

**'COOKIE MOM-STER', 'MOM-IN-CHIEF', AND 'SUGAR MOMMY'  
[DE-] CONSTRUCTING IDEAL FEMININITY OF  
PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE WIVES**

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## DEDICATION

For my daughter, Aris Jacqueline Akpet Obaji. May you not spend your life wondering: “Where are all the girls?”

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## Introduction

A 2004 *New York Times*' article regarding the role of potential First Ladies at political conventions wrote, "The public will someday accept a fully independent first lady, Ms. Gibbons predicted, 'I don't see how we can go backwards.'" (Purnick, 2004) That isn't to say, however, we have continued moving forward. Perpetuating the trend that began two decades ago, in 2012 both Ann Romney and Michelle Obama delivered speeches at the Republican National Convention (RNC) and Democratic National Convention (DNC) respectively. Prompting a continued study of the first lady include not only Michelle Obama's self-titled "Mom-in-Chief" speech or the ever present role of fashion and the First Lady, but also her permanent role as the candidate's feminine counterpart and its close management demand examination. To be sure, this thesis comes at a time of significant importance, with Hillary Clinton vying for the 2016 Democratic Presidential nomination. I agree with past scholars that presidential spouses, as part of the presidential institution, have ushered in a level of public power not previously possible for women (Anderson, Campbell, Jamieson, Sheeler, et al). However, the power of the first lady is constrained by feminine expectations that prevent the emergence of a fully independent first lady. We should question the limitations of the spousal role and challenge the discourses that create those limitations, as they hinder the realization of a fully independent first lady.

Since 1992, nearly every spouse has given a public address at the presidential nominating convention, with all candidate wives from 2000-2012 taking part. The emergence of this campaign trend has prompted communication

scholars to call for the expansion of research surrounding these speeches (Brown, 2012). Scholars have previously noted that first lady campaign discourse provides a sandbox in which our country experiments with various levels of first lady independence (Parry-Giles, 1996, Campbell, 1998, Anderson, 2002). That is to say, how the wives consistently talk about themselves, their husbands and the country, as well as how the media reports on the potential first lady during coverage of convention oratory, sheds light on the national tone of feminine ideologies. Therefore, I contend that a genre exists governing first lady convention speeches which, along with the mediated discourses surrounding these speeches, constructs and reinforces the ideal femininity of the First Lady. As a result, the hegemonic masculinity of the presidency is further reified with important consequences for our ability to accept an independent first lady which makes it more difficult to accept a woman president.

This thesis examines the dual role of the feminine ideal of US first ladies and the masculinity of the presidency. Examining the generic constraints of 20 years of presidential candidate wives convention speeches and the associated media coverage will uncover dominant themes that aim to vilify certain wives—for their speech style and content—and celebrate others. By assessing what points of struggle we witness in these discourses, we note opportunities where first ladies and potential first ladies challenge these generic constraints and have the potential to reveal shifts and expansions in the discourses. The result may lead to a new understanding of gender in relation to the presidency.

The scholarship on first ladies and the presidency is extensive. First I will identify the generic boundaries of the convention discourse of the presidential spouse. Next, I will highlight the convention speeches that do not conform to those boundaries and further delineate the expectations of the genre by examining media representations of the campaign rhetoric. What could first ladies or potential first ladies do differently to acknowledge the expectations and adapt to them, what Kenneth Burke refers to as "both/ and," to broaden the genre and create opportunities for new perspectives on the masculine and feminine roles inscribed in the presidency (Burke, 1950)? By identifying countered boundaries—or instances where the genre is challenged—I aim to examine shifts in the frame, how the shifts are discussed in the media, and how new perspectives can create an independent first lady.

To accomplish the above I will review the scholarship on hegemonic masculinity and the presidency, the first lady, and feminine style. Following the review of literature, I will explain my method of analysis, genre criticism. In the first portion of analysis, I will argue for the presence of a rhetorical genre that has emerged from the past 20 years of first lady convention addresses, categorizing not only the expectations of the genre but places where first ladies have begun to stretch the genre. In addition, I will interrogate how the media responds to and bolsters the generic expectations for first lady convention address, analyzing the ways these women have complied, confronted and countered these boundaries. Through an analysis of first lady convention speeches and media reporting on first lady convention discourse, this project sets



out to understand the feminine expectations of the first lady role in relation to her husband.

The genre defining presidential spouse speeches at nominating conventions along with the associated media discourses reveal points of challenge that represent limitations on the presidential spouse. This genre reinforces the literature on the "two-person career" defined by Campbell by describing the husband/president through discourses of patriarchy, commitment and masculinity, while simultaneously framing the wife/presidential spouse using feminine style discourses of motherhood and love. Further, the media response surrounding presidential candidate spouse speeches at nominating conventions further constructs and reinforces the hegemonic masculinity of the presidency, as well as the consistent femininity of the first lady. The media helps generate this dual-presidency—masculine and feminine. These frames are built by pseudo-inclusionary language that frame the wives as part of the ticket by fulfilling their feminine role in campaigning—through feminine style—to humanize and personalize their husbands. In contrast to an either/or approach, theories of pragmatism are useful to highlight the points where presidential candidate wives have rejected or stretched the genre, the media responses to these instances, and the implications on future spouses. In so doing, rhetorical scholars can hypothesize what an adherence and expansion of this genre may look like for the future presidential spouses.

## Chapter 1: Literature Review

### *Hegemony*

Hegemony refers to the overall process of how we, as a society, write and re-write various narratives that lead to the co-construction and reinforcement of certain myths and ideologies. Raymond Williams asserts that hegemony goes beyond culture to reinforce, construct and re-create the “whole social process” (Williams, 1977). Hegemony, the lived process, is made up of perceptions and worldview. These constructions are made up of political, social and cultural forces. Hegemony to Williams is not a top-down force but instead a complex interweaving of self-identification. It is Williams’ view of hegemony on which this paper will build to discuss the way hegemonic masculinity is co-constructed in this multi-dimensional process.

### *Hegemonic Masculinity*

Hegemonic masculinity, identified by Connell in 1987, refers to the ways in which culture and society construct white male masculinity as dominant in our culture, and reinforce and shape our consciousness and norms (Connell, 1987). Hanke asserts, “Within civil society, the national popular culture is where various agents of hegemony...give shape to the common sense of the people, including their taken-for-granted notions of masculinity and femininity” (Hanke, 1998). Hegemonic masculinity is often depicted through representations of physical strength, patriarchy, success, and heroism (Trujillo, Butterworth). These portrayals are most notable in public discourses of media, film, and television.

The scholarship of masculinity and public discourse concludes that it is defined in conjunction with, and in contrast to, the feminine (Fahey, 2004) and is reinforced and recreated through similar opposing representations of feminism and gender roles (Dow, 2003). As Fahey contends, “Accordingly, when masculinity is invoked in public communications, femininity is also necessarily invoked—explicitly or implicitly—as the less privileged side of the binary” (Fahey, 2004). The scholarship on hegemonic masculinity quickly parlays into the role masculinity plays in political leadership.

### *Masculinity and the Rhetorical Presidency*

The scholarship on the masculinity of leadership, specifically the US presidency, is extensive. The notion of the presidency as the enactment of a masculine role stems from the thorough research on the rhetorical presidency which began in the 1980s and continued throughout most of the 1990s (Tulis, 1987, Stuckey, 1998, et al). Traditional scholarship on the rhetorical presidency outlines the presidency as an ever increasing power. Those powers, according to Jeffrey Tulis are and always have been constructed through communication from and around the role of presidency (Tulis, 1987). This political power is rooted, primarily, in the ability that 20th century changes and new media provide for the president to go over the heads of Congress and speak directly to citizens to gain consensus for initiatives. The 19th century way of thinking of the presidency relied heavily on avoiding demagoguery, protecting republicanism, independence of the executive and the separation of powers. These foundations led to two types

of rhetoric: policy rhetoric between congress and the president, and rhetoric to the people.

In recent years, scholars, including Mary Stuckey, have begun to call for further questioning and development of the rhetorical presidency to include looking at power, gender, class, and sexuality. Specifically, the idea of the presidency as an inherently masculine role has been a part of the scholarship. Stuckey asserts, “The excess of manliness in the presidency, of course, often extends to sexuality. Presidents are allowed to be assertively if not aggressively heterosexual” (Stuckey, 1998). This notion of not only the requirement of this forceful characteristic, but also heterosexual sexuality, is important when making the argument for not only the dual institution of the presidency, but the coinciding gender roles for each actor as president and first lady.

One such way that hegemonic masculinity is constructed and reinforced is the way we align the family with the nation. This gendered nationalism builds on this notion of hegemonic masculinity by bringing to the surface the connections of the presidency to patriarchy. Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles’ work on the presidency focuses on various ways the presidential identity was played out on the fictional television show *The West Wing* (Parry-Giles & Parry-Giles, 2006). Specifically, Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles’ notions of gendered nationalism and the parallels between nation and family are crucial when analyzing first lady public address. Central to the argument, then, is the portrayal of their husbands as the quintessential family man. Just as he is a patriarchic figure to the family as father

and husband, the role is similar to the national family as president and commander-in-chief.

This parallel is constructed in a myriad of ways when it comes to popular media, which is the focus of Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles analysis of the *The West Wing*. The portrayal of the presidency as a masculine role is often conveyed in a “[feminine style]” (Jamieson, 1995). Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles contend, “[‘Feminine Style’] potentially masks the reliance of political image construction on a hegemonic masculinity that serves to preserve politics as a patriarchal system” (Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles, 2006). Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles argue that political film plays a role in the hegemonic masculinity of the presidency through ‘masculine’ institutions and the representations of women that downplay their roles in governance. These representations reinforce the presidential identity as well as the subservient role of women in politics.

These representations translate to the pejorative way women in the public sphere are displayed. This vilification also points to the hegemonic masculinity of public leadership in the US. Scholars contend that the mediated discourse surrounding women in the public sphere share in the construction of hegemonic masculinity (Campbell, 1998; Anderson, 2002; Anderson and Sheeler, 2005, 2013). Campbell asserts that, “female public figures are bound by feminine representations of self, even in the face of masculine leadership roles, or face scrutiny” (Campbell, 1998). Hostility towards first ladies represents a site of struggle, highlighting the debate of appropriate gender roles of Americans, Lisa Burns contends (Burns, 2008). These rhetorically constructed boundaries hold negative consequences for first lady when they go beyond them. Karrin Vasby

Anderson and Kristina Horn Sheeler have expanded the research on first ladies through the metaphor of the both the political puppet and beauty queen/hostess (Anderson and Sheeler, 2005). These metaphors signify the ways that rhetoric and discourse limits women from entering public life. From a genre perspective, this research demonstrates the specific role that candidate wives must perform, even during nominating conventions, to be perceived as the quintessential first lady. Sheeler and Anderson also argue that women in politics are consistent targets of a sexist culture that broadcasts misogynistic narratives (Sheeler and Anderson, 2013). This research informs the analysis of media representations of presidential spouses.

#### *Women and Politics – Surrogacy, Vilification, Emasculation*

The role of surrogacy campaigners has undoubtedly increased due to the proliferation of the 24-hour news cycle and online media climate. Surrogate speakers, according to Trent and Friedenber, “spread the candidate’s message to audiences that might otherwise not hear them” (Trent & Friedenber, 2004). The largest increase in surrogacy can be seen in the candidate’s family, more specifically, their wives. Trent and Friedenber highlight the Dole campaign specifically, in 1996, when they state, “Elizabeth Dole, wife of the Republican presidential candidate, was often referred to as the stronger speaker of the two. Her ability as a surrogate advocate caused her husband’s campaign to earmark thirty staff members, a \$1.5 million budget, and a fourteen-seat jet largely in support of her speaking efforts” (Trent & Friedenber, 2004). This idea of surrogacy helps build on the argument that the institution of the presidency

cannot be performed alone. Acting as surrogates on the campaign trail, spouses of presidential candidates add another tool to the campaign toolbox to provide identification with particular audiences and disseminate certain policy agendas. As recalled by Karolyn Kohrs Campbell, “In 1992, Charles Black, a senior Bush campaign aid, offered the modern version of that observation when he said that wives, ‘help define the candidacies and the personal styles of their husbands. They are good character witnesses for their husbands’” (Campbell, 1998, p.192). It is in this notion that being a longstanding onlooker to their husband’s true character provides them authority to tell the real story during campaign stops. The primary research on surrogacy and the first lady examines surrogacy during the presidency. This thesis, however, brings campaign discourses into the fold, focusing also on the surrogate role that spouses play during the campaign itself.

In parallel to the implications of negative representations of women in politics, Anderson suggests that outside of the position of presidency, we are beginning to see a shift of more women in places of political power. However, Anderson also contends that, “Although women are making strides in other realms of public governance, the U.S. presidency remains a bastion of masculinity” (Anderson, 2002). Although pointing to an expansion of suitable behavior for first ladies, Anderson asserts that the “double binds” still play a role in the construction of voter and public opinion (Jamieson). For her 2000 study looking at both Elizabeth Dole and Hillary Rodham Clinton, “familiar stereotypes about masculinity and leadership were firmly entrenched in news narratives” (Anderson, 2002, p. 125). Mediated discourses and frames, therefore, not only shed light on the national tone of gendered ideologies, but also reinforce those

beliefs on gender roles. Anderson demonstrates the consistent reaffirming of the hegemonic masculinity of the presidency. This thesis expands on Anderson's analysis of mediated discourses into a longitudinal study from 1992-2012, bringing to light comparisons or changes in the acceptable boundaries of the ideal femininity of the first lady since 2000.

In contrast to the denigration of women in politics, men candidates framed in emasculating ways is also an important piece in the construction of hegemonic masculinity of the presidency. On the topic of John Kerry in 2004, Fahey contends that the Republicans not only set out to align Kerry with the French, who have been constructed in the US as feminine, but that the media also began to reinforce this trope through their political coverage of the campaign in lieu of the typical horse race frame. While Kerry was portrayed with feminine qualities, his wife was consequently framed as too aggressive, which upended the patriarchal order of the family. When the order and roles are not clear, masculinity comes into question. This contention in the media demonstrates not only the existing hegemonic masculinity surrounding leadership in the US, but also the ways in which media consistently re-constructs and reinforces that hegemony. However, what could we glean from a closer examination of Teresa Heinz-Kerry's discourses and the media reaction to them? Fahey's analysis stops short of connecting representations of Heinz-Kerry to Kerry's portrayals of weakness. However, analyzing Heinz-Kerry's representation with the understanding of Kerry's depiction from Fahey, provides the ability to connect the dual-nature of the role comprised of masculine and feminine parts.



### *Femininity and the Rhetorical First Lady*

In order to unpack hegemonic masculinity surrounding the presidency, we must outline what rhetorical style is uniquely non-masculine, that is to say, feminine. Feminine style, according to Campbell, is steeped in narrative and personal anecdotes, providing an indication as to which public addresses can be deemed feminine (Jamieson, 1995). From a historical point of view, Jamieson describes the feminine versus masculine address as: “Driven by emotion, womanly speech was thought to be personal, excessive, disorganized and unduly ornamental. Driven by reason, the manly style was regarded as factual, analytic, organized, and impersonal” (Jamieson, 1995, p.91). In unpacking the discourse of first ladies and would be first ladies for the ability to support a primarily feminine style agenda, I aim to examine the feminine constraints or boundaries these women face. Claiming feminine style as both ‘conversational’ and ‘narrational,’ Jamieson provides a starting point to categorizing discourse as innately feminine (Jamieson, 1995, p. 95). The distinction of feminine style underpins the reading of the convention discourses and media frames that allow me to posit generic boundaries restricting spouse independence.

Diane Blaire, Shawn J. Parry-Giles, and others assert that the first lady is marked by a growing transition from the private sphere to the public sphere, which brought with it shifts in agency, discourses, policy agendas and ideologies (Blair & Parry-Giles, 2002). More specifically, Parry-Giles asserts that first lady discourses are framed by 19<sup>th</sup> century values. That is, the private discourses of the 19<sup>th</sup> century impacted and helped to define the boundaries of the public discourses for first ladies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. If this is the case, what advances in

20<sup>th</sup> century public discourses move women forward in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? This increase in agency, what Parry-Giles refers to as the “rise of the rhetorical first lady,” places a premium on the agency gained by first ladies as part of the two-person career. The two-person career, according to Campbell, represents the first lady role as, “an ambiguous mixture of public and private functions whose performance almost inevitably offends someone” (Campbell, 2004, p. 181). The role of president is a co-dependent role, although the outward portrayal can never be as such. First ladies are, historically, to appear supportive of their husbands while never straying from the talking points or the policy agendas. This idea of the presidency as a two-sided institution is significant in the construction of hegemonic masculinity of the position. While Parry-Giles indicates that the private/public binds appear to be breaking down for first ladies, and attests to the benefits women in the public have seen with the “two-person career” requirement, she also points to the position of first lady as contested. So as this rise of public agency for first ladies was evident at the time of her writing, I question whether those advancements have continued. Should the rhetoric and media frames of 21<sup>st</sup> century first lady campaign discourses still be bound by 19<sup>th</sup> century feminine ideals? By looking at the last 20 years of campaign discourses by presidential candidate spouses, we can determine if the generic boundaries have stayed the same or moved in any direction on the gender ideological scale. Looking at the inroads that have been made in the last decade and whether or not the advancements have continued, will uncover the dual nature of the presidency, but also highlight the continuing first lady restrictions.

Moreover, the first lady as a public figure both reflects and constructs current feminine roles and ideologies (Anderson, 2004, Blaire & Parry-Giles, 2002). Called the site of American Womanhood, Anderson suggests that it is the role of first lady that reflects the continued contention regarding women's place in the public sphere, and its trickle-down effect to all women (Anderson, 2004). The problem is in the defining of women's place as private that, in so doing, defines the public space as masculine. That is, to what Hanke and others attest, the presidency (public) isn't masculine without the feminine (private). In this jockeying between public presence and private existence we find the largest site of struggle. Scholars already mentioned here agree that it is the adherence to the feminine persona that both constrains and compels first lady agency (Blaire, Parry-Giles, Gutin, Anderson, Sheeler, Dubriwny, et al). Anderson points to "social style," when she asserts that first ladies have the ability to hide political power as mere party planning (Anderson, 2004). That isn't to say first ladies are trivial, rather that they can utilize their power of social causes to provide for true political progress. Further, Dubriwny points to the intersection of both the liberal and maternal feminism as both the cardinal reason First Lady Laura Bush found success, but also the lynchpin preventing true public advancement outside of gendered-feminine roles. Parry-Giles and Blaire also contend that First Lady Laura Bush was able to push the boundaries on expectations at Senate hearings, without the media discipline, pointing to recent abilities for first ladies to fly under the radar of criticism, with the caveat that Bush was able to do so due to her otherwise feminine performance.

The agency of first ladies remains in this both/and state of constraining but compelling. Although scholars do not dismiss the progress first ladies have made and surely note a progression of their public abilities, I can't help but wonder if the time to question the progress has arrived. Should we be celebrating the role of first ladies as creating a space for women in politics and accomplishing policy objectives even within these obvious limitations? Or rather should we challenge the boundaries preventing them from breaking out of the supportive 'first helpmate' role? The 19<sup>th</sup> century ideologies still frame our 21<sup>st</sup> century first lady discourses and abilities, precluding the rise of a truly independent first lady. In order to determine if first ladies and potential first ladies can conform to and expand their roles in presidential politics, we must look at what tenants make up the genre of first lady convention address. In the next section, a genre critique defines such a genre.

## Chapter 2: Method of Criticism

Determining if shared characteristics are consistent enough to denote a genre and subsequently comparing them against existing public address genres reveals an adherence to an existing genre of presidential speechmaking. The deductive approach to critical generic analysis utilizes generic participation as a framework. Generic participation as a critical operation involves assessing the situation, aim and pattern emergence within the artifacts, as well as compares these three aspects to existing genres in scholarly literature. Campbell and Jamieson have determined nine genres of presidential speechmaking genres (Campbell & Jamieson, 1990).

The core generic theme that Campbell and Jamieson use to test presidential public address against begins with the foundation of institution. That is, “institutional functions of the executive or that have become accepted as customary” (Campbell and Jamieson, 1990, p.4). What fits within these genres are those that maintain the presidency as the institution. Campbell and Jamieson are referring to the clear powers that are given to the president by way of the constitution. “The identity of the presidents as spokespersons, fulfilling constitutional roles and exercising their executive power, gives this discourse a distinctive character” (Campbell and Jamieson, 1990, p.7). Although these speeches are not spoken by the president, or the candidate for president, the institutional expansion to include first ladies as a “two-person career” allows for the speeches at nominating conventions to be included in the collection of genres of presidential rhetoric (Campbell, 2004).

### *Generic Criticism and Texts for Analysis*

Generic criticism provides the framework to uncover the ways in which first ladies have challenged generic boundaries of their public identity based on evidence from convention addresses and the media frames surrounding these speeches. According to Foss, the generic description analysis includes four steps. These steps include 1) observation of similarities in rhetorical responses to particular situations; 2) Collection of rhetorical artifacts occurring in similar situations; 3) analysis of the artifacts to discover if they share characteristics, and 4) formulation of the organizing principle of the genre. When combined, these steps determine the existence of a generic argument.

Scholars have questioned the usefulness of the genre critique, boiling it down to mere classification. Jamieson and Campbell, however, discuss the importance of the institution and its complex nature stating that, “[gender] critical analysis is the relationship between individuals and the institution they represent” (Campbell & Jamieson, 1990, p. 156). That is, we cannot simply provide the framework for a genre of presidential spouse convention address, without considering the institution that requires “some leaders submerge their identities” (Campbell & Jamieson, 1990, p. 156). In the case of the Presidential institution, Campbell and Jamieson argue that nine genres exist in presidential speechmaking including the inaugural address, state of the union, war rhetoric, etc. (Campbell & Jamieson, 1990). Campbell and Jamieson employ two levels of analysis while examining political oratory. Campbell and Jamieson first look at the presidency as an institution. That is, “institutional functions of the executive, that have become accepted as customary” (Campbell & Jamieson, 2008). What

fits within these genres are those that maintain the presidency as an institution. Scholars have not, however, identified the position of First Lady as an institution, therefore worthy of generic demarcation. Although not spoken by the president, the speech made by spouses acting as first lady, whom Campbell otherwise argues as part of the 'two-person career' of that institution, creates an institutional identity through discourse and therefore should be included as a presidential speech genre, if characteristics dictate through criticism.

To determine if the consistent themes of situation, shared characteristics, and organizing principles exist in first lady convention addresses, I conducted a historical critical analysis covering two decades. This timeframe was selected as it marked the beginning of a true trend, representative of what Campbell calls the two-person career nature of the presidency. This two-decade study uncovers themes and style to demonstrate the ways potential first ladies describe themselves—their roles, interests, characteristics—as well as that of their husbands. The first part of this thesis demonstrates the mechanics of how these convention speeches paint a picture of the 'two-person career' that is created by framing their husbands via descriptions of patriarchy, commitment and masculinity, while simultaneously framing themselves via use of feminine style discourses of motherhood and love. This genre uncovers the boundaries of first lady convention speeches, as well as the strategy for certain women to expand those boundaries. Only two years in the past five presidential elections cycles did not yield a spouse speech at the nominating convention. In both 1992 and 2000 Hillary Clinton and Tipper Gore did not present convention speeches,

respectively. Although Gore was absent in oratory, she was not absent in representation as she introduced her husband in a much-talked about way. The artifacts presented for analysis, therefore, include the remaining speeches from 1992 to 2012. Textual analysis was conducted on speeches by First Lady Barbara Bush (1992), First Lady Hillary Clinton (1996), Elizabeth Dole (1996), Laura Bush (2000), First Lady Laura Bush (2004), Teresa Heinz-Kerry (2004), Michelle Obama (2008), Cindy McCain (2008), Anne Romney (2012) and First Lady Michelle Obama (2012).

Once the characteristics of the first lady convention address genre are demarcated, the media's role in bolstering those generic boundaries will be assessed. Analyzing mediated discourses surrounding, or in reaction to, these speeches will uncover dominant media frames of the speech, and, therefore, the reaction to the wives. By examining newspaper articles covering the U.S. presidential candidate spouse speeches at corresponding political party nominating conventions, this thesis demonstrates how the media response to these speeches further constructs and reinforces the genre of first lady convention addresses. The media helps generate this dual-presidency—masculine and feminine—by pseudo-inclusionary language that appears to include the wives as part of the ticket, however only by fulfilling their feminine role in campaigning and governing.

The newspaper articles that were analyzed for this thesis were compiled from the analysis of 27 major US city newspapers, within a 30-day window of each speech. This yielded an extensive artifact compilation from major



newspapers including *The New York Times*, *Washington Post* and other major newspapers throughout the US. Examined in this study include speeches from 1992 – 2012. LexisNexis database was used to procure the news articles for the time period described. The articles were sourced and analyzed for coverage within thirty-days of the presidential candidate speech at the nominating convention, specifically.

Through the textual analysis of each speech, in addition to the mediated discourses surrounding them, points of contention will be uncovered. What women, based on their confrontation with generic boundaries, were disciplined in the media? Through a more comprehensive look at their discourses, I will compare and contrasts the ways these women challenged expectations of femininity, motherhood, and independence through a more comprehensive look at their discourses.

### Chapter 3: First Lady Convention Address: A New Genre

The candidate wives aim to construct two identities: the identity of their husband and the identity of self. This analysis determined that the identity of their husbands is consistent with what we come to understand as presidential characteristics, while they frame themselves as, or perform the role of, characteristics consistent with the first lady. This is accomplished through three distinct themes in the 20 years of campaign discourses. They include commitment and love, identities of fatherhood and motherhood, and demarcation of traditional gendered roles. While constructing the identity of their husbands, the wives use rhetoric of fatherhood and patriarchy, commitment, strength, and male gendered roles. In contrast, while creating their own identity, the candidates' wives utilize discourse rooted in motherhood, love, feminine style and female gendered roles. A complete analysis of each characteristic is included below.

#### *Commitment and Love*

The first theme found in the convention speeches of candidate wives is the presence of commitment to their relationship with their husband and to country. In many of the convention speeches, this is conveyed by quantifying the number of years since they met their husbands or length of their marriage. This quantitative indicator not only calls the audience to associate commitment to marriage with commitment to country, but also that they have the longest relationship with the man and therefore are the truest expert as to his true self.

Further, this association creates an opportunity for the wives to demonstrate the unchanging character of their husbands. The longevity of their relationship, tied to the notion that their husbands remain the same, reflect commitment to country and ideologies that will go unchanged while in office.

Whether overtly disclosing the number of years they've been married or telling stories linking youth and their meeting, candidate wives attempt to demonstrate commitment. Michelle Obama said, in 2008, "And in the end, after all that's happened these past 19 months, the Barack Obama I know today is the same man I fell in love with 19 years ago" (Obama, 2008). In a more narrative sense, Laura Bush said, "It's reminded me of our very first one [campaign], 25 years ago. George and I were newlyweds, and he was running for Congress. Our transportation wasn't quite as fancy back then, an Oldsmobile Cutlass, and George was behind the wheel" (Bush, 2004). This narrative implies many years of life together, with George leading the way. These examples of quantifying their relationship in number of years highlight the reliance on fact and statistics in determining expert status. That is, the longer the relationship, the greater the character expert.

Michelle Obama used almost the same commitment indicator in 2012 when she said, "And I didn't think it was possible, but today, I love my husband even more than I did four years ago...even more than I did 23 years ago, when we first met" (Obama, 2012). In a rare highlight of her marriage, Hillary Clinton in 1992 said, "In October, Bill and I will celebrate our 21st wedding anniversary" (Clinton, 1992). These signposts of commitment are consistent throughout the speeches, giving the audience reason to believe if he has stayed committed to

their relationship he will, in fact, be committed in other areas including the role of president.

Another way that the candidate wives mention commitment is through themes of unchanged character, signaling a presidential characteristic that his current character has, and will always be, his character. In one of the more famous lines of Michelle Obama's 2012 convention speech she said, "Well, today, after so many struggles and triumphs and moments that have tested my husband in ways I never could have imagined, I have seen firsthand that being president doesn't change who you are – it reveals who you are" (Obama, 2012). This demonstrates not only a steadfast character that remains unchanged, but a position that calls into action the very identity she creates in the discourse.

Simply mentioning marriage commitment and unchanged character does not go far enough to demonstrate the linkage between commitment in marriage and country. Some of the candidate wives make that discursive leap for the audience. In an overt connection between marriage commitment and presidential commitment, Cindy McCain said, "It also depends on a personal commitment, a sense of history and a clear view of the future. I know of no one who better defines how to do that...whose life is a better example of how to go about that than the man I love and with whom I have shared almost 30 years of my life" (McCain, 2008). Also in a blatant attempt to demonstrate a man who has gained wisdom through age but remaining unchanged at his core, Laura Bush said, "People ask me all the time whether George has changed. He's a little grayer. And of course, he's learned and grown, as we all have. But he's still the same person I met at a backyard barbecue in Midland, Texas, and married three months later"

(Bush, 2004). These examples of marriage longevity and unchanged character portray a characteristic of commitment that is essential to the genre of speeches at nominating conventions while attempting to construct an identity of their husbands that is rooted in dedication, assurance and perseverance.

Also emerging from the textual analysis of the eight speeches and tied to this theme of commitment, is that of romantic love. Anne Romney's speech cited love more than any other sentiment when she said things like, "Tonight, I want to talk to you about love. I want to talk to you about the deep and abiding love I have for a man I met at a dance many years ago. And the profound love I have and I know we share for this country. I want to talk to you about that love so deep, only a mother can fathom it. The love that we have for our children and our children's children" (Romney, 2012). Elizabeth Dole also declared her love for Bob when she said, "...I'm going to be speaking about the man I love" (Dole, 1996). It is important to note that although absent in the traditional public speech, Tipper Gore was decidedly present in the portrayal of love for her husband. In 2000, after a campaign video, Tipper Gore introduced her husband to the crescendo of a kiss that lasted an awkward length of time and created a media buzz in the following days. Although this isn't to be analyzed as a textual thematic portrayal of love and commitment, it certainly provided a visual linkage to the theme of love, and should not be left out of the analysis. These proclamations of commitment and love aid in the construction of supportive wife, ever the one to dote on her husband. Not only does this secure her place as the warm, feminine giver of love, but also the one who has stood by him through all of those years. This theme of commitment and love reinforces the dual-nature of

the presidency, the couple's relationship at the forefront, but also begins to define the lines between masculine and feminine.

### *Fatherhood/Motherhood*

While framing themselves as mom-in-chief, as Michelle Obama famously claimed, presidential candidate wives simultaneously construct their husbands as father-in chief. According to Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles, "In the end, the president represents the father to whom all commit, evidencing the lasting, loving and loyal relationship between citizens and their president and, by extension, the nation" (Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles, 2006, p.58). Throughout the speeches, this construction of fatherhood emerges through overt mentions of fatherhood, connection of the husband to father of national family and personal narratives of fatherhood that aim to humanize their husbands as genuine guardian of the nation.

The artifacts analyzed included a central theme of the role and characteristics of fatherhood. Through mentioning of being a father by the candidate wives and fatherly characteristics, this notion of father of the national family begins to emerge. For example, Cindy McCain said, "In that most sacred role, he brought to our children his great personal character...his lifelong example of honesty...and his steadfast devotion to honor" (McCain, 2008). Further, Anne Romney combines the indication of fatherhood with the humble beginnings of young parents. "Then our first son came along. All at once, at 22-years-old with a baby and a husband who's going to business school and law school at the same

time...,” (Romney, 2012). These overt mentions of the candidate as father begin to paint the patriarchic picture of fatherhood.

Similarly, themes that lead the audience to think of the candidate as not just head of his individual family, but head of the national family, are consistent in a number of the speeches. “So I want to talk about the issue that I believe is most important for my own daughters, for all our families, and for our future: George’s work to protect our country and defeat terror so that all children can grow up in a more peaceful world” (Bush, 2004). This juxtaposition of personal family with protection of the larger nation-state constructs the argument for leading, and in this case protecting, the national family.

Finally, candidate wives tell stories of their husbands, personal stories, which call the audience to think of their own personal narratives around raising and fathering children. For instance, Michelle Obama said, “He’s the same man who, when our girls were first born, would anxiously check their cribs every few minutes to ensure they were still breathing, proudly showing them off to everyone we knew” (Obama, 2012). This portrayal of her husband as doting and worried father translates into characteristics of constant watching over the flock.

This role of shepherd of life is closely tied to presidential characteristics of leader in steadfast and committed ways. Another example of the fatherhood narrative can be seen in Laura Bush’s speech in 2000. She said, “As we worked on the plans, I put a door between bedrooms that our teenagers will probably want to keep closed to keep us from hearing their conversations. But one day, we’ll want to open that door so we can hear our grandchildren playing. One day, God willing, George will make a fabulous grandfather” (Bush, 2000). This

narrative takes the audience beyond fatherhood, expanding identification to that of grandfather, which demonstrates longevity and wisdom. This notion is reinforced with her other comments regarding George being “grey-er,” as well. This slightly different variation of fatherly depiction demonstrates a need for a wiser candidate.

In contrast to descriptions of fatherhood, the descriptions of motherhood are equally present, constructing the identity of the first lady. These examples demonstrate their role as mother and illustrate why these dichotic roles reinforce the patriarchal role of their husbands. Blatantly signifying her responsibility within the institution of family and national family, Michelle Obama states, “I come here as a mom whose girls are the heart of my heart and the center of my world –they’re the first thing I think about when I wake up in the morning, and the last thing I think about when I go to bed at night. Their future –and all our children’s future—is my stake in this election” (Obama, 2008). Another example of the notion of mom before anything else, is Cindy McCain’s statement that, “Nothing has made me happier or more fulfilled in my life than being a mother” (McCain, 2008). And, of course, the most recent reference, “You see, at the end of the day, my most important title is still “mom-in-chief” (Obama, 2012). These demonstrate the themes Jamieson discusses that we, as an audience, still have expectations of motherhood and its place as a priority in public address.

There are the rare cases in the survey of eight speeches where the candidate’s wife did not mention their own children or role of mother. In its absence, they turned the discourse to narratives of their own mother. “Tonight, I want to remember my mother’s warmth, generosity, wisdom, and hopefulness



and thank her for all the sacrifices she made on our behalf, like so many other mothers” (Kerry, 2004). Elizabeth Dole, who was not a mother but a step-mother, also mentioned her own mother when she said, “Now, let me just say I could go on and on sharing stories about this loving husband and father, this caring friend, but please indulge a very proud wife just one final story which neither I nor my 95-year-old mother will ever forget” (Dole, 1996). Although these speeches do not discuss their own roles as mother, they still make references to the characteristics, adhering to the genre.

### *Gendered Roles*

The third common theme that emerged as the candidate wives spoke at the nominating conventions was the construction of the masculine presidency. As stated earlier, scholars like Stuckey (year) and Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles (year) theorize the presidential role as inherently masculine in nature. These characteristics of masculinity and the presidency are highlighted throughout the speeches while attempting to define their spouse. These examples are demonstrated through outright mention of the candidate’s military service, mention of strength in general and also strength in marriage.

Military service has been a precursor for presidentiality for most of our history. For the candidates who had served in the military, it is naturally included in their speeches to epitomize strength and war fighting. Teresa Heinz-Kerry said, “John is a fighter. He earned his medals the old-fashioned way, by putting his life on the line for his country. No one will defend this nation more vigorously than he will and he will always be first in the line of fire” (Kerry,

2004). Barbara Bush also indicated her husband's military service by saying, "You know, when George and I headed west after World War II, we already had our first child; George was a veteran" (Bush, 1992). Mentioning military service calls the audience to link the candidate with fight and sacrifice in the name of country. This qualification alone helps to construct a masculine identity of the president.

Another avenue to demonstrate the masculine characteristics deemed essential for US president is the overt mention of strength. Barbara Bush demonstrates this when she said, "You make me feel wonderful, but then I always feel wonderful when I get to talk about the strongest, the most decent, the most caring, the wisest, and yes, and the healthiest man I know" (Bush, 1992). In 2000, Laura Bush echoed that sentiment when she said, "And from that well spring of values, George developed the strength and the consistency of conviction. His core principles will not change with the wind of polls or politics, or fame or fortune or misfortune" (Bush, 2000). Strength as a masculine characteristic is an essential trait of presidentiality. Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles refer to presidentiality as, "an ideological rhetoric that helps shape and order the cultural meaning of the institution of presidency" (Parry-Giles & Parry-Giles). That is to say that first ladies have and still play a role in the discursive construction of what it means to be president. Wives who explicitly mention their husband as possessing this characteristic are reinforcing the role of force and power in the presidency.

The final way that candidate wives construct the image of strength and power is in relation to emotional strength in their marriage. Elizabeth Dole in

1996 said, “Now for the last several days, a number of men and women have been painting a remarkable portrait of a remarkable man, a man who is the strongest and most compassionate, most tender person that I’ve ever known –the man who, quite simply, is my own personal Rock of Gibraltar” (Dole, 1996). This emotional strength, enough for two people, reinforces the role within the marriage, or institution, as one person being the metaphoric rock. By saying her husband plays that function of strength, he is positioned as leader of their binary institution.

Further, roles defined between First Lady and candidate are gendered. For instance, Barbara Bush stated, “George’s days in the fields were dusty with long hours and hard work, but no matter when he got home, he always had time to throw a ball or listen to the kids” (Bush, 1992). This demonstrates partner roles that are consistent with stereotypes.

As noted earlier, the notion of ‘effeminate style’ by Campbell sheds light as to the types of public address deemed as masculine or feminine. Highlighting Campbell’s work in her book *The Double Bind*, Jamieson quotes Campbell, “Consistent with their allegedly poetic and emotional natures, women tend to adopt associative, dramatic, and narrative modes of development, as opposed to deductive forms of organization. The tone tends to be personal and somewhat tentative, rather than objective or authoritative” (Jamieson on Campbell, 1995). This concept of feminine style of conversational dialogue is a clear strategy throughout all of the speeches.

In nearly every speech, the wives mention the need to have a conversation. Famously, Elizabeth Dole walked into the audience in an attempt to connect with

her audience at a more personal level. “Now, you know, tradition is that speakers at the Republican National Convention remain at this very imposing podium. But tonight I’d like to break with tradition for two reasons – one, I’m going to be speaking to friends, and secondly, I’m going to be speaking about the man I love” (Dole, 1996). Clinton echoed this sentiment when she said, “I wish we could be sitting around a kitchen table, just us, talking about our hopes and fears about our children’s futures” (Clinton, 1996). Framing their speeches as conversation situates them as not behind a podium, but instead engaging in dialogue. In contrast with the masculine style of public address, these conversations construct a style to which the candidate wives must adhere.

As Campbell argues, the role of first lady has very specific responsibilities as determined in conjunction with the institution of the presidency that are vital to the function of the presidency. The two-person career of the presidency yields a presidential institution that includes both the role of president and first lady. The role of presidency cannot be created without the inclusion of the first lady. In this next section, the ways in which the candidate wives attempt to create their identity by performing as first lady is analyzed. Patterns of motherhood, demonstration of love, delivered in feminine style and inclusive of gendered role discourse helps build the second part of the genre: defining of self consistent with the rhetorical first lady (Campbell, 2004).

These representations of the ways in which the speeches construct the identity of self as first lady while concurrently creating the identity of the candidate emerged as shared patterns. These similar themes and characteristics determine the existing genre. All eight speeches constructed the role of the

president through patterns of language of fatherhood, commitment, strength and male gendered roles. Further, all eight speeches constructed the role of the first lady through feminine style discourse of motherhood, love and female gendered roles. The inductive approach allows for determining the existence of a genre. The clear emergent themes and patterns in response to convention needs as similar situations, demonstrate an unmistakable new genre in public address.

Based on the preceding analysis, the surrogate speech creates the same institutional requirements. “That is, spouses exert power by virtue of their sexual and marital relationship to the president; their influence is indirect and intimate, a subtle intrusion of the private into the public, political sphere” (Campbell, 1998, p.181). Therefore, although the role of first lady does not hold constitutional powers, when considered in the context of the presidential institution including both the president and first lady, both reliant on the other and containing certain rhetorical requirements, the adherence to and inclusion among presidential speechmaking genre is clear. Therefore, a new genre of First Lady Convention Oratory, should be considered.

The rhetorical presidency is constructed through language and narrative rooted in fatherly and masculine prose, reinforcing the importance of commitment and alluding to stereotypical gender roles of leadership in society. In contrast, the rhetorical first lady is constructed through feminine language and style rooted in motherhood and adoration language, reinforcing the gender roles of being his support system. This genre of presidential speech making has proven essential over the past two decades in constructing the institution of presidency.

The requisite nature is the characteristic that provides the final determination of the creation of the new genre.

## Chapter 4: Media Coverage: Co-Constructing and Reinforcing Generic Boundaries

Identifying presidential spouse convention addresses as a genre of presidential speechmaking is important, but classifying it stops short of understanding the underpinnings and ramifications of adhering to or abandoning the genre. We should be more concerned with the image of the presidential spouse, the expectations of performance, and what that means for the presidential couple and the masculine/feminine binary that is reinforced. When the media labels first ladies as “Cookie Momster” as the *New York Times* did with Anne Romney in 2008 (Romney, 2008), or “Sugar Mommy” as the *Washington Post* did with Theresa Heinz-Kerry in 2004 (Kerry, 2004) it’s important we pay attention. As media coverage of convention addresses increases, how the media talks about the spousal speech is an important link to determining what impacts it has on the role of women in politics.

The genre analysis of the previous section included twenty years of convention speeches, marking the beginning of a clear trend in presidential oratory. In recent years, these speeches have been moved from afternoon timeslots with lack-luster attendance, to prime-time, televised media events. With this rise of media attention, comes a focused, often scrutinized, media lens which warrants analysis.

The twenty-year review of mediated discourses of presidential candidate spouse speeches at nominating conventions yielded three main themes. These messages include first the representation as an example of the dual and

unbalanced nature of the presidential institution—with a blueprint of specific responsibilities to be carried out by the first lady. Second, the discursive representations included consistent use of feminine style to carry out two speech aims: humanize and personalize their husbands. Finally, the coverage yielded indicators of non-feminine descriptions, calling into question the feminine style and aims of particular speeches. These three themes work together to construct the role of the presidential spouse as an essential but ultimately subservient feminine role to the masculine leader running for president. These representations further place women inside the presidential binary, but only as long as she remains in accordance with ideal feminine boundaries identified in the genre.

#### *Spouse Speech as Accessory to the Presidential “Ticket”*

The first common theme that aids in the reinforcement of masculinity as the ideal leadership style in the U.S. is the representation of the first lady as part of the presidential ticket. The finding that the media portrays the candidates’ spouse as a part of the ticket, points to Campbell’s depiction of the presidency as a two-person career (Campbell, 2004). However, although it is true that we elect, as Campbell asserts, a couple for the position of president, their essential nature doesn’t tell the whole story. The media representations of these spouses help tease out their true role in the binary of the institution as a required accessory.

At first glance, it would appear that the media frames pertaining to the dual-nature of the presidency hold the spouse as a requirement teetering on political agency. For instance, in relation to Michelle Obama, Barack Obama was



described as being “joined by his full ticket” (Cooper and Peters, 2012). The ticket is often referred to the Presidential and Vice Presidential candidate. The framing of wives as part of that group demonstrates Campbell’s notion of the institution of presidency as a two-person career. Accomplished by utilizing discursive descriptors reserved for politicians and portraying the wives as having political purpose demonstrates this inclusionary two-person career. Further, the media depicts these spouses and their speeches as running a campaign of their own, as if to say that they could be elected ‘First Lady’ without the campaign victory of their husbands. These portrayals demonstrate the essential role these women must play. For example, in 2008 one such representation noted, “At least before last night, there had never in American history been a memorable political-convention speech delivered by a woman *seeking* to become first lady” (Bunch, 2008). Another news article called Michelle Obama, “the *prospective* first lady” (Welch, 2008). Similarly, in 2000, Laura Bush, portrayed as the “reluctant political wife who would rather read than speechify, introduced herself to the nation Monday as a prospective first lady with a commitment to education” (Lawrence, 2000). In 1996, *USA Today* remarked, “Elizabeth Dole’s stock as a political asset has jumped” (Hasson, 1996). These illustrations of the candidates’ wives as pursuing a position, demonstrates the two-person career of the institution of Presidency, which re-affirms the notion of the first lady as part of the presidential ticket.

However, the essential nature of the spouse’s involvement is called into question when media frames reveal a specific use for the first lady—as something to be leveraged. The utility of the first lady becomes clearer by further ferreting

the ways the role is used by the campaign. For example, Ann Romney in 2012 was referred to as the “party’s shiniest star” (DeFalco and Miller, 2012). Similarly, in 1996 the Pittsburgh Post Gazette stated, “The convention’s big star last night was first lady Hillary Clinton, and the Democrats made sure she got a prime time chance to shine” (Bianco, 1996). Describing Romney and Clinton’s agency as a component of the party further constructs her role as within campaign boundaries, but in a way that connotes her polish. In 2004 we can see similar agency when one article stated that “the most strategic seat assignment: Robert Rubin, the former Treasury secretary, placed next to Teresa Heinz Kerry. Message to Wall Street: We Care” (Stolberg and Tierney, 2004). Although not a new concept, this alignment of campaign strategy directed by the political party depicts the overarching inclusion of potential first ladies within the presidential campaign.

Another way that media helps to demonstrate the first lady as a utility of the presidency is in the descriptions of the spouse as garnering specific types of votes. For example, in 2004 an article in *The Washington Post* stated, “She pushed all the right buttons in appealing to moderate undecided voters” (Dionne, 2004). Also in 2004, John Kerry was described as leaning on his wife’s “connections [...] to put the state in the Democratic column again in November” (Reston, 2004). In 2000, *The New York Daily News* noted, “A key to that strategy is to let Tipper Gore connect with the crowd” (Sisk, 2000). These political responsibilities placed on the candidates’ wives demonstrate a clear political advantage to be leveraged.

One way that the media frames construct the first lady role as perfunctory— little more than a chess piece—is the way the inclusive nature of the role is feminized. One of the most famous declarations in Michelle Obama’s 2012 convention speech was her self-labeling of “Mom-in-Chief.” Media latched on to this tag as demonstrated by *The Washington Post*: "And she reminded us that her No. 1 job remains ‘mom-in-chief’, heavily emphasizing the importance of family in the Democratic Party's vision" (Elder and Greene, 2012). Deemed a party tactic, the label itself connotes an executive role title, which is shared exclusively by the President of the United States or C-level executives in corporations. However, the private role of mom, juxtaposed with the public title “in-chief” highlights the apparent conflicting nature of the two roles.

Describing the essential nature of the first lady also demonstrates the presidential binary that requires something outside of the individual presidential candidate. For example, one *New York Times* blogger noted in 2008, "Michelle Obama's convention speech will mark a new point in her remarkable transformation from a Chicago hospital executive who openly called politics a waste of time to a hugely popular first lady and polished political communicator considered essential to her husband's re-election efforts" (Kantor, 2012). Often referred to as “figures on the campaign trail” (Elder and Greene, 2012) and “the Democratic duo” (Lambrecht, 2004), the first lady has become a necessary fixture within the campaign for presidency. In 2008, *The New York Times* represented the most obvious description of the two-person career of the presidency when the paper described Barack and Michelle Obama by writing, "Now they have fully fused their careers into one enterprise that has gotten them

farther than ever before" (Kantor, 2008). This union of abilities, talents and career paths reinforces the requirement and power of the dual-nature of the presidency.

Although many scholars have pointed to the idea that successful presidential candidates require a spouse to fulfill certain roles as first lady, the presidential binary is represented even during the campaign itself. However, the use of the first lady half of that binary connotes the superficial and malleable nature of her identity, persona, and responsibilities. Whether through representations of supposed political agency, or use for garnering certain votes, the true lack of autonomy of the candidates' spouse is reinforced in mediated discourse. The teamwork representations of the first lady and her essential duties, along with the often used frame as running their own campaign, both point to the political role that is the first lady. While the frames appear to legitimize the role as part of a cohesive unit, a closer look reveals a periphery figure to be handled, leveraged, and continued. This media framing of the candidate wives leads to the construction of the executive binary that evolves to require both a masculine and a feminine. These frames reveal a first lady meant to prop-up or embellish her husband's campaign for president. The continued framing of presidential spouses as a tool for her husband's campaign toolbox further constructs the expectations that women's role in the public sphere is to support her husband's endeavors and be available to play the role the campaign desires.

### *Humanize, Personalize, Feminize*

Expanding on the basic premise that mediated discourse reinforces the role of a spouse as part of the presidential binary, albeit by way of utility for the campaign, the frames reveal specifics in what the spouses must do with the convention speech. That is, what specific strategies are being imposed on the first lady and what goals does the party and campaign expect her to achieve? The consistent ways first ladies have accomplished these goals delineates the genre boundaries of the convention speeches. These generic outlines emerge through the media's description of speech expectations, but also in the feminine descriptors employed when covering certain speeches. Framing speech praise in feminine descriptors—as personalizing and humanizing—these discourses reveal the speeches' intended function. In summing up all things the first lady must be, one *New York Times* author wrote, "Mrs. Obama displayed the kind of grace and female strength that political consultants love and many Americans yearn for in a first lady" (Randolph, 2008). So what is it that we Americans 'yearn' for in a first lady convention speech? If the media discourse tells us anything, it is that first, the convention speeches must humanize and personalize the candidate. Second, this intimate understanding of the candidate must be delivered through feminine style.

In 2012, Michelle Obama gave a "speech designed to humanize a president" (McDermott, 2012). Similarly, in 2004, Laura Bush, "offered a personal look at her husband's anguish over sending troops into battle" (Hutcheson, 2004). Ann Romney's most successful part of her 2012 convention speech was, "no surprise here - the personal testimonial" (Marcus, 2012). Cindy

McCain, in 2008, was described as speaking "of his personal traits and captivity from 1967-1973 as a prisoner of war in Vietnam" (Lawrence, 2008). When describing Barbara Bush it was stated "...she will talk about family values, but more importantly, she will incarnate family values" (Shales, 1996). In a slight dig at her husband in 2008, a recount of Michelle Obama noted, "And so Michelle Obama [...] sought to humanize the sometimes aloof candidate" (Bunch, 2008). These personalizing narratives aren't new to first lady rhetoric. As noted by *The Washington Post* in 2012, "When Michelle Obama takes the stage at the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte on Tuesday night, she will once again embrace a role that wives of presidential contenders have now played for two decades: humanizer of their husbands, dogged advocate for their men" (Obaro, 2012). In similar predictive description of Ann Romney's speech, one newspaper article wrote, "Ann Romney will use her prime-time speech at the Republican National Convention to take some of the sheen off her husband's glossy image and try to humanize Mr. Romney with the very real struggles he has faced with dogged determination and inevitable success" (Unknown, 2012). Once again, the value of the first lady is reduced to campaign strategy of humanizing and personalizing her husband. This consistent frame of first lady responsibility reinforces the unbalanced binary of the presidential couple, while also feminizing those tasks left at the feet of the first lady.

In addition to framing the aims of the convention addresses, the discourses pertaining to method also depict a specific style to which these women must adhere. Jamieson describes the masculine versus feminine address as,

“Driven by emotion, womanly speech was thought to be personal, excessive, disorganized and unduly ornamental. Driven by reason, the manly style was regarded as factual, analytic, organized, and impersonal” (Jamieson, 1995, p.91). Feminine style, when implemented in these addresses, coincides with feminine descriptors of the speeches by media outlets. In addition to the representations of what the successful candidate spouses must do during the convention speeches, the ways the speeches or personas as a whole are described by news coverage also demonstrates the feminine requirement to the masculine binary. For example, *The New York Times* commended Michelle Obama’s successes by noting, "She is now a pro. No one since Mrs. Kennedy has worked the camera more astutely or more purposefully to help her husband--the best way is still to be seen as an exemplary first lady" (Stanley, 2012). Figure 1 depicts these media narratives that demonstrate feminine style of the candidate wives during convention speeches. The consistent frame of feminine descriptors in media discourse reminds audiences of the expectations of style.

Figure 1.0

Convention Speech	Descriptors
<b>Michelle Obama - 2012</b>	“emotionally powerful convention speech” (Lemire and Lee, 2012)
<b>Michelle Obama - 2012</b>	“exercise in empathy” (Unknown, 2012)
<b>Michelle Obama - 2012</b>	“warm, positive speech” (Moore, 2012)
<b>Michelle Obama / Ann Romney – 2012</b>	“They are warm, caring, and most of all, irreproachable helpmates” (Katz, Mirchandani, and Lee, 2012)
<b>Ann Romney - 2012</b>	"before her adoring audience" (Esfahani, 2012)
<b>Ann Romney - 2012</b>	“Ann Romney confided” (Weisman, 2012)
<b>Ann Romney - 2012</b>	"warm and fuzzy convention speech" (DeFalco and Miller, 2012)
<b>Michelle Obama – 2008</b>	"Mrs. Obama displayed the kind of grace..." (Randolph, 2008)
<b>Michelle Obama – 2008</b>	“a moving address" (Goldenberg, 2008)
<b>Michelle Obama – 2008</b>	"stirs throng with 'heart'-felt speech" (Goldenberg, 2008)
<b>Laura Bush – 2004</b>	"a polished performer" (Hutcheson, 2004)

<b>Laura Bush – 2004</b>	"first lady's heartfelt speech" (Edozien, 2004)
<b>Laura Bush – 2004</b>	"But she spoke with her customary modesty" (Podhoretz, 2004)
<b>Laura Bush – 2000</b>	"the reserved former librarian said of her husband's..." (McQuillan, 2000)
<b>Elizabeth Dole – 1996</b>	"brought some badly needed charm, poise and personality..." (Hasson, 1996)
<b>Elizabeth Dole – 1996</b>	"Elizabeth Dole's warmth is key to reaching them." (Hasson, 1996)
<b>Barbara Bush - 1992</b>	"Mrs. Bush was just a kinder, gentler coda to one long innuendo" (Shales, 1996)
<b>Barbara Bush - 1992</b>	"the First Grandma" (Shales, 1996)

The dominant media frames of the twenty years of first lady convention addresses are important indicators for the gauge of feminine style employed. Governing the narrative with descriptors such as "emotional", "warm", "adoring", "grace", "heart-felt", etc., points to the boundaries and expectations of this particular public address. In order to make a case for expanding the genre, we must determine where these boundaries were challenged.

### *Confronting the Boundaries*

The media constructions of political agency and feminine style for presidential candidate spouses implicate the continued hegemonic masculinity of the presidency. However, the disciplining of presidential spouses who transgress feminine conventions solidifies this masculine bias. Two women absent from Figure 1 are Hillary Clinton and Teresa Heinz Kerry. This section will help to ferret out why certain speeches are tagged as not as effective, in terms of style and content. As the media discourses surrounding presidential candidate spouse speeches at conventions reveal, their extant usefulness to the campaign is contingent upon their adherence to these norms and conventions of femininity,



both in style and content. When a potential or extant first lady, clearly used as a utility knife to delineate a specific image of her husband, contests those boundaries, the point of struggle reveals something about both the role of first lady and the role of president. This section sets out to examine the ways those contested or countered boundary speeches were represented by the media. By holistically examining the ways in which all of the speeches were described, sheds light on the characteristics that make up a “successful” speech, and therefore first lady. Further, comparison to past speeches can also discern successful compliance within expectations of feminine content and style and, therefore, the hegemonic masculine roles of the presidency. Let’s take a look at what speeches the media celebrated, and which speeches they condemned.

In coverage of Michelle Obama, one newspaper noted “Like all first ladies since Hillary Rodham Clinton was cast as the Glamour Don’t of East Wing etiquette, Mrs. Obama was careful not to say anything on Tuesday that critics would seize on as strident or unladylike” (Stanley, 2012). In some cases, the contrast pits the two candidate spouses against each other. Looking at descriptions of the two 2012 convention speeches, the news coverage concludes, “The tone of the Democratic convention changed sharply the moment Michelle Obama took the stage. In contrast to the speech that Ann Romney, Mitt Romney’s wife, gave at the Republican convention last week, Mrs. Obama—in her prepared text—avoids any kind of political confrontation: no talk of Republicans or Romney or even the other side” (Unknown, 2012). While at times the media does not explicitly indicate a positive or negative favoring of the address (what is determined to have a Neutral rating in Figure 2.0), the comparison between two

first ladies can tip the hat as far as favorability is concerned. Although this does not tell us much about the first lady, it does reinforce the expectations of the genre.

Similar comparisons between the candidate spouses took place in the 2004 coverage of then First Lady Laura Bush and candidate spouse Teresa Heinz Kerry. In contrast to Laura Bush's convention speech, coverage of Teresa Heinz Kerry noted, "There was a missing ingredient in Teresa Heinz Kerry's recipe for a convention speech Tuesday night. The would-be first lady failed to leaven her rambling rhetoric with any memorable explanation of why she married John Kerry" (Shapiro, 2004). Further reinforcing Laura Bush's style as the ideal, one article stated, "Most political strategists doubt that wives have a major impact on the election, but Mrs. Kerry sure doesn't look like an asset compared to the super-popular Laura Bush, a former school librarian" (Orin, 2004). The 2004 speeches also have coverage comparisons that further help to demonstrate the feminine requirements of the oratory. On Laura Bush in 2004, "No one is asking whether Laura Bush is an asset" (Seelye, 2004). In the same article, the author wrote, "In the case of Teresa Heinz Kerry, the pundits have been asking a telling question. Is she an asset or a liability? As long as that is the question, the answer is clear. Since reviews of her speech in July at the Democratic convention ran the gamut from self-absorbed to wifty, her public presence has been reduced" (Seelye, 2004). These representations of Laura Bush, in contrast to Teresa Heinz Kerry, illustrate the feminine style and adhering to the genre as successful, which continues to reinforce the hegemonic masculinity of the executive role.

Negative accounts of the speech and the candidate spouse is just one way the mediated discourses reinforce the expectations of the feminine role. Comparing to past candidate spouses who met the same or contrasting fate accomplishes this aim. In the time period of the last two decades, the most prominent candidate spouse-turned-candidate is Hillary Rodham Clinton. Therefore, she is often used as a measuring stick on which other first ladies are considered. In describing “I won’t be packaged” statements of Teresa Heinz Kerry, the *New York Times* wrote “That's for sure. A wealthy, highly educated woman who took over the stewardship of one of the country's largest philanthropic organizations after the death of her husband in 1991, she has no patience for Stepford-like pretense, many who know her have said. Will her sharp elbows and jutted lip fly with an electorate that admires the modest Laura Bush?” (Purnick, 2004). This excerpt helps to demonstrate the polar frames that compare genre-contending speeches to those deemed to fit within the genre.

The final representations have little to do with comparisons to other campaign spouses and first ladies, but focus on content of the speech. When these discourses are compared, generic conventions signify the expectations. When the convention speech breaks these boundaries, what happens to the media representations of the speeches? As noted earlier, Teresa Heinz Kerry’s speech wasn’t portrayed as attempting to personalize or humanize her husband, and wasn’t described as particularly warm and fuzzy. Instead, her speech was considered “sobering” (Orin, 2004) and “unorthodox” (Orin, 2004). One extended discussion of Teresa Heinz Kerry’s speech explained it by writing, “The crowd sat silently through much of her speech and applause was scattered, as if

the delegates didn't quite know what to make of the exotic, Mozambique-born woman who gave none of the personal insights or anecdotes that spouses usually offer" (Orin, 2004). While her husband John Kerry was portrayed as indecisive, his wife was consequently framed as too aggressive, which upended the patriarchal order of the family. When the order and roles are not clear, masculinity comes into question and demonstrates not only the existing hegemonic masculinity surrounding leadership in the US, but also the ways in which media consistently re-constructs and reinforces that hegemony. Ultimately, had Teresa Heinz Kerry complied with the genre of the convention speeches, the media representations may have portrayed a feminine first lady, thereby counteracting the emasculation of her husband. As Fahey contends, John Kerry was emasculated through most of the media portrayals. These portrayals have a negative impact on the campaign, and reveal the clear expectations of the aims and style of the convention speech. These expectations and requirements—to humanize and personalize via feminine style—work to reinforce the hegemonic masculinity of the presidency.

In addition to Teresa Heinz-Kerry, Hillary Clinton is also absent from Figure 1.0 above, indicating the media narrative did not define her convention address as one that humanized her husband through feminine means. In lieu of emotional appeals, media response to Hillary was overall successful, if not within expectations. *The Washington Post* stated, "Mrs. Clinton's speech was capably delivered but lacked warmth, for all of her determined efforts to project some" (Shales, 1996). Further, the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette* indicated, "Hillary Clinton gave a serious speech, making the connection between private life and public

issues, between family and the village" (Goodman, 1996). While not hailed as far off-base as Teresa Heinz-Kerry was, Hillary's address seemed riddled with skepticism. The *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* noted, "Aiming to establish the Democrats as the party that cares about family and children, Hillary Clinton made at least 15 references to her daughter during her nationally televised speech" (Dart & Malone, 1996). And one newspaper recalled, "She was so restrained...some of it almost came across as insincere," threatening again her authenticity (Stevenson, 1996). As far comparisons to other first ladies can determine the positive or negative spin attached to the address, Hillary Clinton was no exception. However, her biggest point of comparison proved to be herself. Although she did not give a speech at the 1992 DNC, the role she played in the first four years of her husband's presidency seemed to dictate her point of comparison. That is, she was deemed successful only in comparison to her contentious overly political role she appeared to be playing. *USA Today* said, "First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton's no-nonsense speech Tuesday to the Democratic Convention went a long way toward boosting her image" (Benedetto, 1996). What appears to be Hillary Clinton giving a genre-stretching speech, she did so in what seemed inauthentic given her political past. I can only contend that, in the absence of a bar set firmly in her expected role steeped in policy and issues, any appeal to conform to typical first lady appeals was appreciated, but questioned. It is also in comparison to the other wives at the convention that we see Hillary's attempts to stretch the genre thwarted. *The Washington Post* said, "Now she [Hillary Clinton] suffers in contrast to Elizabeth Dole, who is as much of a career woman, has no children, and publicly tells her husband what to say,

yet is regarded by the public as a more traditional spouse" (Maraniss, 1996). Therefore, although we can look to her for guidance on stretching the genre, Hillary Clinton may be an unfortunate outlier when it comes to the positive/negative rating when based in hurdling her own bar.

The themes identified in the media analysis include representation of the utility of presidential candidate spouses framed by duties to humanize and personalize through feminine style discourse, and disciplined when boundaries are confronted or contested. Campbell's notion of the two-person career of the presidency goes beyond elected presidents to the electability of the pair. The continued use of candidate spouses in convention strategy shows the prominence and efficacy the couple achieves. This trend is reinforced by mediated discourses that add censure to the function of the candidates' wives. The feminine style employed in the speeches helps to construct the feminine side of the dual executive. When the feminine style is absent, the speeches—and therefore, wives—are framed as ineffective, and we see the breakdown of the masculine/feminine binary. The breakdown happens through rejection of the generic expectation. The comparisons with other first ladies just perpetuate these genre requirements. These themes work together to reinforce the femininity of the first lady.

Parry-Giles and Perry Giles contend that "Ultimately, it is through the analysis of the hegemonic interaction of style and substance that the deconstruction of potentially destructive 'masculine' themes of power, competition, and war can occur to lead to a more genuine and meaningful feminization of American political communication" (Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles,

p. 349). Through the feminine/masculine binary, where the masculine is only constructed in association with the feminine of the heterosexual presidential couple, we continually reward masculine leadership. This hegemonic masculinity of the presidency cannot be upended with the current roles and representations of the presidential candidates' wives. Until these roles and requirements are diversified, the feminine and masculine pillars of the institution of presidency will be required, with the masculine representing the leadership position.

## Chapter 5: Implications for Future Research and Conclusions

The first step in determining if adhering to a genre is problematic is to first establish a new genre exists. The genre of Presidential Spouse Convention Oratory includes certain boundaries of the convention discourse of the presidential spouse, discussed above. Once a genre has been revealed, we must then highlight the convention speeches that do not conform to those boundaries and further delineate the expectations of the genre by examining media representations of the campaign rhetoric. Revealing the media frames that point to adherence of expectations of these speeches takes the analysis a step further. Finally, making the determination whether the media frame is a positive or negative one sheds light on those expectations. Working together, these three points of analysis reveals which spouses performed a both/and presentation. These are the instances where the genre is stretched, and creates opportunities for new speech expectations that do more to promote diversification of the role of the president and the presidential couple. By identifying countered boundaries—or instances where the genre is challenged—this thesis examines shifts in the frame, how the shifts are discussed in the media, and how new perspectives can create an independent first lady.

Figure 2.0 below summarizes the intersections of these three points of analysis. Under the genre column, a determination is made as to whether the spouse adhered to the main tenants of the newly constructed genre, or if they stretched or contended it. Under the media frame column, a determination is



made as to whether the media framed the spouse as falling inside or outside expectations of the genre as a surrogate and spouse. This was determined by looking for key words such as “predicted”, “expected” or other words that align with the genre tenants such as “personal” or “humanize.” Under the media coverage column, this indicates if the media coverage of the spouse overall was negative, positive or neutral. This is determined by the textual analysis looking for words such as “pro”, “polished”, “asset”. What we are looking for are instances where the genre was adhered to and stretched, the media framed the speech as adhering to expectations and ultimately still framed the address positively. Those instances are the example for a more independent first lady address. Figure 2.0 indicates only two presidential candidate wives which meet this desired intersection: Elizabeth Dole and Hillary Clinton, both in 1996. Other spouses came close, such as Laura Bush in 2000, however the media coverage did not seem to celebrate or condemn the candidate, garnering a neutral rating. Conflicting, Teresa Heinz-Kerry stretched the genre, but did not garner positive coverage from the media.

Figure 2.0

Convention Speech	Genre	Media Frame	Media Coverage
<b>Michelle Obama - 2012</b>	Adhered	Adhered	Positive
<b>Ann Romney – 2012</b>	Adhered	Adhered	Positive
<b>Michelle Obama – 2008</b>	Adhered	Adhered	Positive
<b>Cindy McCain - 2008</b>	Adhered	Adhered	Neutral
<b>Laura Bush – 2004</b>	Adhered	Adhered	Positive
<b>Teresa Heinz-Kerry – 2004</b>	Adhered/Stretched	Contended	Negative
<b>Tipper Gore – 2000</b>	N/A – No Speech	N/A – No Speech	N/A – No Speech
<b>Laura Bush – 2000</b>	Adhered/Stretched	Adhered	Neutral
<b>Elizabeth Dole – 1996</b>	Adhered/Stretched	Adhered	Positive

<b>Hillary Clinton – 1996</b>	Adhered/Stretched	Adhered	Positive
<b>Barbara Bush - 1992</b>	Adhered	Adhered	Neutral
<b>Hillary Clinton - 1992</b>	N/A – No Speech	N/A – No Speech	N/A – No Speech

It is important to note that these intersections do not tell the whole story. For instance, while Michelle Obama was celebrated in media coverage for her convention addresses, she received that praise while strictly adhering to the genre. The role of race and historic implications of her husband’s campaign created a rhetorical situation that demanded rigorous repartee to stay on script. However, these outliers aside, by examining those spouses who adhered or stretched the genre of the speech but were welcomed and framed as such through mediated discourse, we find a guide to begin a pragmatic shift of the genre. We look to 1996 as the year the largest opportunity for stretching this genre took place. Both Elizabeth Dole and Hillary Clinton presented speeches that adhered to but stretched, a both/and approach, the genre. With that expansion came a surprising media frame. Media frames for both speeches indicate both women stayed within the public expectations and were received positively. Interestingly, it is in comparison to Hillary Clinton that both were deemed successful. That is, Hillary Clinton of the 1992 campaign. Whereas Elizabeth’s Dole speech stands out as the most successfully stretched oratory, Hillary Clinton may be an outlier in absence of her own contentious and controversial role as President Clinton’s wife.

Therefore, using Elizabeth Dole’s speech in 1996 as a starting point, we must propose a broadened genre that expands the role of women in presidential politics but does so in a way that flies under the radar and the media frames the

speech as within those expectations. The primary difference of Elizabeth Dole's convention address came down to style. One of the most memorable speeches in the twenty year analysis was due primarily to *how* she delivered the speech. Style, then, could be the determining factor in accomplishing the both/and genre bending. That isn't to say, however, that we can disassociate content from style. That isn't the point here. As Sheeler and Anderson have postulated, women in political life who are more feminine are allowed more flexibility when it comes to contending expectations (Anderson & Sheeler). We can see that in this analysis with Laura Bush, Elizabeth Dole, and even Hillary Clinton when adhering to but stretching the genre, they are given a neutral or positive gauge in media coverage. So, while presidential candidates' wives can expand the genre by adhering to and stretching it, they will fly under the radar of media scrutiny if exuding femininity. Elizabeth Dole did this through style, and Hillary Clinton, albeit skeptically, through appealing to motherhood. It's a tight rope, a "double bind" that wives must walk, but the further they stretch the genre, the more widened the boundaries become. These models of expanded requirements, informed by the research included here, should act as a guide for future convention oratory.

The title of this paper originally included the word spouse but was replaced with wife, signifying that prior to the 2016 election cycle, candidate spouses have been comprised of only wives. By using a genre critique to determine whether the construction of the feminine role within the institution of the presidency is reinforced through media representations of presidential candidate wives at nominating conventions, it is evident that both the speech and the media response further constructs and reinforces the hegemonic masculinity

of the presidency. By looking at the wives' speeches we clearly see the support of the dual nature of the presidency. The president is not presidential in absence of first lady. The institution of presidency not only needs the nominating speech to construct these humanistic characteristics, it demands its inclusion. Without the first lady, the president is cold and distant, without a story. Acting as author by narrating her roles and his, the potential first lady constructs the identity and characteristics of both sides of the presidential couple. Even further, the media helps generate this dual-presidency—masculine and feminine—by inclusionary language that frames the wives as both part of the ticket and fulfilling their role to humanize and personalize their husbands through feminine style, to comply with successful First Ladies before them. As this genre of presidential public address strengthens, so too does the ideal masculinity of the presidency.

The media response to those wives whom contend the genre are problematic and reinforces the dual-nature of the presidency. Not only to define their husbands, first ladies have walked the line between public and private roles since the beginning of the institution. “By contrast, presidential wives raise the more problematic issue of the relationship between women, sexuality and power. (Campbell, 2004) This relationship between presidency and first lady as a shared position anchors this new genre. This genre constructs a very specific roadmap for defining the presidency and first lady.

Through the genre of candidate wife convention addresses, the picture of the presidential institution becomes clearly defined, absent of malleable boundaries. With stringent musts and must-nots, the candidates' wives create an institution that, absent of specific actors and characteristics, cannot come into

existence. Although these women adhere to genre specifications and aid in the election of their husbands, they simultaneously reinforce a gap between women and the presidency. With such specific characteristics and traits associated with the presidency, and reliant on the supportive nature of first lady, it is no wonder anyone outside of a man, along with his wife, supported by his children, would find it difficult to successfully a run for President. As the genre is maintained and reinforced every four years, as it has the past twenty, it becomes increasingly difficult to shatter the picture of presidentiality. By challenging the genre, as we have seen here with Dole, Clinton, and Heinz- Kerry, changing the genre to include various pictures of the institution, we prepare the electorate for different options of what the presidential couple is comprised of, opening the door a little wider for the first female president of the United States.

How can presidential candidate spouses recognize the need to have a 'both/and' approach to their speechwriting? This thesis postulates that realizing the genre problem exists, is the first step. The next step is to create convention oratory that begins to bend the genre, as we see Elizabeth Dole did successfully. We need to expand those boundaries little by little; a guide that first ladies can turn to when writing their convention addresses. While adhering to some characteristics and abandoning others, these wives can actually play a larger role in their own hopes for female political leadership. Until we can recognize the diversity of the role of president via the diversity of the presidential couple—a couple that is in part defined during the convention address—a woman, under the current American presidential discourse, will find it difficult to fit into the role of president. By bending the rules just slightly in her speech, and expanding the

genre, spouses could be achieving one of their greatest contributions to political life as they help shape and normalize a more diverse presidential couple.

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## Curriculum Vitae

Lindsay Katherine Quandt

### Education

Master of Arts in Applied Communication – Indiana University, Indianapolis

Indiana—November 2016

GPA: 3.967

Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies—Indiana University, Indianapolis

Indiana Spring 2007

GPA: 3.196

Bachelor of Arts in Political Science—Indiana University, Indianapolis, Indiana

Spring 2007

GPA: 3.196

Dean's List Spring 2007, Fall 2006, Spring 2006, Fall 2005

Academic Honors Diploma –Danville Community High School Spring 2002

### Research Assistantships

Dr. Jonathan Rossing, PhD Indiana University (Dept. Assistantship)

January 2013-May 2013

Research focused on mediated discourses on race, national identity and politics

Dr. Jennifer Bute, PhD University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana (Dept.

Assistantship) August 2012-May 2013

Research focused on mediated discourses of women's health issues and miscarriage disclosure

Dr. Catherine Dobris, PhD Indiana University August 2012-May 2013

Research focused on contemporary child rearing discourses

Dr. Kim White-Mills, PhD Ohio University August 2012-May 2013

Research focused on contemporary child rearing discourses

#### Conference Presentations

Rhetoric Society of America May 2014

"Rhetorical Boundaries of the 'Mom-in-Chief': A Genre Critique of Presidential Candidate Wives' Speeches at Nominating Conventions"

Eastern Communication Association (under review) May 2014

National Communication Association – Critical Theory Roundtable November 2013 "Creating the Rhetorical Mom-in-Chief: A Genre Critique of Candidate Wives' Speeches at Nominating Conventions"

Organization for the Study of Communication, Language and Gender (OSCLG) October 2013. "Public Discourses of Celebrity: Media Representations of Illness and the Body of Giuliana Rancic"

Co-Authored with Dr. Jennifer Bute, IUPUI and Dr. Margaret Quinlan, UNC

Central States Communication Association – Kansas City, MO April 2013

"Mitch Daniels' 'Second Red Menace': Metaphor and Identification in Conflict Communication" IUPUI Communication Studies Student Research Panel – Indianapolis, IN March 2013

## Research Interests

Political Communication – War rhetoric, women in politics, presidential rhetoric, and hegemonic masculinity.

Health Communication – Mediated discourse of women’s health issues including infertility, breast cancer, miscarriage, and abortion.

Gender Communication – Gender roles and family structure, workplace structure and public sector structure

## Awards

IUPUI Department of Communication Studies, Outstanding Graduate Paper, 2013 “Constituting Communities: The Life of Julia”

IUPUI Department of Communication Studies, Outstanding Graduate Paper, 2012 “Mitch Daniels’ ‘Second Red Menace’: Metaphor and Identification in Conflict Communication”

Richard G. Lugar Excellence in Public Service Class of 2012

Society of American Military Engineers (SAME), Regional Vice President’s Outstanding Service Award, 2010

Star Performer, Quality Environmental Professionals, Inc.; 2007 and 2008

## Professional Memberships

TEDxIUPUI, Co-Chair Aug 2012-April 2013

Central States Communication Association, Member February 2013-Present

National Communication Association, Member August 2011-Present



Richard G. Lugar Excellence in Public Service Series, Class Member September 2011-Present

Richard Lugar Campaign United States Senator, Volunteer September 2011-Present

Jackie Quandt Leadership Foundation Drive Your Dreams, Director January 2008-Present

### Employment History

#### Technical Writer

Indianapolis, Indiana CNO Financial Group May 2012-Present

Responsibilities included coordination, completion and maintenance of internal Business Glossary. Day-to-day responsibilities include technical written documentation of business terms and elements, in conjunction with data owners and stewards.

#### Research Assistant

Indianapolis, Indiana Indiana University, Purdue University, Indianapolis August 2012-2013

#### Federal Proposal Writer

Indianapolis, Indiana DSS Consulting (dba DiverseGOV) November 2010-

Present Responsibilities include implementation of government division contracts and projects. Day-to-day responsibilities include capture management and supervision of all activities involved in planning and developing and managing projects in the public sector. Outside of B2G development, responsibilities include writing and revising of technical proposals. Recipients of

proposals include federal, state and local government entities. Proposal process typically includes identifying win themes and discriminators, leading kick-off and review meetings, defining and managing proposal response schedule, providing guidance to proposal team and outside teaming partners, and finally reviewing proposal for RFP/RFQ compliance. Daily responsibilities include project management of all division projects with Department of Veterans Affairs, AmeriCorps, Indiana Intelligence Fusion Center, and US Air Force. Responsibilities also include monthly manpower reporting, PO compliance and FY closeout.

#### Marketing Manager

Indianapolis, Indiana Quality Environmental Professionals Inc. November 2005-November 2010 Responsibilities include all marketing and sales events including maintaining client relationships, technical tradeshow and conferences selling the company brand. Day to day responsibilities include managing all activities involved in planning, developing, and revising of technical proposals. This includes involving and coordinating with multiple strategic business units and teaming partners on large proposals. Recipients of proposals include private sector, local government agencies, municipalities, state agencies, and federal government agencies. Daily responsibilities include monitoring of federal proposal opportunities, business development with federal entities, maintaining representation with political and business association memberships, and tracking proposal progress and contacts for monthly reporting. Responsibilities also include managing compliance project for US Air Force Base that included

coordinating activities with subcontractors, contracting, civil engineering and facility managers on monthly services.

#### Communication Intern

Indianapolis, Indiana Indiana House of Representatives December 2004-June 2005 Responsibilities included overseeing the communication between five Representatives and their respective media outlets. This included weekly columns, press releases, statehouse updates, radio feeds, etc.

#### Insurance Representative

Bloomington, Indiana State Farm Insurance October 2003-December 2004 Responsibilities included handling insurance applications and policies for property and casualty insurance. Position required a passing score on the Indiana Property and Casualty Insurance License Exam. Daily tasks included answering client inquiries regarding policies, marketing new product lines, completing applications for new lines of insurance, and providing support to the Agent. I also assisted in the implementation of a safe driver program for teens.