonian in Hillary Clinton’s comments after her recent trip to Iraq,” Canellos (2007) includes the former president right away (A2). By using the term ‘Clintonian’, Canellos (2007) points out the enormous power of the former president and the familiarity of the public with the president. The term implies that someone before the senator established a place for her, and she now has the advantage of using the familiarity. While there is no denying that the former president may be a great advantage to the senator, the term ‘Clintonian’ forces Senator Clinton into the role of “the wife,” not emphasizing the independent side of the senator as well.

Mike Lupica (2007) of *Daily News* discusses the public looking forward to a new presidential administration after President Bush leaves office in “Can’t hide from war gone wrong.” His description of the senator includes “She is the big front-runner in the polls right now...whether you think the country is ready to elect a woman President or not. She also has to look no further than her own marriage to know how fast things can change in presidential politics” (4). He also writes that the longer President Bush stays in

office, the better other candidates look. “That includes his predecessor and his wife” (4). Demoting the senator from a powerful political figure to simply the wife of a powerful political figure creates an image of Senator Clinton as weak and dependent. Put into gendered terms, the senator has the disadvantage of having to prove to the American public that she is a competent person, not simply a woman in power because of her marriage.

Even articles that discuss Senator Clinton as an independent person can create gendered terms. Dan Balz (2007) of the *Washington Post* writes a long article about the senator’s electability in “Hillary Clinton opens presidential bid.” However, in the first paragraph Balz (2007) describes her as “the only former first lady to follow her husband in the White House” (A01). First of all, the description is misleading. The senator would not technically follow President Clinton, but President Bush. The use of the word ‘follow’ also implies dependence, not a woman breaking old traditions by running for the senate as a first lady, and now possibly for president. Though the former president’s fame might *help* to get the senator elected, it would not be his help alone. However the image of the senator becomes a puppy-like one when terms such as ‘follow’ describe the race for president.

Finally, Steven Thomma (2007) of *The Advertiser* creates an image of the senator in terms of her husband in his article “I’ll make history:Clinton.” Thomma (2007) opens his article with “Can Hillary Clinton use her enormous political advantages of cash, fame and the Clinton name to brush aside party rivals, win the Democratic Party nomination and go on to seize the White House as the first female president of the U.S.?” (12). The emphasis on using her fame from her husband’s time in office as well as her husband’s

name to win the presidency puts Senator Clinton in the role of a wife. Instead of using her intelligence and experience, the senator must rely on other ways to get elected. This emphasizes the stereotype that women don't belong as leaders in the workplace, and the only way to become so is to depend on a male.

While former President Clinton is a highly visible part of Senator Clinton's life, it is she who is running for office, not he. A mention of his name should occur in most of the articles, but the focus on the differences and similarities between the two puts Senator Clinton in the role of a traditional weaker female, who relies on her husband for success. The lack of analysis of the senator as an individual in many of the articles creates an image of Senator Clinton as the weaker part of a couple, not an independent person who would be running the country herself.

The Tarnished Clinton Name: How Senator Clinton Is Hurt By Her Marriage

While in many ways former President Clinton can help his wife in her bid for the presidency with his popularity and charm, his actions while in office might also set the senator at a disadvantage. Many articles discuss the problems that arise from Senator Clinton's association with her husband. However, a strong emphasis on the relationship without a discussion of other disadvantages creates an image of the senator as a needy female, whose outcome depends completely on the likeability of her husband.

Paul Harris (2007), of *The Observer*, analyzes the ability of Senator Clinton to win the presidency in "Stars take the shine off Hillary's bid." Writing about her mostly as an individual, the image of the senator remains gender neutral. However, at the first mention of her husband, Harris (2007) immediately puts the senator into dependent

terms. “But her bid faces problems too, the first of which is the sense that Republicans will use the sleaze allegations that marred her husband’s years in office against her” (34). While certainly the issue may be relevant, the description implies that if her husband is guilty, the senator should be blamed as well. The connectedness of the description leaves the senator dependent on the likeability of her husband.

Tina Moore (2007), of the *Daily News*, writes of Senator Clinton’s announcement as a possible presidential contender. The title of the piece, “From humble start to extraordinary moment,” seems to imply the impressiveness of a first lady running for president. But instead of outlining the senator’s accomplishments, Moore (2007) focuses on the scandals that former President Clinton has caused. From the “scandal over his philandering” during his governorship to “allegations over land deals and fund-raising” and “a sexual relationship with White House intern Monica Lewinsky,” the article focuses not on Senator Clinton’s campaign announcement, but the scandals of her husband and the past (6). The emphasis on her husband implies that Senator Clinton is completely connected to him, and as an individual she could never be a success because of his negative scandals. Such an image is gender-related, placing the senator as a wife whose life revolves around her husband’s actions. This makes the senator appear weak and gives the scandals the possibility of overshadowing the positive aspects of the Clinton campaign.

An editorial in *Daily News*, titled “Hillary gets in it to win” also emphasizes the negative aspect of the former president on Senator Clinton’s campaign, without even mentioning his name. “A former First Lady who starred in the highest-rated political soap opera in modern times, yesterday entered...the 2008 presidential contest” (32). The

article immediately brings the scandals of the former Clinton administration to mind. Calling the scandal a soap opera demotes Senator Clinton from a powerful politician to an actress, dependent on whether the audience will watch a show, not on her intellect and ability in the political arena. The statement emphasizes the senator's gender, calling attention to her husband instead of discussing her ability to run for office.

Stanley Crouch (2007) of *Daily News* makes no secret of his opinion of the problems the former president will cause for Senator Clinton in "Obama's the elephant hunter Dem's need." Calling the president "too large a shadow," he then writes a story about Lurleen Burns Wallace (29).

In 1967, Wallace followed her husband, George, with a run for the governorship of Alabama. With Alabama governors not allowed consecutive terms, Lurleen and George admitted frankly that if Lurleen was elected, George would continue to make administrative decisions (29).

The inclusion of this story directly after the mention of former President Clinton is problematic in many ways. To begin with, it implies that the situation is the same for both couples. Never has Senator Clinton made the claim that if elected her husband would make administrative decisions, yet that is the implication the public receives from the story. It gives the public an image of Senator Clinton as a puppet, at her husband's disposal. All of the senator's independence is lost when her image becomes a dependent woman listening only to her husband's advice. Thus, because of her gender, she is placed at a great disadvantage.

Linda Feldmann of the *Christian Science Monitor* writes of Senator Clinton's disadvantages in "Hillary Clinton is 'in' for '08, but crowd grows." As usual, the mention of her husband is included early in the list. "One of the many hurdles Clinton must face

on the road to the White House has been dubbed ‘Clinton fatigue.’ Wrapped into that is her husband’s turbulent eight years as president, including his marital infidelity and various investigations” (1). Though Feldmann (2007) mentions the fatigue as one of many obstacles, she continues for three paragraphs to discuss the issue. By the conclusion of her article, she has yet to mention a second obstacle, though there are others. Thus, the public perceives Senator Clinton to be at the mercy of the public’s opinion of her husband, not the public’s opinion of her ability to run the country.

Stefanie Balogh (2007) of *The Advertiser* also writes of Senator Clinton’s chance at election in terms of her husband in “Hillary bids to be Madam President.” “Some still associate her with the scandal-plagued two-term presidency of her husband....But she gained both sympathy and respect as she stood by her husband after his confessions of sexual misconduct involving intern Monica Lewinsky” (1). She continues to write about the former president, also pointing out that “he will need to be careful not to steal the limelight” (1). Balogh (2007) implies that Senator Clinton’s chance at election depends completely on how the public feels about her husband. The other disadvantage Balogh (2007) mentions is the senator’s opinion on the Iraq war, which was only included in the last sentence. The lack of attention to other disadvantages places the bulk of the focus on the senator’s marriage, unlike all of the other candidates currently in the race. Thus Senator Clinton’s gender becomes central to the argument, as a wife who must depend on her husband’s appeal to win or lose her campaign.

Mark Kenny (2007) of *The Advertiser* explained in “Future@Hillary.com” why Senator Clinton took the new approach of announcing her candidacy over the internet. Instead of focusing on the new and innovative idea, Kenny (2007) immediately connects

the senator's husband to the situation. He quotes David Donohue, Deputy President of the Institute of Public Affairs saying, "You've got to consider it (questions at the press conference) would have gone back to her husband's presidency, and a lot of her husband's issues in his presidency and a range of things she didn't want to discuss" (19). While Kenny (2007) applauds the effectiveness of the method, he does so by pointing out her avoidance of her husband's presidency. Thus, the article becomes about the former president's influence on the campaign, not about Senator Clinton's ability to help the country. Once again the senator is lost in the focus on her husband, creating a stereotype of the powerful husband controlling his wife's situation.

It is important to note that because of former President Bill Clinton's time in office, he is an influential factor in Senator Clinton's campaign. However, the focus on the president as 'making or breaking' the campaign for the senator undermines her ability to present herself as an independent and competent person. No other candidate's spouse is mentioned in any of the articles analyzed. Not only is the former president always mentioned, but the implication is that his past is more important than the senator's future. Or that the senator's future depends on public reaction to his past. Thus, Senator Clinton is placed into stereotypical gendered terms as a wife relying on her husband, for better or worse.

The media has repeatedly presented Senator Clinton as stereotypically feminine during her political career. It has created an image of her as a weak wife relying on her husband, a mothering figure not capable of making independent decisions, and an emotional woman, whose physical appearance is more interesting than her intellectual ability. Yet from studying the senator's history, it is clear that she is also an intelligent,

determined and hardworking individual. The effects of the media's flawed image construction are significant and problematic.

Chapter 7: Effects and Ethical Considerations

The effects of the gender stereotyping of Senator Clinton in the media are multiple and varied. Senator Clinton is a highly visible woman and can influence other women even in subtle ways. Being presented as a weaker female could alter the way other women view their leadership role in a male dominated environment. The presentation of the senator in gendered terms is part of a larger issue, that of women being stereotyped as unable to perform in high level jobs with the same ability as their male peers. Younger women, such as adolescent girls, may also be affected by the stereotyping of gender roles in the articles. According to Maria Mastronardi (2003) in her article "Adolescence and media," middle and high school girls are at ages where they are beginning to develop their self-concepts as individuals. Such an age group is influenced by what they see in the media (Mastronardi, 2003). When the senator is presented as a mother figure with a focus on hair and clothing, instead of the political issues at hand, adolescents may interpret the purpose of the female gender as being a nurturer, not also a tough and savvy leader.

As the articles in question discuss Senator Clinton as a potential presidential candidate, it is important to analyze how this could affect her campaign. For females, seeing Senator Clinton run may impact her in a positive way, despite the stereotypes. Feminism has caused many women to support their counterparts working in traditional male roles. Women reading about Senator Clinton as a presidential contender may be tempted to vote for her simply because of her sex. Then again, women who support a more traditional society may be offended by the senator's political ambition.

Males, conversely, may be influenced just the opposite way. As of early 2006, 60% of men surveyed said they would not vote for Senator Clinton if she were to run for president (Baxter, 12). Whether those surveyed would vote for a woman other than Senator Clinton is unclear. However, reading about Senator Clinton in stereotypical terms may not convince them to do otherwise. If they view her as weak and incapable instead of strong and independent, their bias that women cannot make strong leaders is reinforced. She is likely to lose votes when presented as a weak female, especially among male voters. However, such an assessment is difficult to make, since should Senator Clinton instead be defined in strong male terms, men might find her threatening and also chose not to support her candidacy. Senator Clinton is in a classic female double bind. She needs to appear strong and intelligent to compete with male candidates, as the stereotype about women as weak leaders already puts her at a disadvantage. However, research has shown that should she appear too tough or masculine, she will be labeled as an overpowering bitch, also likely to lose her votes. The media has the ability to develop the senator's image in masculine or feminine terms. Which will help her gain the most support, however, has yet to be determined.

As journalists have a great deal of impact over how a political individual is viewed, it is also necessary to analyze the ethics in the Senator Clinton situation. It is the responsibility of a journalist to present a fair and balanced view of a situation, to the best of one's ability. This includes leaving out one's potential prejudice against a female candidate. Whether journalists are male or female, gender stereotypes should not occur in articles. As the media helps the public to learn about presidential candidates, it is especially important that personal opinion be left out of articles. Journalists' personal

political opinions must never be included in news articles meant to help the public make informed decisions about its country's political future. In the case of Senator Clinton, journalists must avoid using the senator's gender as a way of labeling her as a candidate. Mention of her gender should only occur where relevant, not as a way to distinguish her from other competitors. Writing in gendered terms limits the public's ability to view a situation accurately. Therefore journalists, with the ability to get the public to look at a certain viewpoint, have the responsibility of writing about Senator Clinton from a non-biased perspective.

This research has demonstrated the repetitive stereotypes which label Senator Clinton in feminine terms. The patterns which have arisen from the articles show a tendency for journalists to label the senator in terms of her gender, limiting the information the public can learn about her as a presidential candidate. The research shows how the senator is placed at a disadvantage because of her gender and adds to a growing body of researching questioning the connection between the media and a candidate's image in presidential elections.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

There is no doubt that Senator Clinton has accomplished many successful feats in her life, from working on the Children's Defense Fund to twice being named one of the 100 most influential lawyers. Yet most people recognize Senator Clinton for her status as President Clinton's wife. Time and again Senator Clinton is written about in gendered terms. At times, the individual gender stereotypes appear irrelevant and perhaps not that influential. Yet for Senator Clinton, the stereotypes appear in predictable patterns, creating an image of the senator in purely feminine terms. The image is that of a woman needing a man's support, using charm to make her way in the world, and tip-toeing around in a job that requires decisive skill. What is important to mention is that while the gendered images of Senator Clinton may at times not appear out of place, most images would never be used if the candidate were male. For example, the public would be surprised to read about Howard Dean's haircut, or what the fashion police thought of John McCain's latest suit. Yet because we are so immersed in gendered terms when it comes to politics, we don't think twice about mentioning style when it comes to women. This area requires more research into why and how women are discussed in alternative terms than males. Current research only points to where gender stereotyping in the media occurs. In the future, research on the effects of the stereotyping, as well as why it occurs, will hopefully assist in alleviating the disadvantage women in the media face when running for political office.

Senator Clinton is very much a successful and accomplished woman, yet articles in major newspapers and magazines do not accurately reflect why she has been so successful. The misrepresentation of Senator Clinton's accomplishments leads the public

to view her only as a wife, limiting her as a presidential candidate. Whether the outcome of the senator's campaign will be success or not has yet to be determined. However, either way she will face more opposition than the average candidate for something she cannot control: her gender.

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