TURNING THE NOOSE THAT BINDS INTO A ROPE TO CLIMB
A TEXTUAL SEARCH FOR
RHETORICAL AND LINGUISTIC GENDER-MARKINGS
IN SPEECH SAMPLES OF THREE CONTEMPORARY FEMALE ORATORS

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ABSTRACT

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Feminine communication styles have been the subject of active investigation since Robin Tolmach Lakoff’s 1975 publication of *Language and Woman’s Place*. This dissertation adds to that body of research, using both Lakoff’s linguistic markers and the rhetorical concept of the double-bind as discussed by Kathleen Hall Jamieson in “Beyond the Double Bind.” The women selected for this study include Nancy Pelosi; Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, Katharine Jefferts Schori; who serves as Presiding Bishop of the Episcopalian Church-USA; and Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a Justice of the United States Supreme Court. Three genre-specific speech samples from each of the rhetors (the acceptance speech, the standard professional speech, and the interview) are analyzed using Lakoff’s markers and Jamieson’s concept of the double-bind. Using this research structure, the speeches are examined for both stylistic and substantive language use which might be understood as “feminine.”

The dissertation concludes with a summary of the findings, including tables which demonstrate the extent of the usage of Lakoff’s markers by genre and by rhetor, and commentary on the way that genre influenced the rhetors’ usage of both linguistic and rhetorical strategies. Interestingly, genre appeared to be more of a deciding factor in the study than was originally anticipated, and this provides a powerful incentive for further research. Finally, I argue for the inclusion of these orators within the rhetorical canon, for we cannot attempt to re-gender the rhetorical tradition and claim to support inclusive rhetorical practices if we do not recognize the contemporary women whose voices are shaping and re-shaping the way rhetoric is applied in the public sphere.
For Mom
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CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

In 2007, for the first time in the history of the United States of America, three women simultaneously occupy influential public leadership positions encompassing the political arena, the mainline Protestant church, and the United States judicial system: Nancy Pelosi is the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives; Katharine Jefferts Schori serves as Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church-USA; and Ruth Bader Ginsburg is a Justice of the United States Supreme Court. This dissertation analyzes three genre-specific samples of rhetoric from each of these three women: speech samples include the acceptance speech, the standard professional speech, and the interview. A selective analysis of the discourse from a linguistic and a rhetorical perspective is included along with each sample, and the dissertation concludes with an invitation for further study based upon the research findings.

The first chapter lays a foundation for the work that is to follow: I begin here with a historical review of the recent scholarship that has been done in an effort to re-claim the rhetoric of women, both ancient and contemporary, and then I explain the exigence and goals of my own project – how this work fits into the landscape of women’s rhetoric. After tracing recent work in the field and establishing exigency, the subsequent sections in this chapter outline the specific methodology I will utilize in my study, examining both substantive and stylistic features of selected speeches. This introductory chapter also includes a strong word of caution in regard to generalizations which may be drawn based upon this study, and an unambiguous explanation of the limitations of the study. Finally, I offer an overview of what can be expected in chapters two through five.
The Recent Study of Female Rhetors: A Review of the Literature

“Men have an ancient and honorable rhetorical history,” begins Karlyn Kohrs Campbell in the two-volume study of early feminist rhetoric Man Cannot Speak For Her. “…[and] women have no parallel rhetorical history” (1). Campbell seeks the beginnings of a remedy to this discrepancy, and defines her purpose in the book as an effort to “rescue the works of great women speakers from the oblivion to which most have been consigned” and adds that she believes the “works analyzed in this volume… represent a particularly abundant mother lode of creativity from which contemporary women speakers and activists may draw examples and inspiration” (15). Campbell’s work, which begins with Maria W. Miller Stewart’s 1832 “Lecture Delivered at the Franklin Hall” and ends with Crystal Eastman’s speech “Now We Can Begin,” made in 1920, led to work by additional scholars who sought to expand the tradition both backward and forward, and in alternative directions.

Although Campbell’s work was by no means the first effort made to recover a rhetorical tradition which includes female voices, Campbell’s work launched a barrage of research and publication which emerged from scholars who had similar agendas: engaging the rhetorical pieces and practices of women. In the years between 1989, when Man Cannot Speak for Her was published, and 2006, dozens of journal articles and a number of books were published which dealt with female rhetorical practices from a variety of perspectives. In 1995, noted rhetorical scholar Andrea Lunsford published Reclaiming Rhetorica: Women in the Rhetorical Tradition; two years later, Cheryl Glenn followed Lunsford, writing in Rhetoric Retold that she is committed to “re-mapping” the patriarchal rhetorical tradition to include female rhetors from antiquity to the Renaissance.

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1 For instance, in 1988 Beverley Manning published a definitive index of speeches made by women between 1978 and 1985 entitled We Shall Be Heard; this served as a continuation of her earlier work which indexed speeches made by women between 1928 and 1978.
The next year, Molly Meijer Wertheimer edited the collection *Listening to Their Voices: The Rhetorical Activities of Historical Women*, including an essay by Glenn, as well as an essay by Shirley Logan Wilson who in 1995 published *With Pen and Voice: A Critical Anthology of Nineteenth-Century African-American Women*. Wilson followed up in 1999 with another work, “*We Are Coming*: The Persuasive Discourse of Nineteenth-Century Black Women; also in 1999, Christina Mason Sutherland and Rebecca Jane Sutcliff edited the collection *The Changing Tradition: Women in the History of Rhetoric*. Inspired by the work of Glenn, Campbell, Wilson and others, Joy Ritchie and Kate Ronald compiled and edited the 2001 anthology of women’s rhetorics entitled *Available Means*, stating that they “needed this anthology in teaching rhetoric” and their “main impulse… is to make a diverse collection available to scholars and students” (xv).

Following on the heels of *Available Means*, Jane Donawerth and Nan Johnson each published a volume in 2002: *Rhetorical Theory by Women before 1900* and *Gender and Rhetorical Space in American Life, 1866-1910*, respectively. That same year, the *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* journal presented a special issue, edited by Patricia Bizzell and titled “Feminist Historiography in Rhetoric.” Contributors included Campbell, Sutherland, Richard Enos, Susan Jarrett and Carol Mattingly. In 2003 and 2004, the spate of publications continued, including Glenn’s *Unspoken: A Rhetoric of Silence*, Roxanne Mountford’s *The Gendered Pulpit: Preaching in American Protestant Spaces*. In 2005, Sutherland followed her earlier work with the publication of *The Eloquence of Mary Astell*, while journal articles on the topic of the rhetoric of women continued to proliferate.ii

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Obviously, if we are to judge by the amount of research published on the topic of women’s rhetoric, it is apparent that the said topic continues to be engaging and exigent at the beginning of the twenty-first century. However, it is significant that during the seventeen-plus years following the publication of *Man Cannot Speak for Her*, the vast majority of research and publication involving female rhetors and the rhetoric of women indicates that while efforts are being made to recover and restore historical speech, there is not as much being done to work with and analyze the rhetorical practices of contemporary women. In order to ascertain if work in this vein is being accomplished in other fields, I turned to the discipline of speech communication.

Not surprisingly, the situation in the field of speech communication is much the same: the lack of study of the oratorical practices of women is recognized in this discipline as well as in the field of rhetoric, and scholars are working with various approaches to remedy the situation. For example, in 1996 Doris Earnshaw and Maria Elena Raymond gathered an anthology of contemporary speeches entitled *American Women Speak: Voices of American Women in Public Life*, including orations by nineteen contemporary female rhetors such as Hillary Rodham Clinton and Tipper Gore. Earnshaw and Raymond explained the necessity of their work in the introduction, with words eerily echoing those of Campbell: “the explosion of material about contemporary women leaders contains few collections of their own words” (Earnshaw vii). A few years earlier, in 1994, Victoria DeFrancisco and Marvin Jensen published a similar anthology, *Women’s Voices in Our Time: Statements by American Leaders*. DeFrancisco and Jensen stated that this work was, at least in part, in response to Karlyn Kohrs Campbell’s 1991 *Communication Education* journal article “Hearing Women’s Voices” wherein Campbell “criticized the lack of published documentation of women’s voices” (x).
Recently, Dianne Bystrom, in the 2004 book *Women as Political Communication Sources and Audiences*, agreed with Campbell, Earnshaw and Raymond, citing her research in the political sphere: “compared to women political candidates, women elected to political office have received much less attention from researchers… ‘It seems as though scholars lose interest in female candidates if they win their elections’” and fail to record or reflect upon the rhetoric of women (447, emphasis mine). This preservation of primary sources is vital, because, as Madeline Marie Kunin, the first woman governor of Vermont, reflects in the opening pages of her memoir *Living a Political Life*: “Only by writing our stories can we pass the political DNA from one generation to another, a transference that is still less common for women than for men” (iv).

Scholars such as Sandra Sarkela, Susan Mallon Ross and Margaret Lowe, authors of the 2003 volume *From Megaphones to Microphones: Speeches of American Women, 1920-1960*, resonate with the call to preserve the words of women, although their focus is on women from an earlier generation: “It is imperative that we study and analyze these words because they document women’s long history of political rhetoric and activism as well as trace the roots of the modern women’s liberation movement” (335). Across and between the disciplines of rhetoric and speech communication, there is a convergence of opinion, as Ronald and Ritchie illustrate so clearly in the introduction to *Available Means*: “Students and scholars need to posit a tentative tradition if only to begin to have a fruitful and generative conversation about it. Otherwise we have no collective memory of our rhetorical past, and that absence only reproduces invisibility, silence, and misrepresentation” (xix).

The overarching goal of this dissertation is to provide groundbreaking research which juxtaposes the rhetoric of Jefferts Schori, Ginsburg, and Pelosi and adds to the growing, but still scant, collection and analysis of the rhetoric of female orators. In 2007, for the first time in the
history of the United States, there are women standing – and speaking - at the pinnacle of three institutions which have been historically masculine: the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives is a woman, as is the National Bishop of the Episcopalian Church in the United States, and the United States Supreme Court boasts a female justice, as well. The time to consider the rhetoric of these female leaders is upon us.

Goals of the Study

Based upon the classical Aristotelian rhetorical system, I have chosen one rhetor whose speeches are political in nature (Nancy Pelosi), a rhetor (Katherine Jefferts Schori) whose sermons can be defined, on some occasions, as epideictic, and finally a rhetor whose oratory is clearly forensic (Ruth Bader Ginsburg). These women are “groundbreakers” in the sense that Pelosi is the first female Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, elected within months of Schori ascending to the position of National Bishop of the Episcopalian Church in the United States. Schori is the first woman to hold that office. While Ginsburg is the second female to be appointed to the Supreme Court of the United States, her leadership is contemporaneous with Pelosi and Schori, and therefore the three provide a triumvirate of feminine power and authority never before witnessed in the United States.

Despite the fact that these women are clearly pioneers in their respective fields, there has been little or no research about or attention to their rhetoric. Thus, even as their ascension into leadership roles is publicly celebrated, the progress of women is undermined by the lack of serious scholarship. In order to avoid reinscribing the patriarchal rhetorical tradition, scholars need to do more than celebrate Pelosi, Schori and Ginsburg as leaders: rhetorical scholars, in particular, must also investigate how that leadership is performed in the oratorical arena.
“Women have always lived in the oral speech world,” write Earnshaw and Raymond in the forward to *American Women Speak*. Yet, even as scholars such as Glenn work to recover and preserve the texts of the earliest female orators, such as Aspasia, much of the finest contemporary oratory of women is being lost. The motivation behind this work, then, is twofold: along with providing my own analysis of their words, I wish to allow these contemporary rhetors also to speak for themselves.

Of course, including one, two, or even ten speeches from a given orator does not begin to encompass the whole of the speaker’s voice; what one might choose to say on a Monday might be quite different from what the very same speaker would say on the following Friday, let alone what one might say a dozen years later. Later in this chapter I discuss the limitations of this study, and of course the limited number of speeches is one of those constraints with which I must cope. However, here I want to address the approach I utilized in selecting the speeches which are included in this work.

First, availability must be considered. What speeches could I readily find? For Pelosi this was relatively straight-forward, since as member of congress she has a website with numerous speech samples, while Jefferts Schori and Ginsburg presented a bit more of a challenge. Ginsburg has many published court opinions, but fewer oral presentations are available. Jefferts Schori has spoken in a public forum on a weekly basis for years, yet manuscripts or transcripts for her sermons were much more limited in availability. One criterion of what is included in this research, then, is simply what was accessible.

Beyond accessibility, I searched for consistency in genre: I wished to include rhetorical samples for each orator in similar situations. The samples I chose include the acceptance speech, a more typical professional speech (for Jefferts Schori a sermon, for Ginsburg a judicial opinion,
and for Pelosi a eulogy), and an interview. This organizational pattern allows for an observation of how each rhetor varies her language use based upon the context, and also lets us see how a certain genre might induce similar rhetorical approaches from all of the rhetors.

With these speeches selected, and understanding the limited body of work with which I am engaged, I approached the words of these women using two specific frameworks, one rhetorical and the other linguistic: first, I am interested in the substantive material of their speeches, and whether or not there are substantive similarities between the speakers. This framework is based upon the work of Kathleen Hall Jamieson, who developed the theory of the double-bind in relation to women and language, and explored options for eliding it. The second framework I chose is linguistic, specifically focusing on the work of Robin Lakoff and the responses to that work. In the following sections, I will explore Jamieson’s work and establish my method of utilizing it, and then do the same for the work of Lakoff, explicating how Lakoff’s theories and the resultant scholarship will be applied to this particular study.

**Part I of the Study: Breaking the Double-Bind**

“For the past twenty-five hundred years in Western culture, the ideal woman has been disciplined by cultural codes that require a closed mouth (silence), a closed body (chastity), and an enclosed life (domestic confinement),” begins Cheryl Glenn in *Rhetoric Retold*, quoting from Peter Stallybrass (1). The proper conduct of a woman has been closed, and that closure has included silence, while speaking out (except in the private sphere) has been (and arguably still is) considered an act of significant immodesty. Yet, women *have* spoken, have found their voices: in the pulpit, at the podium, and in numerous other public venues.
How have women found their voices, in the face of such strenuous opposition? Kathleen Hall Jamieson, in her 1995 book Beyond the Double Bind: Women and Leadership, offers a succinct summation of the courageous and creative approach women have taken toward a society that offered them the “no-choice choice” of silence or shame: “Historically, women have faced and transcended double-binds… over time, women have learned how to turn potatoes into vichyssoise” (8). Noted feminist scholar Helene Cixous, approaching the subject of feminine speech in her 1975 publication “The Laugh of the Medusa,” summed up the situation in similar terms: “Every woman has known the torment of getting up to speak… how great a transgression it is for a woman to speak – even just open her mouth – in public… A double distress, iii for even if she transgresses, her words almost always fall upon the deaf male ear… Women should break out of the snare of silence” (880). And indeed they have, as we witness with Pelosi, Jefferts Schori and Ginsburg. But what, if any, strategies have they used?

First, it is vital to realize that transcendence of the double-bind is no small feat. The techniques used require cleverness and audacity. The seeming impenetrability of the double-bind is evident in this example: If a woman is accused of a crime she did not commit, she is caught, then, in the throes of the double-bind. Either she can remain silent, thereby acknowledging her guilt, or she can protest, thereby acting immodestly and further impugning herself, for who but a woman capable of criminal activity would allow herself to speak in public, and worst of all, in her own defense? The situation seems inescapable, and the fate unavoidable. Yet, many a metaphorical (and sometimes literal) noose has been slipped by a woman who can turn a spud into chilled cream potato soup.

iii Here, Cixous references a “double distress” – the fear of speaking, and the disappointment of not being heard. This is, in fact, another type of “double-bind.”
Engaging a man to speak when a woman is not allowed, claiming the status of a prophet, referring to Biblical/Scriptural mandates allowing women to speak, offering moral guidance, and claiming “the heart of a man” are but a few of the creative ways women have managed to escape the double-bind of silence/shame and find their voices in the public sphere. Many women, such as Sor Juana de la Cruz, did not escape the double-bind: at least, not in their own lifetimes, and even authors such as Margery Kempe were largely disregarded until the twentieth century. However, each of these women leaves for us a legacy: clues about what to do (and not do) in order to shatter the double-bind, stories of hope and courage.

The three rhetors I have chosen to research are well-known (although Katherine Jefferts Schori is not as widely recognized as Pelosi and Ginsburg), and yet, while they follow in the footsteps of their rhetorical foremothers, they are not well-known as rhetors. While they are hailed as leaders, their language styles are paid scant attention. Serious consideration needs to be given to the linguistic choices which are made by these women, and why, because they are venturing into uncharted rhetorical territory – never before has a woman been the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, or the Bishop of the National Episcopal Church. How do these leaders speak?

Consider one of today’s well-known female rhetors, Hillary Rodham Clinton, and witness the techniques she has employed to slip the knot of the silence/shame double-bind. Clinton has, perhaps, utilized nearly all of the techniques for escaping the double-bind: she has most assuredly influenced her husband’s speech as surely as Aspasia put words in the mouth of Pericles; certainly, while she has not quoted from the Bible or cast herself in a divinely prophetic role, Clinton has shown her faith to be a part of her rhetoric; and indisputably, Clinton has claimed the role of mother, wife and woman to be an important aspect in shaping her identity.
The personal, conversational style used by Margery Kempe is used, too, by Hillary Clinton. A “narrative, personal” tone fills many of her speeches.

“When I ate lunch with teachers at a school in Queens,” begins one portion of a speech she made during her announcement speech for the New York Senate race in 2000, and “when I sat on porches in backyards from Elmira to New Rochelle,” begins another (Anderson 115). Her style is what Karlyn Kohrs Campbell refers to as “feminine”: inviting audience identification, full of personal tone and anecdotal evidence (Anderson 115).

This is the style of conversation which has long been foisted upon women: story-telling and personal conversations in the private sphere. Now, as all the world watches, it is no surprise that a woman such as Clinton, the rhetorical offspring of Aspasia, Fell, Queen Elizabeth, Sojourner Truth, and Willard, among others, can engage in warm, personal-public conversation which makes voters feel more “connected,” while her male counterparts, not forcibly schooled in feminine discourse, struggle to appear “relational” and “nurturing.”

Even the perceived “weakness” of a woman, which Jamieson warned against in her opening paragraphs, can be a potential strength. Clinton’s first opponent for the 2000 Senate race (Rudy Giuliani) had a speech pattern which was considered “too masculine” while Clinton’s “direct” approach and “toughness” generated a positive reception (Anderson 117). Indeed, the double-bind seems to be, in some cases, a double blessing. In chapters two, three and four of the dissertation, I will be taking a close look at Jefferts Schori, Ginsburg and and Pelosi, three contemporary rhetors, to discover if (and if so, then how) they utilize such techniques as storytelling and the role of “moral superior” to overcome – or ignore – the double-bind.
Part II of the Study: Utilizing “Feminine” Language

In addition to looking at the double-bind, and its effect on the oratory of contemporary female rhetors as manifested in their oral communication, I examine the speeches of Pelosi, Jefferts Schori and Ginsburg for the presence of markings which seem to be gender-specific. While sociolinguists do not agree on the specifics of what differentiates the language of women from that of men, there is a general consensus that distinctions do exist; yet, blindly ascribing to the binary of male/female speech can lead to a dangerous sort of essentialism, which needs to be guarded against with care. I raise this point here specifically in order to defuse any possible misunderstanding of my work.

I am cognizant that the attribution of speech characteristics to a person based solely upon their gender seems at first consideration antithetical to feminist theory, as well as ignorant of the emerging concept of intersectionality, and yet from the viewpoint of social constructivism – the idea that the language people use is socially constructed, learned in their environment - there is also a painful logic to such attribution. This tension between avoiding essentialism while acknowledging social constructivism is not new: As Margaret S. Crowdes urges readers in her 1992 essay “Mind, Body and Language: When a Woman Notices Her Humanity,” “emancipatory transformation requires supercession of dualistic notions about language, mind, change and humanity rooted in the patriarchal worldview and social structure” (2). In other words, in order to be free, one must move beyond the limits of dualistic thinking and bring to an end the patriarchal ideology which professes that men are imbued with one set of features and women with another (2). And yet, sociolinguist Ronald Wardhaugh reminds readers, in a book that was

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iv The theory which examines the impact of intergroup differences and commonalities such as race, gender, class, sexuality, etc. (Bedolla and Scola 6).
first copyrighted in 1986 and re-printed as recently as 2002, that “Men and women are social beings who have learned to act in certain ways” (324).

According to Wardhaugh, gendered behavior patterns, including speech patterns, are socially constructed: gendered patterns likely do exist, but not because they are biologically predetermined. Rather, they are learned. Men and women are taught to be – and speak – in certain disparate ways. While Crowdes encourages movement beyond established binaries, Wardhaugh reminds us that these binaries do exist, to some extent. Perhaps these binaries can best be dealt with if they are acknowledged and comprehended. If, for example, we see evidence of the existence and usage of feminine language, we can then make an informed choice as to whether or not that language is our preference.

The purpose of my work is not to enter into a debate on social constructivism or essentialism, but instead simply look at what language patterns exist. I introduce the topic here to reassure readers that I am aware of the delicate nature of the work I do. When I refer to a “feminine” language, it is in no way my intention to indicate that such language is innate; it is merely my objective to acknowledge its presence. With this disclaimer established, then, I will preview a number of the differences suggested by some of the leading scholars in the field of gender and communication, and establish which markers will be the subject of my research. I begin with Robin Lakoff, an influential scholar in the field of gender and language, who understood the complex interweaving of society and language, and reminded scholars that language should be viewed as a clue to the external situation, rather than a means to discover how women are “made” (69).

The field of gender and language emerged forcefully in 1975 with the publication of three seminal books: Robin Lakoff’s Language and Woman’s Place, Mary Ritchie Key’s Male/Female
Language, and Language and Sex: Difference and Dominance, an edited collection by Barrie Thorne and Nancy Henley (Schiffren et al 548). Mary Bucholtz, in her introduction to the 2004 revised edition of Lakoff’s work, introduces Language and Woman’s Place as a “groundbreaking text” for the field, an “indispensable” book with “canonical status;” within its pages, Lakoff raises the questions and makes the claims with which scholars of language and gender have wrestled for over three decades (Lakoff 3, Schiffren et al 549). Lakoff posits in her 1975 edition that the use of “women’s language” denies women access to power and reinforces social inequality, and goes on to identify specific linguistic forms which mark “women’s language.” These linguistic forms, which I outline below, are the basis for my research: are these linguistic forms present in the speeches of the three female orators whose rhetoric I have chosen to examine? Some of the forms, as I will note, do not have the potential to be measured in a textual analysis; for example, “rising intonation” is not evident from a textual sample. Nevertheless, it is possible for seven of the nine markers to emerge through written text.

Before introducing the specific linguistic markers encompassed in this study, it is necessary to acknowledge, at the very start of this project, that, according to Lakoff herself, who partnered with Mary Bucholtz to publish a revised and expanded edition of Language and Woman’s Place in 2004: “It is hard to remember just how different the world was when Language and Woman’s Place was first published… rereading the book I am struck equally by how much has changed and how much has remained essentially the same” (15). Bucholtz reminds those who study Lakoff’s work to “read the text with greater sensitivity to the intellectual and political climate in which it was written…” and argues for “a consideration of the full range of her research… Lakoff’s later scholarship demonstrates both significant continuities and important changes,” (4). It will be interesting to see if the following linguistic
markers, or forms, which were first compiled into a list by Lakoff in 1975 are “with us still” in the rhetoric of the nation’s most public female orators:

1. Tag questions, such as “That was a great movie, wasn’t it?” While at first it might seem that such tag questions would not be present in formal speeches, this rhetorical device could appear as simply a question for the audience to consider. Imagine the preacher addressing the congregation: “We’re all sinners here!” The feminine version might well be: “We’re all sinners here, aren’t we?”

2. Rising intonation, when a falling intonation might be expected. Since I will be analyzing the text of the speeches and not the auditory component, this will not be a subject for my study, but might well be used in future research.

3. “Empty” adjectives, such as “divine,” “adorable,” “charming” or “cute.”

4. “Women’s words” relating to women’s interests. Lakoff offered the example of color vocabulary: for instance, a person of the feminine gender might use such terms as chartreuse, baby blue, or lavender, while masculine speech is more limited to basics, such as “blue” and “purple.”

5. Frequent use of emphasis. Again, since I am not listening to the speeches but rather reading them, this will not be a prominent component of my study. However, emphasis might appear in the form of repetition of words or phrases, and this will be included.

6. Intensive “so” – this is similar to the frequent use of emphasis. However, I can include this in my study to a limited degree since I will be looking for a specific

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In the introduction to the 2004 edition of *Language and Woman’s Place* Bucholtz notes that “A number of commentators in this volume remark on the changes in gendered language since Lakoff’s initial observations, yet they also point to the many ways in which the issues Lakoff identified are with us still” (4).
word; I will not be able to determine the emphasis given to the word, but I will be able to acknowledge its presence or absence.

7. Politeness devices and hypercorrect grammar. In this category, feminine language is marked by fewer swear words – which would be fairly unexpected in formal speeches or sermons anyway – along with a greater use of please and thank-you.

8. The use of hedges: these words seek to “soften” the statements of which they are a part, and include well, you know, kinda, sort of, like, I guess, and others. While such hedges may be considerably more common in conversation than in speeches, it is certainly possible that they may appear.

9. Finally, Lakoff posits that women are unlikely to tell jokes. Again, this is definitely a marker which I will look for in my research study, since speeches and sermons are clearly genres which could, and often are expected, to include humor (Romaine 154).

Lakoff’s contemporaries quickly set out to test her nine hypotheses and duplicate her research, with mixed results. vi Twenty years after Lakoff’s research was published, Anthony Mulac and James Bradac from the University of California at Santa Barbara noted that “an example of a linguistic difference between men and women that research has shown to be very consistent… is the use of intensifiers” (emphasis in original), yet “although Lakoff has suggested that women use more hedges (emphasis in original), than men… the empirical evidence is mixed” (“Women’s Style” 84). Suzanne Romaine, in Gendered Talk, notes that “out of a number of studies done between 1976 and 1980 on tag questions, six found that women used

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vi These mixed results, some of which are detailed here, have led to a continued fascination with, and appreciation for, Lakoff’s work. The fact that the answers are not clear-cut has resulted in much scholarly research, including this dissertation.
more tag questions than men, and five found that men used more than women. One study found no differences…” (156).

While a good number of scholars busily engaged Lakoff’s work, other scholars were documenting further distinctions that they had observed in the communication styles of women and men. Along with the question of whether or not women talked more than men, “interruptions” were a popular subject for research: did men interrupt women more than women interrupted men? Pamela Fishman’s 1978 study found that men interrupted women three times as often as women interrupted men, and a comparable study which spurred a series of articles by Don West and Candace Zimmerman supported Fishman’s findings. However, the question is still unresolved: “different studies have found different results” (Romaine 157). For my research, interruptions and silence have little influence, since (presumably) there would be no interruptions in these speeches, nor would there be a way to measure silence.

Romaine concludes that “much of the empirical research directed at the question of whether there was such a thing as women’s language [in the terms established by Lakoff or otherwise] has, not surprisingly, produced ambiguous results” (157). Yet, despite this absence of definitive proof, scholars went one step more in their questioning: assuming that a “women’s language” did exist, did this “women’s language” act as a barrier to power? Or was it the result of powerlessness? Bradac and Mulac posed the query thus: “Do differences in men’s and women’s language both reflect and cause differences in power?” (“Women’s Style 85). They discussed the ideas of “real power” and “symbolic power.”

“Real power,” according to Mulac and Bradac, is “where people get what they want,” while “symbolic power” is “where people are perceived to be authoritative and influential” (“Women’s Style” 85). The work of Mulac and Bradac is significant for my research, since the
women I have chosen to study possess both real and symbolic power. If, in fact, these language differences do exist, and they do reflect and/or cause a lack of power, then they should not be evidenced by the powerful women who are the subjects of my study.

Bradac and Mulac sought to answer the question they posed and indeed, the “coherent code of powerlessness” which Lakoff seems to suggest did not hold up under Bradac and Mulac’s scrutiny (“Women’s Style” 83). The research they conducted instead indicated that “the language style of women in problem solving interactions is both powerful and feminine” (emphasis in original) and “women apparently did not feel they had to give up one to get the other” (“Women’s Style” 101). Therefore, according to Mulac and Bradac, women do have their own “language” but they need not sacrifice it in order to have power. Mulac and Bradac are, in their own way, providing statistical data which supports, challenges, explores and extends the theoretical framework of scholarly forerunners such as Helene Cixous, who was mentioned earlier.

Unlike Mulac, Bradac and Lakoff, who identify feminine patterns of speech, Cixous called upon women to write and speak, yet posited that “it is impossible to define a feminine practice of writing… which doesn’t mean that it doesn’t exist” (881). Yet, Cixous continued, women should speak, because their speech is powerful; she goes on to offer some possible attributes of feminine speech, noting that “even when ‘theoretical’ or political, [it] is never simple or linear… she draws her story into history” (881).

My research explores whether or not in any or all of these positions of “real power,” the language use still reflects the feminine gender of the speaker: do these women employ rhetorical strategies to escape the double-bind, and do they utilize what is stereotypically considered to be feminine language, or will they abandon what Lakoff considers to be “women’s language?” Does
a feminine style exist today, for these contemporary rhetors, and, if so, will it manifest itself in
the speeches of Pelosi, Jefferts Schori and Ginsburg?

The questions I have developed to address the issues are as follows:

First, what, if any, content-based strategies do these contemporary female rhetors seek to
employ within their speeches in an effort to escape the double-bind? Does this effort to escape
the double-bind appear to be more prevalent in forensic, epideictic or deliberative situations, or
does the situation appear to have little or no effect upon the rhetor’s response to the double-bind?

Secondly, what gendered speech patterns appear or are notably absent from the works of
these contemporary orators? Do any of the orators have patterns which repeat within and
between their speeches? Are there any overlaps between orators, any patterns which seem to be
common for two or three of the rhetors? This section will be devoted to the form of the speech,
and analyze the performance for the following seven attributes: tag questions, hedges, empty or
trivializing adjectives, “women’s” words, intensive “so,” hypercorrect grammar and politeness,
and the presence or absence of humor.

Limitations of the Study

While the three women I have chosen to study comprise a powerful triumvirate worthy of serious
scholarship, it is not without reservation that I have made these selections. Ronald and Ritchie
acknowledge, in the introduction to Available Means, that gathering together rhetorical works for
publication in a book is a wrenching process, for in attempting to broaden the rhetorical canon
there is indubitable exclusivity: some rhetors are included, while others – a multitude of others -
are left out. As a result, the authors risk re-inscribing the hierarchy of the patriarchal tradition.
There is a very real paradox in this study. While I seek to preserve and examine the words of three of the (arguably) most powerful women in U.S. history, I simultaneously eliminate (at least in this work) the voices of the less-than-powerful. I am faced with a delicate balancing act: I wish to preserve the words of these pioneering women alongside those of the men who have so long held sway in the corridors of power, and yet, by prizing the voices of these women whom a patriarchal society has deemed powerful, am I not in fact condoning that very society?

My hope is that the answer is not a double-bind, wherein I must either keep silent, at which point I reinforce traditional norms, or I must include only women of power, which also reinforces traditional norms. My hope is that I can slip the double-bind by acknowledging its existence, and accepting the limitations of my work. For guidance on negotiating this conundrum, I turn to the debate over this issue which erupted following Campbell’s publication of *Man Cannot Speak For Her*.

In the months after Campbell published *Man Cannot Speak for Her* a closely-watched debate ensued between Campbell and feminist theorist Barbara Biesecker in regard to the issue of what it means for feminists to recover and preserve the rhetorical tradition. Because of the heated nature of the debate, and the salient issues raised by both Campbell and Biesecker, it is worth our time at the beginning of this study to recount, briefly, the exchange between the two scholars, both who claim to be feminist.

Biesecker, in her 1992 article “Coming to Terms with Recent Attempts to Write Women into the History of Rhetoric,” worries that “Campbell’s revisionist history of Rhetoric resolidifies rather than undoes the ideology of individualism that is the condition of possibility for the emergence of the received history of Rhetoric” and, further, that “Campbell’s promotion of a
kind of self-help program plays straight into the hands of the old order that has consistently sought to deflect critical attention away from those structures of oppression larger than individual consciousness and will” (146). Biesecker’s expresses, with consternation, her fear that by choosing such shining examples of rhetorical ability, the patriarchal hierarchy will be reinscribed, even as Campbell works to undercut that same hierarchy.

Under the watchful gaze of the scholarly community, Campbell fired off a response to Biesecker, playing on the title of her own book: “Biesecker Cannot Speak for Her Either.” In this reply to Biesecker, Campbell answers Biesecker’s charge that Campbell is reinforcing the status quo by selecting a few women of excellence: “I have written of some thirty women and their rhetoric plus the rhetorical outgrowths of such group efforts as the Seneca Falls Convention, the National Woman’s Party, the Convention of Anti-Slavery Women… Female tokenism? No, just a beginning,”(154). Campbell writes that women of excellent rhetorical skill should be recognized along with the men who are equally gifted: “to include the works of rhetorically gifted women merely gives their voices equal weight with those of men” (155).

In the very next issue of the same journal, *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, Biesecker offers a final word, backpedaling a bit, perhaps, and conceding that it is not her intention to urge the abandonment of “recovering women’s rhetorics [and] struggling for their integration into the canon” but rather to encourage “feminists working within the discipline of Rhetoric to labor scrupulously on two fronts at once…persistently critique our own practice of inclusion and exclusion, that we vigilantly attend to the criteria against which any particular rhetorical discourse is assessed…” (237). Biesecker reiterates that her goal is to find commonalities – “points of contact” – between her work and the work of Campbell, while taking seriously the concern expressed by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, who writes that “the way to counteract
Western [i.e., Eurocentric and patriarchal] historicism is not simply to produce alternative or counter-histories but to contest and inflect the more far-reaching implications of the system of which they form a part” (237, brackets by Biesecker). Beisecker concludes on a hopeful note: “I suspect that Professor Campbell and I will find ourselves walking under the same banner, that our common passion for social change will surely cross the divide… even as they bring each other into productive crisis” (240).

The study I undertake in the following pages has, too, made me aware of not only the potential of my work, but also the painful and undeniable limitations of my work. Clearly, my work falls much more solidly into the genre established by Campbell, and yet I resonate with Biesecker’s call to struggle against reinscribing the patriarchy. Therefore, before I begin to delve more deeply into the work of Campbell and others – those upon whom my work is built, those who have approached the topic of reclaiming women’s rhetoric in a similar fashion, what could be considered adherent to more traditional rhetorical standards - I will attempt to delineate and admit to the limitations of this work. It is my hope that this acknowledgment of the confined scope of the study will defuse possible negative reactions, and allow the work instead to be what it is with integrity: a close look at a sample of the rhetoric of three women who concurrently hold the highest possible positions in their various fields: Nancy Pelosi, Katherine Jefferts Schori, and Ruth Bader Ginsburg.
Limitations Presented by Homogeneous Subjects

The three women who are the subjects of this study represent a rather homogeneous sample in many ways. Biographical websites about the rhetors\textsuperscript{vi} reveal the following information: the youngest, Jefferts Schori, was born in 1954 in Pensacola, Florida, while the oldest, Ginsburg was born in Brooklyn in 1933, and Pelosi was born in Baltimore in 1940: all three women are over fifty years of age, and all were born in fairly large cities. All three women are well-educated: Jefferts Schori holds a Ph.D. along with her M.Div., Ginsburg holds a law degree from Columbia and Pelosi graduated with a B.A. from then-Trinity College in Washington, D.C. All have been married only one time, and each of the women is also a mother: Pelosi has five children, Ginsburg two, and Jefferts Schori has one daughter. All three women are “privileged”: these voices are not those of muted minorities. These are not voices of the poor, of the ostracized, or of the oppressed. These are women with “legitimated power.” Unlike scholars such as DeFrancisco and Jensen, who seek to recover the voices of those who are often silenced, this study cannot offer such a contribution to the rhetorical tradition (ix).

These similarities in background may well manifest themselves in the speech patterns of Pelosi, Ginsburg and Jefferts Schori. Therefore, the conclusions I draw based upon what is discovered in the speech of the three women must be tempered by the realization that the data is specific to these individuals; what is revealed here is in no way indicative of the results which might be obtained from women of different races, classes, or levels of education. The findings here are intended only to stir the imagination and whet the appetite for further exploration. Any sort of broad-based assumptions which can be drawn from this study can only be made in the most tentative of ways; perhaps best stated as the impetus for further research in terms such as “I

\textsuperscript{vi} The three websites from which this information was garnered are fully cited in the bibliography, but are briefly titled “About Nancy Pelosi,” “The Twenty-Sixth Presiding Bishop,” and “The Justices of the Supreme Court.” These websites provide the most current information available on these women.
noticed this pattern; I want to look further” or “I expected to fine thus-and-such, and I did not; I need to know why.”

Yet, despite their privilege and their positions of power, and in spite of all they have in common, these women also have significant differences and a variety of lived experiences which serve to connect them, in profound ways, to women of other backgrounds. In the following study, these alternative subjectivities which the women have occupied throughout their lives will be highlighted, and interconnectedness will be acknowledged where perhaps it wasn’t understood to exist. As bell hooks explains “engaging in dialogue with those in privileged positions opens up spaces for greater understanding of the structures of domination and how they function,” this study will “open up” the reality that perhaps even those with “legitimated power” have at times suffered from various forms of systemic domination (Foss, Foss and Griffin 88).

Consider Ginsburg, for example who is Jewish, unlike the other two women in the study: a devoted wife, she left Harvard Law School where she was serving on the Law Review in order to follow her husband to New York. (“Supreme Court History”). Jefferts Schori was born a Roman Catholic, not an Episcopalian (“Q and A”). Pelosi was stigmatized as a “stay-at-home” mom, running for office only when her youngest child was a senior in high school (Marcovitz 27). Although these various life experiences and others which will be discussed in the ensuing chapters do not render the impact of privilege moot, they do serve to complicate any illusions of one-dimensionality which might exist.
Limitations Created by Specific Frameworks of Authenticity

Secondly, while I have tried to locate speech samples of a rather extemporaneous nature (such as the interview), and I have sought transcribed manuscripts which would include “paralanguage” rather than the speaker’s reading copy, it is quite possible, especially given Nancy Pelosi’s political position, that the words spoken by the woman (or women) are not entirely of their own making. With speechwriters (in the case of Pelosi) and legal assistants (in the case of Ginsburg) involved in the process at different levels, it is inevitable that some of the stylistic and substantive qualities which emerge in the speech may be reflecting the linguistic and rhetorical patterns of this anonymous writer rather than of the rhetor under consideration.

At this point, I lay claim to the assertion made by DeFrancisco and Jensen, who dealt with the dynamic of speechwriters by stating that “our judgment about ghostwriting is that the speaker is finally responsible for the words spoken and we have not investigated the creation of all the words” (xi). The speaker must finally, as DeFrancisco and Jensen suggest, take ultimate responsibility for the words they speak. Working within this framework, I am comfortable with attributing the speeches to the speakers who utter the words, fully cognizant of the variety of “authors” who may be involved.

Limitations Regarding Quantity of Speeches

In addition to the limited and rather homogeneous number of subjects I have chosen for this study, I am further limited by looking only at a few samples of speech, and therefore any generalizations which might be made about the women in the study themselves would be overly hasty. Some patterns may not manifest in these particular samples, while others might be present here and not elsewhere. Similarly, it is possible that some speech patterns persist throughout a
lifetime and across situational contexts, but it is likely that as these women have grown in their professional lives, their speech patterns have evolved. The purpose of this study is twofold: first, to preserve the words of the women themselves, quite apart from my meddling, and secondly, to gather some ideas about what might be of interest in further research and exploration.

Chapter Summaries and a Final Note

Chapter Two: Katherine Jefferts Schori: The Woman of the Church

This chapter, formally titled “The Rhetoric of The Right Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church – USA,” focuses on three speech samples, or portions thereof, by Jefferts Schori over the course of nine years, including the first sermon she preached following her election as Presiding Bishop, portions of a sermon she preached on Maundy Thursday in the late 1990s, which was included in a book by David Schlafer (What Makes this Day Different?), and an interview immediately following her election as Bishop. With each of the speech samples, I explain the context in which it was delivered, and then analyze it by means of the following questions:

What, if any, strategies are employed in an effort to escape the double-bind?

What gendered speech patterns, as established in chapter 1, (tag questions, hedges, empty or trivializing adjectives, “women’s” words, intensive “so,” hypercorrect grammar and politeness, and the presence or absence of humor) appear or are notably absent from the speech?

The chapter concludes with a synopsis of what I have found (or not found) to be consistent throughout the speeches. Additionally, I comment upon any notable similarities between this orator and any significant historical rhetors.
Chapter Three: Ruth Bader Ginsburg: The Woman of the Court

This chapter will follow the same format as the previous chapter. In each of the chapters, I maintain similar genres for the speech samples: for example, the speech samples selected for Ginsburg include her acceptance speech for the nomination to the Supreme Court, a dissenting opinion authored for the Supreme Court (which she both read aloud and submitted in writing), and a 2002 interview for PBS, regarding a book she had recently published. The chapter concludes with a synopsis of similarities discovered between and within these speech samples.

Chapter Four: Nancy Pelosi: The Woman of the House

Chapter four is set up identically to the two preceding chapters. In order to remain in the same genre as Jefferts Schori’s first sermon and Ginsburg’s nomination acceptance speech, the first speech analyzed here is Pelosi’s first public address following her ascension to the position of Speaker of the House. The second speech sample is a eulogy Pelosi delivers upon the death of a fellow congressman, and rounding out the samples is an interview which took place just months prior to Pelosi’s election to Speaker of the House. The chapter concludes with an assessment of what was found in the speech samples, and previews what the final chapter will include.

Chapter Five: Research Findings and Possibilities for Further Study

This chapter summarizes what has been found in the previous three chapters, and includes a call for further research on the speeches as delivered orally rather than just the textual criticism I provide here. For example, further research might seek to answer questions such as “is there a rising intonation in the speaker’s voice?” or “Is there a frequent use of emphasis?” or,
importantly, who else should be included, whose voice has been silenced? Where can we look outside of this “triumvirate” to find examples of female speech?

Bearing in mind the limited scope of this study, I am yet optimistic that the work done here might add another stratum of a different texture to the extant scholarship dealing with female rhetors. In the final chapter of the dissertation, I address common findings, as well as what was not found, and what these discoveries might indicate for further research involving female rhetors. Significantly, in this chapter I foreground the importance of continuing scholarship dealing with contemporary female rhetors, lest we reinscribe the patriarchal rhetorical tradition. This scholarship should not be limited to textual analysis, but should also include a close examination of oral performance. Just as I have discovered a gap in current scholarship resulting in the exigence of the research I am undertaking, I clarify where “the gaps” exist in the research I have done, and where more extensive scholarship is needed.

Lastly, as we begin this exploration, I once again echo the sentiment of Hélène Cixous, and reiterate that my purpose in this research is “not to take possession [of this knowledge] in order to internalize or manipulate” (881). I write not in order to categorize the rhetors, thereby defining them forever, but instead to investigate and learn from their language patterns, using this study as a place of beginning. My ambition is to work from a place of deep humility, indebted to those whom I study, grateful for those creative and courageous scholars whose work has preceded mine, and hopeful that this work might serve to inspire those whose work will follow.
CHAPTER TWO:
THE RHETORIC OF THE RIGHT REV. KATHARINE JEFFERTS SCHORI
PRESIDING BISHOP OF THE EPISCOPALIAN CHURCH - USA

Introduction and Chapter Format
On June 18th, 2006, the Episcopalian Church in the USA met in Columbus, Ohio and elected its first ever female Presiding Bishop in the four-hundred-year history of the denomination: fifty-two year old Katharine Jefferts Schori, who was currently serving as the bishop of Nevada, was selected out of seven nominees. This chapter takes a closer look at three samples of Jefferts Schori’s rhetoric over the course of nine years, including the first sermon she preached following her election as Presiding Bishop, portions of a sermon she preached on Maundy Thursday in the late 1990s, (which was included in a David Schlafer’s book What Makes this Day Different?), and the transcript of an oral interview following her election as bishop.

These three samples are carefully chosen in order to provide a degree of variety in rhetorical moments. The first sample demonstrates Jefferts Schori’s rhetoric before the large, unfamiliar audience which received her opening sermon as elected bishop; the second selection is very succinct and demonstrates her rhetorical practices when the context is much more familiar, limited, and private (her own congregation), and the final sample, the live interview, allows for a glimpse of the rhetoric Jefferts Schori employs in an unscripted situation.

Before examining Jefferts Schori’s rhetoric, however, it is informative to gain a more thorough understanding of her position in the ECUSA. Jefferts Schori, who, in addition to her role as the 26th Presiding Bishop of the ECUSA is a mother, a wife, a pilot, and a scholar with a Ph.D. in oceanography, officially began her nine-year term with a service of investiture on November 4th, 2006 at The Washington National Cathedral (“From Columbus”). In order to
clarify the position that Jefferts Schori currently occupies, I provide the following diagram, which illustrates the structure of the 2-million-member ECUSA:

Figure 1: The Structure of the Episcopalian Church, USA
(“Life and Work of the Church”)

Based upon the diagram above, it is evident that the Presiding Bishop is responsible for over seven thousand congregations and nearly twenty thousand ordained clergy spanning fifty states, and, not unexpectedly, Jefferts Schori’s selection for this position was met with varied reactions. One of the other twelve female bishops in the ECUSA, Cate Waynick of Indianapolis, rose to the dais shortly after Jefferts Schori’s election and proclaimed that "This is an historic moment before the church, a wonderful moment before our church," and described Jefferts Schori as "faithful and articulate. She has the ability to carry the vision and mission and to share it with the church and the world beyond us. My heart is bursting; I hope yours is, too” (“From Columbus: Episcopal”). The Reverend Margaret Rose, who serves as the director of women’s ministries for the Episcopal Church, also had favorable remarks about the Presiding Bishop-
Elect: "She is a woman of depth, a woman of inclusion, a woman of fairness, a woman of prayer, a woman who knows what it is to gather God's people together, and we will trust that God will help us to walk together in every way possible" (“From Columbus: Episcopal”). Women leaders were not the only ones to affirm Jefferts Schori’s selection as bishop; John Vanderstar, of the Diocese of Washington, summed up the situation with the following quote: “I rise to add another male voice to the chorus [of those speaking in favor of confirmation]. If you listen carefully, you will hear and I hope enjoy the sound of another glass ceiling being shattered” (“From Columbus: Episcopal”).

Others did not respond to Jefferts Schori’s election with the same level of enthusiasm as Waynick, Rose and Vanderstar: Eddie Blue, a member of the House of Deputies hailing from Maryland, declared that "I am shocked, dismayed and saddened by the choice of the House of Bishops," (“From Columbus: Episcopal”). Although church leaders would express their dissent in the days, weeks and months ahead, Blue was the only member of the eight hundred-plus House of Deputies to express his dismay on the floor of the convention.

“Grow in All Things into Christ”: First Sermon as Presiding Bishop

In the milieu of these passionate reactions, the new Presiding Bishop-elect was called upon to preach at the closing worship service for the 75th General Convention on Wednesday, June 21st, 2006. This was Jefferts Schori’s first opportunity to preach following her election and the sermon was titled “Grow in All Things into Christ” (“From Columbus: Text”).

The full text of Jefferts Schori’s sermon appears below, and each line is numbered for ease of reference. Two sections follow the sermon: the first is a rhetorical analysis and the second is a linguistic analysis of the speech. In the first section, the rhetorical analysis, I discuss
ways in which Jefferts Schori negotiates the double-bind, the classic construct examined by Jamieson as mentioned in Chapter 1: a double-bind “casts two supposedly desirable states as mutually exclusive” (14). In this case, the two desirable states are womanhood and leadership in the church. The double-bind infers that a true lady would not aspire to leadership, and a true leader could never be a woman, and in the first section following each speech sample, this double-bind is addressed.

Secondly, I examine Jefferts Schori’s rhetoric for gender-markings as discussed in chapter one. Each gender-marker is underlined, easing identification for the reader, and its presence or absence is noted. These speech samples, the first of which is a 2006 sermon preached upon her election as bishop, the second of which is a sermon preached in the mid-1990s and the third of which is an interview immediately following her election to the bishopric, reflect a range of genres and situations over a substantial span of time. This variety enables a certain amount of hypothesizing in regard to similarities and differences, based on the framework in which the speech sample occurs.

Each of the sermons in this chapter will be followed with these two sections, which I label with letters “A” and “B.” Section B is further sub-divided into each of the seven gender-markings. The research sections following this first sermon, therefore, will be “1A” and “1B.”

1 Grow in All Things into Christ
2 Lections for the Reign of Christ
3 Colossians 1:11-20\textsuperscript{viii}

\textsuperscript{viii} These passages from the Bible (New Revised Standard Version) are included in Appendix A.
This last Sunday morning I woke very early, while it was still dark. I wanted to go for a run, but I had to wait until there was enough light to see. When the dawn finally began, I ventured out. It was warm, and still, and very quiet, and the clouds were just beginning to show tinges of pink. I ran by the back of the Hyatt just as two workers were coming out one of the service doors. They were startled, I'm afraid, but I nodded at them, and they responded. I went west over the freeway, and encountered a man I'd seen here in the Convention Center. Neither of us stopped, but we did say a quiet good morning. Then I found a lovely green park, and started around it. There was a man with a reflective vest, standing in the street by some orange cones, as though he were waiting for a run or a parade to begin. I said good morning, and he responded in kind. Around the corner I came to a bleary-eyed fellow with several bags who looked like he'd just risen from sleeping rough. I said good morning to him too, but I must admit I went past him in the street instead of on the sidewalk. Then I met a rabbit hopping across the sidewalk, and though we didn't use words, one of us eyed the other with more than a bit of wariness. Around another corner, a woman was delivering Sunday papers from her car. She was wary too, and didn't get out of her car with the next paper until I was a long way past her. Back over the freeway, and a block later, two guys seemingly on their early way to work. We nodded at each other.

As I returned to my hotel, I reflected on all those meetings. There was some degree of wariness in most of them. There were small glimpses of a reconciled world in our
willingness to greet each other. But the unrealized possibility of a real relationship --
whether in response of wariness, or caution, or fear -- meant that we still had a very long
way to go.

Can we dream of a world where all creatures, human and not, can meet each other in a
stance that is not tinged with fear?

When Jesus says that his kingdom is not of this world, he is saying that his rule is not
based on the ability to generate fear in his subjects. A willingness to go to the cross
implies a vulnerability so radical, so fundamental, that fear has no impact or import. The
love he invites us to imitate removes any possibility of reactive or violent response. King
Jesus' followers don't fight back when the world threatens. Jesus calls us friends, not
agents of fear.

If you and I are going to grow in all things into Christ, if we're going to grow up into the
full stature of Christ, if we are going to become the blessed ones God called us to be
while we were still in our mothers' wombs, our growing will need to be rooted in a soil of
internal peace. We'll have to claim the confidence of souls planted in the overwhelming
love of God, a love so abundant, so profligate, given with such unwillingness to count the
cost, that we, too, are caught up into a similar abandonment.

That full measure of love, pressed down and overflowing, drives out our idolatrous self-
interest. Because that is what fear really is -- it is a reaction, an often unconscious
response to something we think is so essential that it takes the place of God. "Oh, that's
mine and you can't take it, because I can't live without it" -- whether it's my bank account
or theological framework or my sense of being in control. If you threaten my self-
definition, I respond with fear. Unless, like Jesus, we can set aside those lesser goods,
unless we can make "peace through the blood of the cross."

That bloody cross brings new life into this world. Colossians calls Jesus the firstborn of all creation, the firstborn from the dead. That sweaty, bloody, tear-stained labor of the cross bears new life. Our mother Jesus gives birth to a new creation -- and you and I are His children. If we're going to keep on growing into Christ-images for the world around us, we're going to have to give up fear.

What do the godly messengers say when they turn up in the Bible? "Fear not." "Don't be afraid." "God is with you." "You are God's beloved, and God is well-pleased with you."

When we know ourselves beloved of God, we can begin to respond in less fearful ways. When we know ourselves beloved, we can begin to recognize the beloved in a homeless man, or rhetorical opponent, or a child with AIDS. When we know ourselves beloved, we can even begin to see and reach beyond the defense of others.

Our invitation, both in the last work of this Convention, and as we go out into the world, is to lay down our fear and love the world. Lay down our sword and shield, and seek out the image of God's beloved in the people we find it hardest to love. Lay down our narrow self-interest, and heal the hurting and fill the hungry and set the prisoners free. Lay down our need for power and control, and bow to the image of God's beloved in the weakest, the poorest, and the most excluded.

We children can continue to squabble over the inheritance. Or we can claim our name and heritage as God's beloveds and share that name, beloved, with the whole world.

("From Columbus: Text").
Section 1A: Negotiating the Double-Bind

Presiding Bishop-elect Katharine Jefferts Schori is a sanctioned speaker in the public sphere when she delivers the sermon which appears above. She has been elected to the office of Presiding Bishop and is authorized to speak. Yet, she is aware that her audience is much larger than the assembly gathered before her: indeed, not only are the members of the ECUSA watching, but the media also is eager to garner a sound-byte from this woman who has shattered the “glass ceiling” of one of the mainline Protestant denominations in the United States.

While Jefferts Schori’s immediate audience is primarily supportive – they are, after all, the ones who elected her – the audience beyond the assembly hall is less so. Even within the ECUSA, there are three dioceses which do not allow for the ordination of women, much less the election of a female bishop (“Female Ordination”). Outside the ECUSA, the disparity is greater still: for example, in the Southern Baptist Convention, which boasts over sixteen million members as compared to the ECUSA’s two million, “opposition to women clergy is particularly intense” and the SBC faith statement is clear that “while both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by scripture” (“The Baptist Faith”).

The Presiding Bishop-elect has a double-bind to negotiate in her first sermon after election: a Bishop is required to be an upstanding, faithful, “good” person – and a woman can certainly fulfill these requirements. However, a woman who speaks out as a preacher of the gospel is automatically disobeying Scripture, which makes her “bad.” Therefore, how can a

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x San Joaquin, California; Fort Worth, Texas; and Quincy, Illinois. (http://www.religioustolerance.org/femclrg14.htm)

xi The SBC, which adheres to a literal interpretation of the Scriptures, quotes passages such as 1 Timothy 2:11-12 to support their position.
woman be a “good” bishop? Her task is to convince her audience that not only is she a “good” orator, but also a good person.

Jefferts Schori, in her attempt to establish positive ethos in her first public appearance as bishop, enters into a rich rhetorical tradition. The importance of the formation of positive ethos is explicated by Aristotle, who in his *Rhetoric* explains that “the orator must not only try to make the argument of his speech demonstrative and worthy of belief; he must also make his own character look right and put his hearers, who are to decide, into the right frame of mind” (213). Aristotle goes on to elucidate what, precisely, will make the hearers trust in the character of the speaker: “There are three things which inspire confidence in the orator’s own character… good sense, good moral character, and goodwill” (213). James and Tita Baumlin, in *Ethos: New Essays in Rhetorical and Critical Theory*, extend the concept of Aristotle’s ethos for present-day speakers, defining the classical rhetorical term as that which “concerns the problematic relation between human character and discourse; more specifically, it raises questions concerning the inclusion of the speaker’s character as an aspect of discourse, the representation of that character in discourse, and the role of that character in persuasion” (italics in original, xvii). Obviously, the character of the speaker, as perceived by the audience, is a key component in the public-speaking process and the speaker must work with this “aspect of discourse” in order to enhance communication.

Jefferts Schori attempts to communicate with an audience which is somewhat unfamiliar with her character, and she faces the challenge of demonstrating her good sense, good moral character, and goodwill in the midst of a double-bind which seems to indicate that if a woman possesses these qualities, she is no woman. Quintilian posed the question almost two thousand years ago in the twelfth chapter of the *Institutes of Oratory*: “Why should not some one among
mankind be able to attain eminence in both goodness and eloquence?” (416). Now, in the wake of post-structuralism, the concept of “self” as a fixed and unified whole has been discarded by many rhetorical theorists; yet, the “general audience” engaged by such oratorical performances as Jefferts Schori offers here is not familiar with the concept of the “split self” (Jarratt and Reynolds 37). Rather, this audience probably still adheres to the Enlightenment construct of “self”: “a unified and coherent whole” (Jarratt and Reynolds 37). Cognizant of the reality of her audience, Jefferts Schori employs a number of rhetorical techniques to convince her audience that, despite any doubts they may have, she is not simply eloquent, but also “good.”

The sermon begins with Jefferts Schori describing her run from the past Sunday morning, very early. Immediately, positive images are formed: she is an early-riser, which is associated with diligence, and she is preparing to exercise, which is associated with health-consciousness. During her run, the Bishop-elect encounters a number of individuals going about their tasks, and she “nodded” to two of them (line 10, 23), and said “good morning” (line 12, 15, 17) to three others. With these numerous examples of her personable nature, Jefferts Schori is working to convince her audience that she is both communicative and compassionate to each person she meets; in the language of Aristotle, she possesses “goodwill.” Simultaneously, Jefferts Schori begins to mix genteel language (for example, line 15: “I said good morning, and he responded in kind”) with language which conveys her status as an “ordinary” person, in order to demonstrate “good sense,” or keen intellect, coupled with “good will.” In line 22 she refers to some of the men she meets as “guys” in an effort to show the audience that she is just a normal person, talking with normal “guys.”

Having laid the groundwork to establish her positive personal ethos, Jefferts Schori moves from the introduction into the body of the sermon by posing a question (line 29-30): Will
we ever be able to relate to one another without fear? The question is largely rhetorical, and
Jefferts Schori spends much of the rest of the sermon answering that question, using imagery that
at times is strikingly feminine. In order to enter into this fearlessness, we must “become the
blessed ones God called us to be while we were still in our mothers' wombs,” according to
Jefferts Schori (38 and 39) and we must remember that “Our mother Jesus gives birth to a new
creation -- and you and I are His children” (52). Such feminine imagery paints a picture of a
Jesus who would not be averse to a woman in a leadership role, spreading his message – for
surely, if Jesus was a “mother” to the audience, then a woman can be a bishop. Whether or not it
is intentional, when Jefferts Schori refers to “mother Jesus,” she follows in the rhetorical
footsteps of Julian of Norwich, who in her _Showings_ wrote that “our heavenly Mother Jesus may
never suffer us who are his children to perish, for he is almighty, all wisdom and all love…”
(301).

While superficially Jefferts Schori explains throughout the sermon that a fearless
relationship is the kind which God would have us form with one another, at a deeper level she is
asking her audience if they will be able to relate to _her_ – a woman in a role previously occupied
only by men – without fear. Will they be her “friends” and not “agents of fear?” (35 and 36). This
is a clever logical move to elide the double-bind, because essentially Jefferts Schori has created a
double-bind for her listeners: either they learn to relate to her, or they go against the desire of
God. In line 49 Jefferts Schori urges her listeners to be “like Jesus… make ‘peace through the
blood of the cross.’”

Jefferts Schori never directly addresses the double-bind, or the potential difficulty some
members of her audience may have with the position she has attained. She comes close,
however, near the end of the sermon. In lines 56-60, she states that “when we know ourselves
beloved of God, we can begin to respond in less fearful ways. When we know ourselves beloved, we can begin to recognize the beloved in a homeless man, or rhetorical opponent, or a child with AIDS. When we know ourselves beloved, we can even begin to see and reach beyond the defense of others”…therefore, if her “rhetorical opponents” (note how this phrase was carefully placed between the image of a “homeless man” and a “child with AIDS” to make the opponent seem to be an object deserving of sympathy) truly know themselves to be beloved, they will respond differently – they will respond in “less fearful ways” (57). Thus, the double-bind has been shifted from Schori to her “rhetorical opponents” who now are saddled with the burden of proving that they know they are beloved by acting out of compassion, rather than fear. She calls upon them – and herself – to “Lay down our sword and shield, and seek out the image of God's beloved in the people we find it hardest to love” (62-63).

Wisely, Jefferts Schori tries, while shifting the burden of the double-bind, to draw ever closer to her audience, as the above quote indicates. Rather than occupying a position of power and “shaking a finger at them” she chooses to be partners with the audience: her pronouns turn from the “I” used at the beginning of the sermon to the inclusive “we” and “our.” In the last ten lines of her sermon, Jefferts Schori uses the pronoun “we” eight times and “our” is used six times. Although the sermon is primarily uni-directional – it is a speech, rather than a conversation – still, in a very limited way, Jefferts Schori is attempting to employ what Suzanne Romaine refers to as “the collaborative floor that emerges from a shared conversation where no one dominates” (158). The “collaborative floor” construct originated with Jennifer Coates, author of Women Talk, who defined the collaborative floor as the “shared construction of utterances and overlapping talk” (266). Clearly, Jefferts Schori dominates this rhetorical space, and there are no shared utterances or overlapping words; yet she works to open the stories, to
include the listeners, to talk not simply to them, but also with them. Her use of the first person plural seems to be a feminine rhetorical strategy to draw the audience ever closer to their new bishop.

A close relationship with nature also emerges in this sermon, perhaps as yet another way to relate to a diverse audience and untangle the double-bind. When Jefferts Schori discusses her early morning jog, she is careful to paint a picture filled with the natural world: light (line 7), dawn (line 7), clouds (line 8), and even a rabbit makes an appearance here in the midst of the city. While the people gathered together are quite diverse, each of them can relate to a rabbit and a quiet morning: Jefferts Schori seems to be intimating that surely, then, they can relate to their new bishop. Nature is a recurrent theme in Jefferts Schori’s rhetoric, as will be seen through the rest of this chapter. The manner in which she shares her experiences with nature are particularly poignant, taking the narrative form: as linguist William Labov noted, “they [narratives] will command the total attention of an audience in a remarkable way, creating a deep and attentive silence that is never found in academic or political discussion” (396). Narratives garner attention: they are stories. “And when women friends talk,” writes Coates, “they tell each other stories” (94). Jefferts Schori tells stories, and many of them are about her own experiences with the natural world.

Through stories, inclusivity and establishment of a positive ethos, Jefferts Schori worked in this sermon to successfully negotiate the double-bind. The response to her sermon was, not unexpectedly, mixed. In particular, her reference to “mother Jesus” brought negative reactions: Albert Mohler, a renowned radio personality in the Southern Baptist Convention responded to Jefferts Schori’s remark by proclaiming that “This idea of a ‘Mother Jesus’ giving birth to creation is precisely the kind of gynecological theology that biblical Christianity opposes.
Creation is not birthed from a divine womb --- it is spoken into being by a divine Word” (“Mother Jesus?”). Despite Mohler’s contention with this aspect of Jefferts Schori’s speech, it certainly seems that she made a worthy rhetorical effort to move beyond the double-bind: perhaps primarily by re-positioning that bind upon her audience.

**Section 1B: Examining the Sermon for Feminine Gender-Markings**

In the opening chapter of the dissertation, I enumerated nine potential feminine “gender markers” which could potentially appear in the speeches examined: of those nine, I dismissed two – rising intonation and frequent use of emphasis. Since both of these markers require an auditory examination of the speeches, I eliminated them from my study. The remaining markers are tag questions, empty adjectives, “women’s words,” the use of the intensive “so,” politeness devices/hypercorrect grammar, hedge words, and an absence of jokes or humor. We begin with an examination of the presence or absence of these markers in the first sermon of Katharine Jefferts Schori as Presiding Bishop of the ECUSA. To aid in clarity, one sub-division of this section will be devoted to each marker.

**Tag questions:** In this first sermon of Jefferts Schori, there do not appear to be any tag questions, any instances where Jefferts Schori tries to soften a statement by adding a question to the end. While she does pose two questions, in lines 29 and 55, they are not tag questions, but direct queries.

**Empty adjectives:** In line 13, Jefferts Schori refers to a “lovely” green park. “Lovely” is one of the words (along with “adorable,” “charming,” and others) earmarked by Lakoff as “empty adjectives” – words that “denote approval of the trivial, the personal; that express approbation in terms of one’s own personal reaction” (Lakoff 46). Interestingly, the word “lovely” is chosen
specifically by Lakoff to exemplify the power of the feminine gender marking: she provides the example of the (male) professor who exclaims “What a lovely hat!” only to be laughed at by a more traditionally masculine truck driver (47). Lakoff argues that one would likely not hear a “masculine” individual use this term; however, Lakoff also mentions that men who work in the academy and the church are oftentimes considered “effete” and are therefore able to violate these “sacrosanct” rules (47). Perhaps, because Jefferts Schori is speaking in the context of the already-feminized church, this word does not sound as strikingly feminine as it would in the boardroom.

Women’s words: Interestingly, it is again at the beginning of her sermon that Jefferts Schori enters a realm of descriptive words which are often used as gender-markers: the naming of colors. Jefferts Schori, in the opening ten lines of her sermon, mentions no less than three colors: pink, green, and orange. Traditionally, women are expected to make more “fine” color distinctions than men would make: for instance, a man would say “pink” while a woman would refer to the color as “mauve” (Lakoff 43). Here, we witness Jefferts Schori utilizing the more typical masculine speech pattern.

Use of intensive so: Jefferts Schori uses the intensive “so” five times in this sermon, and usually several times in quick succession. For instance, the intensive “so” is used twice in line 33, twice in line 41, and then again in line 45. According to Lakoff, the use of the intensive “so” is a feminine gender-marker, indicating that the speaker did not want to “make strong assertions, but felt you had to say something along those lines anyway” (80). Along with using “so,” Jefferts Schori also employs the words “very” and “just” for additional emphasis, using the former three times (lines 6, 8, and 27) and the latter also three times (lines 8, 9, and 16). However, Lakoff
argues that “very” does not fall into the same category as “so”; “very” is more precise than so, according to Lakoff, and therefore not as indicative of a feminine pattern of speech (80).

**Politeness devices and hypercorrect grammar:** As anticipated, there are no obscenities in this sermon. There are, however, several instances of the use of what might be referred to as “politeness devices.” Although Jefferts Schori does not explicitly say “please” or “thank you” to her listeners, she shares with them in lines 12 and 15 how she greets those she encounters on the street with the common pleasantries of “Good morning.” Additionally, Jefferts Schori recounts twice that she “nodded” at others along the way. This demonstration of politeness to others communicates to the audience that their speaker is a polite person. In line 17, Jefferts Schori adds that “I must admit” – this also can be construed as a form of politeness. Clearly, she is working to prove her amiability to the audience.

**Hedge words:** These words, which “convey the sense that the speaker is uncertain about what he (or she) is saying, or cannot vouch for the accuracy of the statement,” include “well,” “y’know,” “kinda,” “sorta,” and similar phrases (Lakoff 79). These words are notably absent, with the exception of the word “seemingly” in line 22.

**Humor:** While Jefferts Schori does not explicitly tell jokes in her sermon, she does use a minor bit of humor: in lines 18 and 19 she alludes to a rabbit with which she came into contact on her morning run. The two exchanged a “wary” glance. Perhaps the gravity of the situation – her election to such a monumental office – deters her from using humor; this may be the case. It might be interesting, in future scholarship, to examine Jefferts Schori’s initial sermon in conjunction with the first sermons offered by her male counterparts to see if humor is present or absent, and if these differences “break” along gender lines.
In summary, Jefferts Schori does demonstrate the use of a number of the traditional feminine-gender markings in her speech, while others are notably absent. She employs the intensive “so,” she utilizes women’s words along with a sprinkling of empty adjectives, and her politeness is evident. While hedge words and humor are absent, there are enough gender-markers to whet one’s interest. The following sermon and interview, when examined in tandem with this sermon, offer further illumination as to Jefferts Schori’s speech patterns.

Maundy Thursday, late 1990s: Before the Bishopric

Before Katharine Jefferts Schori was a bishop, David Schlafer, author of the 1998 text What Makes This Day Different?, describes one of her preaching events as “far and away the most powerful Maundy Thursday sermon I have ever experienced” and he then summarizes the beginning portions: the congregation is invited to remove their shoes, then recounts biblical imagery of feet touching the ground – Adam and Eve, and finally Jesus. Jefferts Schori continues with the story of a ‘‘terribly proper’ woman who ventures out on a San Francisco street too soon after a bout with pneumonia” (Schlafer 90). The woman collapses and eventually is assisted off of the ground by an unlikely ‘‘very dirty and rather aromatic little man’’ (Schlafer 90). From this story, Schlafer, explains, Jefferts Schori “brought the sermon home” (90). The text of Jefferts Schori’s next words are then reproduced in full, as follows:

Maundy Thursday, mid-to-late 1990s (partial text)

1 John 13: The Footwashing

2 When or where do we ever find ourselves on the ground? Can we recognize the ground when we’re sitting on it? Can we humbly accept the gift of an outstretched hand, or two hands washing our feet? Or the gift of life, offered for us?
Jesus knew who he was, he was grounded in his identity. He knew his origins and where he was going. And he invites us to join him on that journey. If we’re going to “go and do likewise,” we too have to know who we are, where we’ve come from, and where we’re going.

Think back to Ash Wednesday, when we began this journey with a cross marked on our foreheads. We heard the words “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” Lent is a journey that begins in dusty ashes. We’re dust – made from the earth.

We are created beings, earthlings, dependent upon the one who creates us. If we lose our sense of groundedness in God—that humility—we have nothing to share with others. We have no common ground. We have to have our feet firmly planted before we can love and serve others.

Come have your feet washed, as we prepare to walk the way of the cross. Come feel your earthy, humble roots, and be strengthened for the journey. Feet don’t need to be embarrassing. They’re the part of us that’s closest to the ground. They’re the most human, and perhaps the most to be honored. Come let your feet, and yourself, be honored. Come receive this gift of love. Humbly offered, let it be humbly received.
Section 2A: Negotiating the Double-Bind

Although this sample is quite limited, it is fairly evident in this sermon (as opposed to the sermon preached upon her election as Bishop) that Jefferts Schori is comfortable with the audience and does not need to spend as much time establishing a sense of rapport and connection. Although she does employ the strategy of positioning herself in solidarity with the audience by employing the first person plural throughout this portion of the message, there is a definite lack of rhetoric, at least in this portion of the sermon, which seeks to justify itself.

Likely, this is the case because she is serving in a congregation which has heard her preach many times before and is comfortable with her leadership. Her ethos has been established in the past, and therefore she no longer needs to work as hard at developing it in this context. Furthermore, this audience is significantly more contained than is the audience nearly ten years later, when she is elected bishop. There are no media swarming about to catch a phrase or two. It is simply the pastor and the people: the audience is what it seems, although a portion of this sermon was reproduced in Schlafer’s book, thereby increasing the audience. It seems unlikely, though, that Jefferts Schori held Schlafer’s audience in mind while she preached: she probably was unaware that the sermon would eventually be published.

As in her sermon preached in 2006 and studied earlier, even in this brief sermon Jefferts Schori alludes to nature, to the created order. In fact, in this sermon she explicitly uses the trope of nature to delineate the relationship that exists between all humans: we are all dust, “made from the earth… we are created beings” asserts Jefferts Schori (lines 12-13). While this may not be conscious effort to escape the double-bind, it certainly does provide a shared ground upon which the preacher and the congregants can stand.
Despite Jefferts Schori’s rhetorical work with the concept of nature, the lack of effort to negotiate the double-bind, as evidenced in this sermon, is significant. First of all, this Maundy Thursday sermon was preached nearly a decade before her first sermon as bishop. Jefferts Schori should be increasingly more comfortable in her role as pastor, and feel less need to negotiate the double-bind, and yet, despite the passage of time and perhaps Jefferts Schori’s own increased comfort-level, the difference in audience is appreciable. Many who are present on the day of her election had never heard her preach before. Some were opposed to her ministry. The audience was broad: beyond the scope of not just her own congregation but also outside of her denomination. Jefferts Schori demonstrated considerable rhetorical savvy in working with the double-bind because the audience required it of her, even though clearly, as this sermon indicates, she did not feel the need to justify her preaching.

Section 2B: Examining the Sermon for Feminine Gender Markings

Tag questions: There are no tag questions in this portion of the sermon. Jefferts Schori does ask direct questions of her audience, rhetorical questions which the audience can answer internally. In lines 3-5, Jefferts Schori poses three questions in quick succession: “When or where do we ever find ourselves on the ground? Can we recognize the ground when we’re sitting on it? Can we humbly accept the gift of an outstretched hand, or two hands washing our feet? Or the gift of life, offered for us?” She then moves on, allowing the congregation to ponder the answers.

Some debate might be raised on whether or not this rapid-fire series of questions is in itself indicative of traditionally feminine language. Catherine Evans Davies, who used Lakoff’s gender markers in 2004 to evaluate Martha Stewart’s speech in the article “‘Women’s Language’ and Martha Stewart: From a Room of One’s Own to a Home of One’s Own to a Corporation of
One’s Own,” reminds us that “one of the most controversial features identified by Lakoff as characteristic of women’s language is the heavy use of tag questions and question intonation in statements, interpretable as indicating uncertainty and insecurity,” (191, emphasis mine). From the point of view of a textual analysis, we cannot detect rising intonation in statements, but we do see here a flurry of questions.

Interestingly, Jefferts Schori frames the questions as collective: they are aimed not just at the audience, but at herself as a part of that larger group. Six times in these three brief lines she refers to “us, our, we and we’re”: clearly, Jefferts Schori is inviting her audience to see themselves as part of a larger whole which includes herself simultaneously as speaker and listener. This is a pattern repeated throughout the duration of this brief message, which includes twenty-seven instances of “us, our, we, we’re, ourselves.” Only in the concluding sentences does she invite the listeners specifically to engage in the ritual of footwashing: in lines 17 and 20, Jefferts Schori implores her listeners using “you” and “your.”

Empty adjectives: This short message does not contain what are traditionally considered to be “empty adjectives.” The subject matter is quite serious, as the Maundy Thursday service is a celebration which for Episcopalians marks the beginning of the end of the earthly life of Jesus Christ. Such austere subject matter likely would not lend itself to trivializing adjectives such as “cute” or “adorable.” In fact, Lakoff posits that “in a really serious situation, the use of ‘trivializing’ particles constitutes a joke, or at any rate, is highly inappropriate” (44). Certainly, Jefferts Schori would not wish to trivialize or undermine the importance of this sacred and serious day in the Christian church.

Women’s words and use of intensive so, politeness devices, hypercorrect grammar, and hedge words: Again, the subject matter is quite serious, and Jefferts Schori approaches it in such a
manner. In this portion of the sermon, there are no “women’s words” nor are there any instances of the use of “so” as an intensifier. The grammar is correct, but not “hypercorrect.” In lines 19 and 20, when making reference to the feet of her congregants, Jefferts Schori does say that “They’re the most human, and perhaps the most to be honored.” A less “correct” alternative might have been “They’re the most human and perhaps the most honorable.” On the other hand, the use of the contraction “they’re” rather than the more formal “they are” reveals a lack of what might be considered “hypercorrect” grammar. We also note the use of the hedge word “perhaps” in this same sentence; this is the only hedge word in this portion of the sermon.

Humor: There is little room for humor on this day of the church year, and yet Jefferts Schori offers us a glimpse of it in lines 3 and 4, where she asks a question that seems to call for an immediate “yes” but invites further thought: “Can we recognize the ground when we’re sitting on it?” This single instance of gentle humor is the only one in the partial message examined here. Nonetheless, it would be a hasty generalization to attribute the lack of humor to feminine style rather than simply to an awareness of the gravity of the occasion.

Upon reviewing our findings in this speech sample, although it is somewhat brief, we can detect a heightened comfort-level between the speaker and the audience, as well as a keen awareness of the significance of the occasion on the part of the speaker. A reasonable idea calling for further exploration is whether or not, as a speaker becomes more familiar with her audience, the number of gender-specific speech patterns decreases.
The Transcript of the “Religion and Ethics Newsweekly” Interview

of the ECUSA’s First Female Bishop

Two days after her election as bishop, Jefferts Schori was interviewed by Kim Lawton, managing editor of “Religion and Ethics Newsweekly,” an online weekly magazine that describes itself as “an online companion to the ‘Religion and Ethics’ weekly television news program” which debuted on PBS in 1997. The following is a verbatim transcript of the interview, which was also recorded and is available for viewing on the website.

The rhetorical act of participating in an interview leaves considerably less opportunity for preparation than does the presentation of a scripted sermon. Thus, in this setting we might expect to see notable differences from the crafted texts of the sermons examined above.

Interview

KIM LAWTON: You mentioned right away after your election that you saw the church as having an opportunity to be the vehicle for the reign of God. And I just wanted you to tell us a little bit more about what you see, what is that vision of the church?

Bishop KATHARINE JEFFERTS SCHORI (Presiding Bishop-Elect, U.S. Episcopal Church): Well, the church is a community that is really called to transform the world around it. That takes different forms in different places. Each one of us has got a piece to play in that kind of work. And the fact that this General Convention has adopted justice and peace as its first priority for mission in the coming triennium, particularly focused on the UN Millennium Development Goals, gives us an enormous opportunity to be part of building something that looks very much like the reign of God that's achievable in our own day.

LAWTON: Are you very mindful of the magnitude of what you are lurching into?
Bishop JEFFERTS SCHORI: Probably not fully. I'm sure that I will have much to learn
that I don't even know about. But I think life is meant to be challenging. If we're going to
use the fullness of the gifts that we've been given, it means we have to continue to be
stretched. And I look forward to that.

LAWTON: What message does your election send to all the quarters of the Episcopal
Church?

Bishop JEFFERTS SCHORI: This is not your grandmother's church anymore. When I
was growing up, girls and women could only do things like sing in the choir and serve on
the altar guild. And singing's not my great strength, so I had no concept of being active in
leadership in the church when I was growing up.

LAWTON: And what about for the rest of the communion? What message, what signal
do you hope this sends to other members of the Anglican Communion?

Bishop JEFFERTS SCHORI: I hope that our decisions at this General Convention send
several messages to the rest of the communion: that we are incredibly anxious to be, to
continue to be, part of the communion; that we are fully committed to partnerships across
the globe; that we firmly believe that all people need to be included in the reign of God
that is being built; that people of all colors and races and nations and language groups and
sexual orientations are fully part of this creation that God has blessed us with.

LAWTON: What do you anticipate saying to some of the primates at your first meeting,
including some that you know have problems with women being ordained? What can you
imagine yourself saying to them?

Bishop JEFFERTS SCHORI: One would probably begin with "hello," to begin to build
some kind of relationship, speaking about each other's contexts, who am I, where do I
come from, what kind of history do I bring, what kind of theology do I understand that
this church is being called to? And we cannot have substantive conversations until we
know each other as human beings.

LAWTON: Some people say that this has been a real crucial time for the Anglican
Communion just in terms of reexamining what Anglicanism means today in this world.
Do you think that is going on right now?

Bishop JEFFERTS SCHORI: Yes it is, and I think it goes on in every age. Anglicanism
has grown out of a history of struggle and tension. The great Elizabethan compromise
that produced the Church of England was born out of incredible strife, but it has been a
gift to many, many people around the globe.

LAWTON: And so in what way do you see, you know, what are some of the critical
issues that global Anglicans need to be examining right now?

Bishop JEFFERTS SCHORI: We need to be examining the poverty that is real around the
world. We need to be examining the fact that our brothers and sisters, Anglican and not,
in places like Africa and Asia don't have enough to eat. Their children don't have the
opportunity to go to school. AIDS and tuberculosis and malaria are rampant in many
parts of this world and people with those diseases don't have access to adequate health
care. That's where our focus needs to be.

LAWTON: Clearly, one of the big challenges, the big issue is the sexuality debates. What
message do you hope that this convention sends to people who are very upset about the
consecration of Gene Robinson and are really opposed to same-sex, the blessing of same-
sex unions? What signal do you hope they get from this convention?

Bishop JEFFERTS SCHORI: That there is room for them at this table as well.
LAWTON: And what about for gay and lesbian members of the church who are concerned that maybe there is a backing away, that maybe they're being, in some way being called to make sacrifices for the sake of unity that aren't just, for a church that's emphasizing justice? What do you hope they hear from this?

Bishop JEFFERTS SCHORI: The same message, that there is room for them at this table as well, that God calls all of us to this bountiful table to share in the riches of creation that were given for all.

LAWTON: There've been some pretty pointed statements publicly from some of the conservative bishops and other leaders of that wing of the church, really raising questions about whether indeed everybody can stay at the table and whether this is a time when that is no longer possible. Do you feel that reconciliation is still possible, and what will you do to try and make that happen?

Bishop JEFFERTS SCHORI: Reconciliation is always possible. The Christian faith is about the eternity of hope. Once we give up hope, I think we cease to become active, engaged Christians. If we have no hope, we have repudiated the basis of our faith. There is always the possibility of reconciliation, resurrection, renewal. And once we lose a sense of that in a very deep way, we have challenged the very foundations of our faith. If -- if the resurrection, the reconciliation may come beyond the grave, but we insist that it is always possible.

LAWTON: Talk about the transition, oceanographer turned bishop. What led to that?

Bishop JEFFERTS SCHORI: Well, I knew I was supposed to go fishing, and it took me a while to figure out just what for. Christians often talk about being sent to fish for people; the gospel is about drawing all people into the reign of God. When it became apparent
that I was not going to be able to continue to be an active oceanographer, that if I wanted to continue in the field it was going to be as a grants writer and hustling grant money, right at the very same time, three people in my congregation asked me if I'd ever thought about being a priest, just out of the blue. It seemed absurd, it seemed unfitting to the gifts that I recognized at the time. But I went and spoke at great length with the priest in that congregation and came to the conclusion that, at least, the time wasn't right. But five years later, I was asked to preach on a Sunday morning when he wasn't going to be there -- a new rector. And that experience and the response that I had to that experience finally let me say yes. And I was in seminary the next fall.

LAWTON: Describe some of your emotions on Sunday [the day she was elected the first female presiding bishop]. What gamut did they run?

Bishop JEFFERTS SCHORI: It was a long and challenging day -- to sit waiting, to recognize that this election might possibly call me into this office. I think we were all surprised, all of us.

LAWTON: And I have a personal question for you. Just, a lot of people have different practices to maintain their own spiritual spark, you know, and to maintain that, and I'm just wondering if you'd be willing to share what's most meaningful for you? How do you get your best connection with God?

Bishop JEFFERTS SCHORI: I've always found a great sense of spirituality in the outdoors. I ground myself as a creature in the midst of the natural created order. And taking Sabbath time is exceedingly important to me, taking time away, and I bring all of those together in seeking solitude in the wilderness. The wilderness is a place of great gifts. It
may be threatening to some people; it ought to be threatening, I think, in some important
way. But it is a place where I discover God, and what God is calling me to do and be.
Section 3A: Negotiating the Double-Bind

The transcript of this interview reveals a woman who is clearly aware of the double-bind which permeates her new position as National Bishop of the ECUSA. Kathleen Hall Jamieson writes that “the first step in overcoming a double-bind is seeing it for what it is” and it certainly seems that Jefferts Schori does just that by asserting (as she does in line 29 and again in line 82) that “all people need to be included in the reign of God” (190). She recognizes that she is a woman in a role that has historically belonged to a man: the assumption of the double-bind, therefore, is that she must not be a woman, regardless of any appearances indicating otherwise. And yet, Jefferts Schori is a mother and a wife: roles reserved for women. The listening audience must contend with a speaker who is clearly a woman and a definitive leader in the church, expected to be a “good” person. This speaker knows that she is “different” from any person that the listeners have heard before, by virtue of her office and her gender. Wisely, Jefferts Schori reminds her listeners that in spite of her difference, she must be accepted because “all people need to be included.”

In addition to examining the above-noted quote more fully in the paragraph immediately following, I will look specifically at three other areas in the interview where Jefferts Schori quite explicitly employs rhetorical tactics to undo the double-bind. The first section is found in lines 20-23; the second, in lines 35-39; and the third attempt to counteract the double-bind occurs in lines 72-78. Finally, I note where Jefferts Schori returns again to the topic of nature at the conclusion of her interview: in lines 102-106 she reminds her listeners that we are part of a larger “natural created order” (line 102).

Jefferts Schori begins the interview with a call for the church to “transform the world” (line 6) and asserts that “each one of us has got a piece to play.” Immediately, Jefferts Schori is
working to disempower the double-bind. She notes in line 8 and following that the “General Convention has adopted justice and peace as its first priority” and this “looks very much like the reign of God.” If, in fact, including everyone looks like the reign of God – and supposedly every Christian longs for this very reign – then would it not make sense for Christians to include everyone, even women, particularly if they are “good” Christians? As in her sermon preached two days earlier, Jefferts Schori is “turning the tables” on the double-bind, and carefully placing it upon her listeners with such fervor and faithfulness that they can hardly offer dissent without seeming to deny their own Christian convictions.

As was mentioned above, Jefferts Schori repeats the mantra of “all people need to be included” throughout the entire interview. In lines 29-31, she is explicit: “all people need to be included in the reign of God that is being built… people of all colors and races and nations and language groups and sexual orientations are fully part of this creation.” She does not mention people of all genders in her list, and yet the list itself seems to preclude any argument and pose the question “if all of these people are included, and are meant to be included, how could the exclusion of women be acceptable?”

The question of the inclusion is a theme which permeates the interview. When Lawton inquires as to what message Jefferts Schori’s election sends to “all quarters of the Episcopal Church,” (lines 18-19), Jefferts Schori responds by with what at first appears to be a quip: “This is not your grandmother’s church anymore.” Yet, this off-the-cuff statement brings up several interesting points. First, it seems as if Jefferts Schori indicates here that the church did at one time belong to our grandmothers, but it no longer does. Jefferts Schori’s following statements seem to indicate that the church belonging to our grandmothers was, in fact, a very limiting church. Jefferts Schori explains that “When I was growing up, girls and women could only do
things like sing in the choir and serve on the altar guild. And singing’s not my great strength, so I had no concept of being active in leadership in the church when I was growing up” (lines 20-23). So it seems that the implicit assertion here is that now the church belongs to “girls and women” at least as much as it does to boys and men.

However, this statement, while it appears to attempt to both acknowledge the existence of and offer counteraction to the double-bind, actually has negative implications. By stating that women “could only do things like sing in the choir and serve on the altar guild,” (emphasis mine) Jefferts Schori risks offending those members of her audience, both male and female, who proudly care for the church linens and lift their voices in the choir.

Unfortunately, while Jefferts Schori’s intention is most likely to celebrate the various gifts which women (and men) bring to the church, it sounds here as if she is denigrating traditionally feminine roles. This, in fact, reinforces the patriarchal norms of the church. Here, Jefferts Schori does not seem to use her rhetoric as feminist bell hooks urges, to “transform the culture of domination into a culture characterized by equality, mutuality, and respect” but rather to stake a woman’s claim to the terrain of domination (Foss, Foss and Griffin 93). While in other areas of her rhetoric, such as the next example analyzed, Jefferts Schori skillfully negotiates the double-bind, in her response to this particular question the double-bind prevails in a way that is both painful and unsurprising.

The subject of inclusivity continues as the interview progresses, and Lawton turns toward the subject of the ordination of women when she asks Jefferts Schori in lines 32-34 what she anticipates saying to “some of the primates... that you know have problems with women being ordained?” Obviously, if these gentlemen have difficulties accepting the ordination of women,

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xii A “Primate” is the equivalent of a National Bishop. For example, the Anglican Church in Canada has a “Primate” rather than a National Bishop. The Anglican Church in Canada is the equivalent of the ECUSA.
they are not going to easily accept a female bishop. Yet, Jefferts Schori cleverly deflects the question by answering it with humor and honesty. Her first response to these primates, of course, will be “Hello” – a greeting of neither deference nor presumption, but of equanimity (line 35). Jefferts Schori then goes on to speak about building relationships, a very feminine approach to the situation, and she further elucidates the situation by moving beyond gender: “we cannot have substantive conversations,” she claims, “until we know each other as human beings” (lines 38-39). A – perhaps the - formative element in their relationship, according to the rhetoric of Jefferts Schori, lies in looking beyond the individual distinctions which exist among and between the primates in order to focus upon their mutual humanity.

Jefferts Schori has navigated eight questions, focusing upon unity and equality, when Lawton poses the question of whether or not the other church leaders will be willing to “stay at the table” or “whether this is a time when that is no longer possible” (lines 69-70). Jefferts Schori again is confronted with the double-bind wherein if she speaks, she will not be heard because the listeners have left the “table.” Her response is, once again, to call upon the theological principles the Christian faith in order to bolster her position. She reminds Lawton that “The Christian faith is about the eternity of hope. Once we give up hope, I think we cease to become active, engaged Christians” (lines 72-74). At this point, Jefferts Schori again reverses the double-bind: if people are unwilling to stay at the table and engage with the possibility of hope and reconciliation, then they are no longer “active” or “engaged” as Christians. In other words, to deny the possibility of reconciliation is to deny the Christian faith.

After these difficult queries, the interview ends with what Lawton refers to as a “personal question.” She asks the new bishop “How do you get your best connection with God?” (lines 99-100). Jefferts Schori turns, at last, to the subject of nature, a subject which unites rather than
divides, a common experience for all people. The “out-of-doors,” explains Jefferts Schori, is where she can “ground” herself as a “creature in the midst of the natural created order” (lines 101-102). Once again, she has united herself to all of humanity by acknowledging herself as a creature, the same as everyone else; men, women, children and animals.

Throughout the interview, which lasted just under nine minutes, Jefferts Schori struggles with the double-bind of being the first woman in a highly masculinized leadership role. Her efforts to overcome the double-bind are stronger in some areas than in others. She is particularly adept here, as in her first sermon as presiding bishop, at inverting the double-bind and placing it back upon her listeners. Nonetheless, there are moments, such as in lines 20-23, when it seems that the patriarchal tradition is re-inscribed rather than rebuffed.

Section 3B: Examining the Interview for Feminine Gender-Markings

Perhaps because of the nature of the rhetorical act of an interview, and her role as interviewee, Jefferts Schori does not utilize any tag questions throughout her discussion with Lawton. In fact, she raises only one question, or flurry of questions, of her own throughout the entire interview, in lines 36-38: “…who am I, where do I come from, what kind of history do I bring, what kind of theology do I understand that this church is being called to?” At this point, Jefferts Schori is discussing her relationship to male leaders in the church and how she will establish rapport with them by coming to a mutual understanding of the answers to these questions. Her speech pattern in this interview, when examined for tag questions as a gender marker, does not appear traditionally feminine.

Empty adjectives: There are neither empty adjectives nor what might be considered, according to Lakoff, women’s words, in this interview between Jefferts Schori and Lawton. Similarly, the
intensive so does not manifest here, either; yet, in the rhetorical spirit of the “intensive so,” Jefferts Schori uses intensifiers throughout the interview. In line 46 she discusses the “many, many people around the globe” to whom the Episcopal Church is a “great gift.” Throughout the interview, Jefferts Schori uses intensifiers on eighteen separate occasions, in addition to the repetition noted above. The following is a list of the intensifiers she utilizes and the number of times and lines wherein she employs them:

really: 1 (line 6)
enormous: 1 (line 10)
very: 4 (lines 11, 76, 76, 85)
incredibly: 2 (lines 27, 45)
fully: 2 (lines 28, 31)
firmly: 1 (line 29)
exceedingly: 1 (line 103)
great: 4 (lines 22, 44, 87, 101, 104)
many\textsuperscript{xiii}: 1 (line 52)

According to work done by Mulac and Bradac, intensifiers exemplify “a linguistic difference between men and women that research has shown to be very consistent across contexts” (86). They cite numerous studies by such scholars as Crosby & Nyquist, McMillan, Clifton, McGrath, and Gale, along with their own research to support the hypothesis that female speakers – or those using a feminine style – include the use of intensifiers such as Jefferts Schori utilizes during the course of her interview with Lawson.

Politeness devices and hypercorrect grammar: There are no significant instances of the use of politeness devices or hypercorrect grammar within the interview transcript. While there are times

\textsuperscript{xiii} This does not include the “many, many” mentioned in line 45.
when Jefferts Schori pointedly avoids contractions (see lines 27 and 28, for instance: “we are incredibly anxious… we are fully committed”), there are also a number of instances where contractions are freely used (lines 14-16: “I’m, don’t, we’re, we’ve”). This balance does not seem to indicate an attempt at avoiding contractions in order to demonstrate “hypercorrect” grammar.

**Hedge words:** Throughout the interview, Jefferts Schori employs eleven hedge words, including “well” (lines 6, 80), “probably” (line 14), “I think” (lines 15, 43, 73, 95, 105), “I hope” (line 26), “maybe” (line 105) and “ought to be” (line 105). According to Lakoff, “the use of hedges arises out of a fear of seeming too masculine by being assertive and saying things directly,” and perhaps here Jefferts Schori is trying to “soften” herself and seem less masculine to her listeners (79). However, if the listeners are expecting a masculine approach, this might make her appear to “lack authority” (Lakoff 79).

**Humor:** Three times during her interview with Lawson does Jefferts Schori employ the rhetorical technique of humor, normally considered to be a masculine speech pattern. The humor is gently self-deprecating at points. In line 22, Jefferts Schori admits that “singing’s not my great strength” in an effort to explain why she could not lead in the church when choir was one of the only venues for a woman to pursue. Similarly, when she is asked about her career change, from oceanographer to ordained minister, she cleverly remarks, in lines 80-81, that “Well, I knew I was supposed to go fishing, and it took me awhile to figure out just what for.” Here we witness Jefferts Schori softening the masculine humor with a hedge (“well”). This may be a pattern which merits further investigation – the possibility in some cases of women combining a feminine gender marker with a male gender marker in an effort to produce an inoffensive, neutral result.
The third instance of humor appears in line 35, and is not of the self-deprecating variety. At this point, Jefferts Schori has been asked how she will begin to deal with the male leaders who do not welcome a female presence at the table, and her response, as was noted above in the section regarding negotiating the double-bind, is that “One would probably being with ‘hello.’” Again, Jefferts Schori employs the hedge “probably” to soften the humor.

Conclusions: Katharine Jefferts Schori, A Woman in the Language-Land of Men
From these three samples of the rhetorical practices of Katharine Jefferts Schori it is impossible to draw far-reaching conclusions; however, it is very intriguing to take note of some important observations and draw a few tentative, broad-based hypotheses which might be further explored in the following chapter and in future research. In analyzing the texts of these rhetorical acts, I arrived at four noteworthy conclusions.

First, when exploring Jefferts Schori’s speech patterns, I realized that some of her linguistic and rhetorical patterns may have less to do with her gender and more to do with other elements of her identity: her level of education or her social position, for instance. These multiple facets of her personhood which affect her speech can best be understood as intersectionality. The development of the concept of intersectionality is credited to Kimberle Williams Crenshaw, who coined the term in order to “describe the interconnections and interdependence of race with other categories” (Valentine 12). The term now encompasses not only the relationships between race and other categories, but also the interplay of gender, class, ethnicity, disability, motherhood, sexuality and other essentialist categories. Intersectionality must be recognized as a key concept and acknowledged when analyzing speech-communication acts through both rhetorical and linguistic frameworks.
Bonnie J. Dow and Celeste M. Condit, in the 2005 article “The State of the Art in Feminist Scholarship in Communication,” reinforce the importance of recognizing intersectionality in the studies of rhetoric and linguistics: “… the earlier era, in which sex or gender were taken to be simple, highly coherent variables based on invariant characteristics that were uniform within groups, has passed” (454). In a similar vein, Mari Mikkola, author of “Elizabeth Spelman, Gender Realism, and Women,” explains that “Women can experience their social positions in any number of different ways and their social positions may affect and shape their identities or sense of selves as women in numerous different ways” (87). Jefferts Schori, then, cannot be understood as the proto-typical woman, because there is no such woman. The speech of Jefferts Schori must be understood as not simply the rhetoric of a “woman,” but the rhetoric of this particular woman, who happens to be white, highly educated and middle class.

Similarly, the speech patterns of Nancy Pelosi and Ruth Bader Ginsburg must be viewed through the lens of intersectionality. It is helpful, from a research perspective, to note that these three women share similar traits: all are white, all are highly educated, all are middle-class, all are married, all are mothers, and all are of the same generation. Nonetheless, these shared traits do not render unto us a seamless, uniform set of research subjects. Each woman remains an amalgamation of personal experiences, and “case studies represent the most effective way of empirically researching the complexity of the way that the intersection of categories are experienced in the subject’s everyday lives” (Valentine 14-15). Therefore, disparities arising between communication styles may not be gender-based, but might arise as a result of other personal variables; at the same time, some of the similarities which arise between the three women are based not solely on their shared womanhood, but on the multiplicity of common characteristics between Jefferts Schori, Ginsburg and Pelosi. Throughout this work I refer to
“gender-markers,” as traditionally delineated by Lakoff; however, I also work, especially in the sections relating to the double-bind, to maintain a level of awareness of the intersectionality of the subjects of this study, and the reality of multiple variables impacting their rhetorical practices.

Along with the importance of acknowledging the intersectionality of the orator when looking at a speech act, the situation, or “kairotic moment” in which the act takes place must be viewed as fundamental to understanding the approach the speaker utilizes. The construct of the “kairotic moment” stirred debate as early as 386 B.C.E., when Plato argued with Isocrates over absolute versus situational truth. Plato believed that rhetoric which relies upon the situation or the “kairos” is false rhetoric, while Isocrates argued in favor of “provisional truth” or “probable knowledge” (Bizzell and Herzberg 28). Rhetorical scholars today, such as Sharon Crowley and Debra Hawhee, acknowledge the validity of the concept of kairos:

We believe, along with the sophists [of which Isocrates was one] that the world is always changing and that knowledge itself is full of contraries and is never certain… Kairos points to the situatedness of arguments and the ways in which different arguments depend on many forces: the rhetor’s political views, her past experiences, her particular stance on the issue at the time she composes a discourse, and the views of her audience at that time and place (40).

While the situation is always a factor in the rhetorical act, there are times when the kairos – the time, the place, the audience, the genre of the speech act itself - dictates performance to a degree that the rhetor’s speech is significantly affected.
To better understand this distinction, consider the typical Sunday sermon. The setting and the genre, the time and the audience, all influence the preacher’s rhetoric. However, over a series of Sunday mornings, the rhetoric may be more or less similar in style. Then, imagine a Sunday morning following a Saturday in which tragedy strikes the congregation: for example, imagine that the church is struck by lightning. This Sunday morning, then, is notably different from those that have preceded and will follow.

In the same vein, there are three notable examples of the impact of audience, occasion and genre in Jefferts Schori’s rhetorical performances in the speeches examined in this chapter. First, distinctive differences in negotiating the double-bind emerge based upon her audience; secondly, the gravity of the occasion impacts her approach; and finally, the distinctive genres of sermon and interview yield dissimilar results. These examples are examined more closely in these concluding paragraphs, and I will re-visit these ideas in subsequent chapters.

The more familiarity a rhetor has with her audience – the more she trusts that the speaker and audience share an understanding of the validity of the speaker – the less the speaker employs rhetorical maneuvers to justify her presence and escape the double-bind. Obviously, Jefferts Schori was significantly more concerned with escaping the double-bind in both her opening sermon and in her interview with Lawson than she was in her Maundy Thursday sermon to her own congregation.

However, the Maundy Thursday sermon is preached at a time of such situational gravity that neither masculine nor feminine speakers would likely employ the technique of humor with any degree of success. On the other hand, a circumstance such as the first sermon to be preached by any given bishop offers enough flexibility for humor or a lack thereof to comfortably surface. Therefore, we may not judge Jefferts Schori’s lack of humor on Maundy Thursday as very
telling, while we may look with a more critical eye at her approach to humor in the other two instances examined in this chapter.

As opposed to both the Maundy Thursday sermon and her first sermon as presiding bishop, the interview situation allows for the emergence of rhetorical gender-markings which may not manifest themselves as clearly in a prepared text. For example, there are considerably fewer hedges and intensifiers in Jefferts Schori’s prepared texts than in the more extemporaneous setting of the oral interview. In Jefferts Schori’s first sermon as presiding bishop she includes only one hedge; in her interview, there are eleven hedges.

Throughout both sermons and the interview, however, Jefferts Schori’s intense relationship to nature emerges. Intentionally or not, this may be a way of dealing with the double-bind by leveling the “playing field,” so to speak. Jefferts Schori utilizes the trope of nature to establish an ethos which bridges gender, class, race, sexuality and ethnicity. Valentine writes that “particular identities become salient or foregrounded at particular moments” (15). When Jefferts Schori introduces nature into her rhetoric, she foregrounds the similarities, rather than the differences, between people. In line 103 of the interview, she identifies herself not as a woman, a mother, an educated individual or a person who is white: instead, Jefferts Schori refers to herself as “a creature in the midst of the natural created order.”

In the following chapters, I will offer a textual analysis of three rhetorical acts by Nancy Pelosi and Ruth Bader Ginsburg, respectively. We will see how each of these speakers are similar and different not only within their own practices over time and situational context, but also how in similar situations – such as their first speeches after appointment – their speeches are similar or different to those of each other and of Katharine Jefferts Schori. Larger and less tentative conclusions may be drawn based upon the evidence which follows.
CHAPTER THREE:

THE RHETORIC OF RUTH BADER GINSBURG

ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

Introduction and Chapter Format

Ruth Bader Ginsburg attended Harvard Law School and graduated from Columbia Law School, where she was a member of the law review and tied for first in her class. However, Ginsburg, who was born in 1933 and graduated from law school in the 1950s, faced a unique set of problems, according to a biographical website provided by the Supreme Court: “Although she had superior academic credentials, Ginsburg received no job offers from New York law firms, nor was she able to obtain a clerkship interview with a Supreme Court justice. As she has recalled, her status as ‘a woman, a Jew, and a mother to boot’ was ‘a bit much’ for prospective employers in those days,” (Ruth Bader Ginsburg).

Ginsburg persevered, and following a successful career as both a judge and a law professor - the first tenured female law professor at her alma mater, Columbia - in 1993, at the age of sixty, she became the second woman (following Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, appointed in 1981) to hold the position of Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. As a life-long champion of the rights of women, at her confirmation hearings Ginsburg “dispelled any doubts about her commitment to a woman's reproductive choice. She characterized a woman's right to choose an abortion as ‘something central to a woman’s life, to her dignity... And when government controls that decision for her, she's being treated as less than a full adult human being responsible for her own choices’” (Ruth Bader Ginsburg). It is no accident that Ginsburg is an advocate for the rights of women. As her biography explains,
Her personal encounter with the special obstacles faced by women attempting to combine career and family coincided with a professional awakening. In the early 1960s, prompted in part by her reading of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, Ginsburg recognized that the second-class treatment she had experienced was a symptom of a larger problem--social conditions that denied women choices and opportunities open to men. The law, she believed, should aid in redressing these inequities (Ruth Bader Ginsburg).

In 2007, after nearly fourteen years on the bench, Ginsburg is the only woman amongst the nine jurists. Sandra Day O’Connor retired in early 2006, leaving Ginsburg once again in the unique position to which she became accustomed throughout her trail-blazing career: she speaks the lone woman’s voice in the masculine world of the U.S. Judicial System. In this chapter, I will examine and analyze three samples of her rhetoric as she negotiates this phallocentric terrain.

The first speech, from 1993, is Ginsburg’s acceptance speech upon nomination for the Supreme Court by President William Jefferson Clinton. The second speech is a minority decision which, uncharacteristically, she both authored and orated in early April of 2007 in the case of *Gonzales v. Carhart* and *Gonzales v. Planned Parenthood*. The final rhetorical sample is the transcript of an interview, conducted with Nina Totenberg in May of 2002 on the “Now with Bill Moyers” program on PBS.

These samples span fourteen years and three distinctive genres, providing a rich and varied tapestry through which to view Ginsburg’s speech. Each sample is analyzed, once again, in light of the rhetorical framework of the double-bind and the linguistic framework of feminine language markers. As in chapter two, each rhetorical sample is followed by sections “A” and “B,” wherein “A” is “Negotiating the Double-Bind” and “B” is “Examining the Speech for
Feminine Gender-Markings.” The chapter concludes with a section which reviews the findings from each sample and constructs tentative hypotheses based upon similarities and disparities between the samples.

“When Daughters are Cherished as Much as Sons”:

Remarks Following the Nomination to the Supreme Court

On June 15, 1993, President William Jefferson Clinton publicly nominated Ruth Bader Ginsburg to become the 107th Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, thereby filling the seat of retiring Justice Byron White (“The Supreme Court”). Clinton introduced Ginsburg to the audience, including “Congress and other interested Americans,” and spoke briefly about the constitutional right of the President to appoint members of the Supreme Court and the importance of that responsibility before moving into a biographical sketch of Ginsburg’s life and work. Clinton offered up high praise for Ginsburg on both a personal and professional level, declaring that “People will find, as I have, that this nominee is a person of immense character… Throughout her life, she has repeatedly stood for the individual, the person less well off, the outsider in society, and has given those people greater hope by telling them that they have a place in our legal system” (“The Supreme Court”).

Immediately following Clinton’s introduction, Ginsburg moved to the podium and began the following speech, accepting the President’s nomination. The audience which Ginsburg faced, including Congress, had a vested interest in her words: while the President has the power to nominate individuals for the Supreme Court, it is ultimately the United States Senate which will confirm that nomination after a series of hearings later in the summer. In a very real sense, this is
the first opportunity Ginsburg has to present herself to the individuals who will ultimately decide if she is to be confirmed as the 107th Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

Mr. President, I am grateful beyond measure for the confidence you have placed in me, and I will strive with all that I have to live up to your expectations in making this appointment.

I appreciate, too, the special caring of Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the more so because I do not actually know the Senator. I was born and brought up in New York, the state Senator Moynihan represents, and he was the very first person to call with good wishes when President Carter nominated me in 1980 to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Senator Moynihan has offered the same encouragement on this occasion.

May I introduce at this happy moment three people very special to me: my husband, Martin B. Ginsburg, my son-in-law, George T. Spera Jr., and my son, James Steven Ginsburg.

The announcement the President just made is significant, I believe, because it contributes to the end of the days when women, at least half the talent pool in our society, appear in high places only as one-at-a-time performers. Recall that when President Carter took office in 1976, no woman ever served on the Supreme Court, and only one woman, Shirley Hufstedler of California, then served at the next Federal court level, the United States Court of Appeals.
Today Justice Sandra Day O'Connor graces the Supreme Court bench, and close to 25 women serve at the Federal Court of Appeals level, two as chief judges. I am confident that more will soon join them. That seems to me inevitable, given the change in law school enrollment.

My law school class in the late 1950's numbered over 500. That class included less than 10 women. As the President said, not a law firm in the entire city of New York bid for my employment as a lawyer when I earned my degree. Today few law schools have female enrollment under 40 percent, and several have reached or passed the 50 percent mark. And thanks to Title VII, no entry doors are barred.

My daughter, Jane, reminded me a few hours ago in a good-luck call from Australia of a sign of the change we have had the good fortune to experience. In her high school yearbook on her graduation in 1973, the listing for Jane Ginsburg under "ambition" was "to see her mother appointed to the Supreme Court." The next line read, "If necessary, Jane will appoint her." Jane is so pleased, Mr. President, that you did it instead, and her brother, James, is, too.

I expect to be asked in some detail about my views of the work of a good judge on a High Court bench. This afternoon is not the moment for extended remarks on that subject, but I might state a few prime guides. Chief Justice Rehnquist offered one I keep in the front of my mind: a judge is bound to decide each case fairly in a court with the relevant facts and the applicable law even when the decision is not, as he put it, what the home crowd wants.
Next, I know no better summary than the one Justice O'Connor recently provided drawn from a paper by New York University Law School Prof. Bert Neuborne. The remarks concern the enduring influence of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. They read: "When a modern constitutional judge is confronted with a hard case, Holmes is at her side with three gentle reminders: first, intellectual honesty about the available policy choices; second, disciplined self-restraint in respecting the majority's policy choice; and third, principled commitment to defense of individual autonomy even in the face of majority action." To that I can only say, "Amen."

I am indebted to so many for this extraordinary chance and challenge: to a revived women's movement in the 1970's that opened doors for people like me, to the civil rights movement of the 1960's from which the women's movement drew inspiration, to my teaching colleagues at Rutgers and Columbia and for 13 years my D.C. Circuit colleagues who shaped and heightened my appreciation of the value of collegiality.

Most closely, I have been aided by my life partner, Martin D. Ginsburg, who has been, since our teen-age years, my best friend and biggest booster, by my mother-in-law, Evelyn Ginsburg, the most supportive parent a person could have, and by a daughter and son with the tastes to appreciate that Daddy cooks ever so much better than Mommy and so phased me out of the kitchen at a relatively early age.

Finally, I know Hillary Rodham Clinton has encouraged and supported the President's decision to utilize the skills and talents of all the people of the United States. I did not, until today, know Mrs. Clinton, but I hasten to add that I am not the first member of my family to stand close to her. There is another I love dearly to whom the First Lady is
already an old friend. My wonderful granddaughter, Clara witnessed this super, unposed photograph taken last October when Mrs. Clinton visited the nursery school in New York and led the little ones in "The Toothbrush Song." The small person right in front is Clara.

I have a last thank-you. It is to my mother, Celia Amster Bader, the bravest and strongest person I have known, who was taken from me much too soon. I pray that I may be all that she would have been had she lived in an age when women could aspire and achieve and daughters are cherished as much as sons. I look forward to stimulating weeks this summer and, if I am confirmed, to working at a neighboring court to the best of my ability for the advancement of the law in the service of society.

Thank you.
Kathleen Hall Jamieson references Ruth Bader Ginsburg repeatedly in her 1995 book Beyond the Double Bind: Women and Leadership. In fact, the index notes nine separate occasions upon which Jamieson refers to Ginsburg throughout the course of the work (278). Throughout this analysis of Ginsburg’s negotiation of the double-bind, I consistently reference Jamieson’s work as a foundation for my own research. At the time of Jamieson’s writing, Ginsburg had completed her first two years as a Justice on the United States Supreme Court and, from this vantage point, she was and is one of the “women in power [who] are using their voice in the cause of women” (Jamieson 98).

As the second woman on the bench, Ginsburg is presented with a unique opportunity to demonstrate that not all women in leadership roles – in fact, not even the very exclusive group of women who are appointed to the Supreme Court – are the same. As Jamieson notes, “These appointments convey many messages. One is that women are not cut from identical bolts of cloth. The appointment of Ruth Bader Ginsburg to the Supreme Court gives those seeking female role models a second there, different in style, temperament and ideology from the first” (142). It is interesting and informative to take a closer look at Ginsburg’s first speech following her nomination by President Clinton to the Supreme Court, and examine the various points at which this powerful leader works to negotiate the double-bind.

The speech begins with Ginsburg expressing her gratitude to President Clinton, and then to Senator Moynihan, both of whom are supporting her nomination (lines 1-9). However, immediately following this show of appreciation, Ginsburg pauses to introduce the family members who are present with her: her husband, Martin, her son-in-law George Spera and her son, James. This introduction of her family at the beginning of her speech presages four more
separate instances throughout the course of the talk during which Ginsburg refers to her family, for a total of five times in less than seventy-one lines of text. This is a significant rhetorical move on Ginsburg’s behalf in relationship to the double-bind. As Jamieson notes, words can be reclaimed and recast so that one is “transforming handcuffs into credentials”: Jamieson quotes Mary Boyle, the May 1994 candidate in the Democratic primary for the Ohio Senate, whose campaign stressed the fact that “the Senate doesn’t need any more millionaire lawyers…what it needs is more moms” (192-3). Likewise, Jamieson explains that not only the concept of the mother but also that of the grandmother, an extension of the “acceptable” role of mother, can be recast and reclaimed. “By acting in unexpected ways,” posits Jamieson, “‘grandmothers’ are startling audiences into rethinking the stereotypes and moving beyond the categories available to classify women” (160).

Ruth Bader Ginsburg is “playing the mother, wife and grandmother card” – not to mention the use of her roles as daughter, daughter-in-law, and even mother-in-law! – in this speech. A close look at the four instances wherein she mentions her family reveal a woman who works to convince her audience that, while she may be a powerful judge vying for a seat on the highest court in the country, she is still adept at maintaining at least somewhat of a comfortable, traditional gender-role. This reassures her audience, and relaxes them: after all, who doesn’t trust a grandma?

Ginsburg’s first reference to her family (not including the introduction) occurs in lines 28-33, when she mentions her daughter Jane, who is in Australia at the time of the speech, but has called earlier to wish her mother well. Ginsburg employs humor, a masculine-gendered language technique, (which will be further discussed in the following section) to recount her daughter’s conversation, and then she makes mention of her son, James, as well. Clearly, she
indicates that both of her children are pleased with their mother’s nomination, and this mention of their approval cements the trope of Ginsburg as the “good mother.”

Twenty lines later, Ginsburg further develops her familial role by elucidating her position as not just a mother, but also a wife, and the wife of a husband who is her “best friend and biggest booster” (line 54). Obviously, her husband is also pleased with her nomination, if he is her “booster,” therefore enabling Ginsburg to be both a “good wife” (the traditional role of pleasing her husband) and a solid nominee. Ginsburg continues this rhetorical thread by explaining that not only is her husband encouraging her, but even her mother-in-law is “the most supportive parent a person could have” (line 55). Then she returns to mentioning her children in lines 55 and 56, (note that this is the third time she has mentioned her children since the beginning of the speech), utilizing a rhetorical device which serves to undermines the double-bind in a particularly effective way: she re-appropriates gender roles in a gentle, self-effacing manner. “Daddy cooks ever so much better than Mommy,” quips Ginsburg, “and so [they] phased me out of the kitchen at a relatively early age” (lines 56-57).

First, Ginsburg praises her husband: it isn’t that she can’t cook, but rather, here it is the case that her husband can cook “ever so much better” (line 56). The unspoken insinuation is that if her husband can cook better than she can – if he can successfully overturn the stereotype and function well in a kitchen – then certainly she can function as a judge. The invalidation of one stereotype begets another, and the fact that her children are the witnesses, indeed the very ones who realized that Daddy could cook better than Mommy, and presumably they still recognize her as a “good mother,” further justifies the presence of Daddy in the kitchen and Mommy in the courthouse.
The third reference to family comes on the heels of the second; in lines 60-65, Ginsburg recounts her “wonderful granddaughter Clara’s” meeting with Hillary Rodham Clinton a few months earlier. Ginsburg asserts that Clara is one whom “I love dearly” (line 61). Ginsburg’s establishment of herself in the role of not only mother, but also grandmother, is a rhetorical move which supposedly increases her credibility, as Jamieson notes, albeit in regard to politicians: “female politicians are capitalizing on our positive associations with the role of grandmother” (160). Ginsburg is careful to provide details, proving that not only is she a grandmother - she is an involved grandmother. She knows exactly what Mrs. Clinton and the children sang when she visited Clara’s classroom in October – it was “The Toothbrush Song” (line 64).

Finally, in the closing lines of her speech (lines 66-69; the speech concludes with line 71), Ginsburg mentions her relationship with her mother, who died while she was still in high school (“Ruth Bader Ginsburg”). Ginsburg explains that her mother was “taken from me much too soon,” and then goes on to say that “I pray that I may be all that she would have been had she lived in an age when women could aspire and achieve and daughters are cherished as much as sons” (lines 67-69). At this point, not only is Bader Ginsburg invoking her role as daughter, she also rebukes the notion of the “zero-sum game.” As Jamieson explains, “From Eve to Hillary Clinton, debates over equality versus difference presupposed that empowering women disempowers men. Male-female relationships, in this construction, are a zero-sum game. If I win, you lose, and vice-versa” (110).

Ginsburg insists that this is not the case: the victory of one gender does not necessitate the demise of another. A daughter is to be cherished as much as, not more than, a son. Since Ginsburg herself is the mother of both a daughter and a son, each of whom seem supportive of their mother, this statement possesses extraordinary resonance. According to Jamieson, “Ruth
Bader Ginsburg built her legal career on the argument that equality was not a zero-sum game... men as well as women were advantaged by equal treatment under law” (111). If equality is truly such a preeminent tenet of Ginsburg’s ideology, it is not surprising that Ginsburg would employ her finest rhetorical techniques, stressing her fitness as a woman and as a judge to undo the double-bind cast upon her. In this closing paragraph she utilizes not only her familial role but also a disavowal of the “zero-sum game” in order to escape the double-bind. Ginsburg proves to her listeners that she is a woman, and a judge, and she excels in both roles.

Although this speech is heavily-laden with references to family, the above-discussed rhetoric does not comprise the totality of Ginsburg’s rhetorical efforts to untangle the double-bind. There are four other clear instances of rhetoric used to dismantle the challenge of being both a woman and a Supreme Court Justice. Several times, Ginsburg uses “recounting,” a form of narrative storytelling, and here I examine two of those instances (Jamieson 195). Once, Ginsburg uses the presence of another woman as an example for herself to follow, and in lines 34-47 Ginsburg expounds upon what it means to be “a good Judge on a High Court bench,” calling upon the wisdom of others. A closer look at each of these four instances follows.

Recounting, or narrative storytelling, “has been a form open to and rewarded in women. Whether the process occurs in a boardroom or at the bedside of a child, a woman telling a story is, so to speak, in a traditional sphere” explains Jamieson (195). Importantly, Jamieson goes on to note that this approach “subtly addresses the femininity/competence bind”; while discussing the rhetoric of Ginsburg and Janet Reno, Jamieson concludes that “both identify with their maternal heritage and employ the story form. While the narratives personalized the speaker, the principles educed from them tied otherwise private experience to the public role for which the nominee was being considered” (196). Essentially, in the two examples of recounting which we
look at next, Ginsburg is explaining that she is both feminine (as traditionally defined) and competent.

In lines 23-27, soon-to-be-Justice Ginsburg reminds her audience of the difficult path set before her when she graduated from law school in the late 1950’s. The very brief yet specific story Ginsburg shares helps the audience to grasp in real-life terms the situation faced by female lawyers less than half-a-century earlier. Her class included less than ten women out of five hundred graduates, and “not a law firm in the entire city of New York bid for my employment as a lawyer when I earned my degree” (lines 24-25). Ginsburg goes on to state that female enrollment at most law schools is now much closer to the fifty-percent mark and “no entry doors are barred” (line 27). This narrative reinforces the claims made by scholars Jane Blankenship and Deborah C. Robson, who concluded that “a feminine style exists, characterized by, among other features, a grounding of political judgment in lived experience,” (Foss, Foss and Griffin 21). Rhetorical scholar Gloria Anzaldua complements the conclusion of Blankenship and Robson when she advises rhetors that “To touch more people, the personal realities and the social must be evoked - not through rhetoric but through blood and pus and sweat” (83). Clearly, Ginsburg speaks of blood and pus and sweat: she tells how a young woman that no law firm would hire became a nominee for the U.S. Supreme Court. Her rhetoric is valued and she maneuvers through the double-bind as she speaks from not only a theoretical but also a praxiological framework.

Immediately upon the conclusion of this brief narrative Ginsburg launches into another vignette, this time involving her daughter, Jane Ginsburg. In 1973, when Jane graduated from high school, she listed “to see her mother appointed to the Supreme Court” as her ambition, and then, to add a humorous twist, pledged that “if necessary, Jane will appoint her” (lines 31-33).
While this simple anecdote calls to mind Ginsburg’s role as mother, which was discussed earlier, it also serves to remind researchers that “theorizing experience as we tell narrative, we have a sharper, keener sense of the end that is desired by the telling (hooks 61). Although Ginsburg’s narrative is not explicitly theorized during the speech, it offers the audience two perspectives: first, it is the daughter who promises to appoint the mother if need be. This demonstrates the daughter’s at least superficial claim to power – if no man will appoint her mother, then she, the young woman, will do it. The audience sees an eighteen-year-old female high school graduate who lays claim to the possibility that she could be the one to appoint a Supreme Court Justice: in other words, Jane could be the President. Of course, the reality is not that Jane has become President, but perhaps a twin perspective that would have been deemed equally as unlikely is presented: a President, a man, has seen fit to appoint “Jane’s mother” to the Supreme Court.

Of course, “Jane’s mother” is not the first woman to serve on the Supreme Court of the United States, and Ginsburg utilizes this fact as another way to untangle the double-bind. In lines 19-22, Ginsburg refers to Justice Sandra Day O’Connor who “graces the Supreme Court bench," and the “close to 25 women who serve at the Federal Court of Appeals level, two as chief judges.” This rhetorical technique of justifying her own presence by pointing to the women who go before her and stand alongside her is useful in escaping the double-bind. In essence, Ginsburg is employing an enthymeme – a proof - explaining that if these other women could hold such positions (and remain women) so too can she (Aristotle 226). In mathematical terms, if woman = A, and Judge = B, and O’Connor is both A and B, then Ginsburg, who is also “A” can also be “B.”

The final rhetorical technique that Ginsburg employs to deal with the double-bind occurs in lines 34-47. At this point in the speech, Ginsburg turns to her “prime guides” who provide her
words of wisdom on the actions of a “good judge on a High Court bench” (lines 34-35).

Ginsburg references not just O’Connor, but also Chief Justice Rehnquist and NYU Law School Professor Bert Neuborne’s description of the “enduring influence” of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. Such a rhetorical move hearkens back to Aristotle’s advice in *Rhetoric*: “If you cannot find enough to say of a man himself, you may pit him against others… the comparison should be with famous men; that will strengthen your case” (200). Ginsburg subtly compares herself to Oliver Wendell Holmes, by acknowledging his judicial approach and offering her comment on it: “Amen” (line 47). The audience registers this comparison, and as they begin to equate Ginsburg with Holmes – or at least her approach with the approach of Holmes – the double-bind begins to slip away.

**Section 1B: Examining the Speech for Feminine Gender-Markings**

**Tag questions:** In this carefully prepared speech, there were no tag questions present. However, there were two instances of the use of *empty adjectives*, and both occurred near the end of the speech, in lines 61 and 62, when Ginsburg speaks about her granddaughter, Clara. Ginsburg refers to her granddaughter as one whom she loves “dearly” in line 61, and then she calls her “my wonderful granddaughter” in line 62. Each of these words could likely be construed as more feminine than neutral or masculine, even though they don’t appear as such on Lakoff’s original list.¹⁴iv (45).

**Women’s words:** There are no references to colors in this speech, although there are two occurrences of what might be labeled “women’s words.” The first occurs near the beginning of the speech, when Ginsburg mentions her appreciation for the support of Senator Moynihan. She refers to this support as “special caring,” which seems to be feminine turn-of-phrase. Likewise,

¹⁴iv Lakoff does include “Oh, dear!” as a typical feminine utterance.
near the end of the speech, Ginsburg refers to “the little ones” rather than “the children” (line 64). This familiar term for children seems to indicate a closeness to them which is feminine in nature.

**Use of intensive so:** Ginsburg uses the “intensive so” three times in the course of this speech. First, she uses it in line 32, when she discusses her daughter’s attitude toward the nomination: “Jane is *so* pleased.” The “intensive so” is used again in line 48, when Ginsburg is thanking “*so many*” for “this extraordinary chance,” and then she uses it again in line 56 when explaining that “Daddy cooks ever *so* much better than Mommy.”

Along with the use of so, Ginsburg frequently employs what are known as “empty adverbial intensifiers” or “boosters.” “Boosters” fall in between the category of “hedge words,” “politeness devices,” and the “intensive so” – they seek to increase politeness by unnecessarily intensifying a statement, such as “that was a *very* wonderful evening” and are indicative of feminine speech patterns as defined by Lakoff (Holmes 73). Throughout the acceptance speech, Ginsburg uses these boosters only in the beginning: she refers to Senator Moynihan as someone she does not *actually* know (line 5) and then she refers to him as “the *very* first person to call” (line 6). In line 10, when Ginsburg introduces her family, she refers to them as “*very* special to me.” While no other boosters appear in the speech, there are a multitude of politeness devices which emerge, most notably the words she chooses to express her effusive gratitude.

**Politeness devices and hypercorrect grammar:** There are five instances of extreme politeness and hypercorrect grammar within Ginsburg’s acceptance speech. In the very first line, she addresses President Clinton with the words “I am grateful beyond measure” and then continues to assure him, and the audience, in line 2 that she “will strive with all that I have to live up to your expectations.”
In line 10, Ginsburg introduces her family, but does so in a super-polite and overly formal manner: “May I introduce at this happy moment three people very special to me…” In line 48, Ginsburg once again offers fulsome thanks to her audience: “I am indebted to so many for this extraordinary chance and challenge…” Notably, in both lines 10 and 48, the politeness devices are coupled with the hedge and booster words “very” and “so.” This coupling of two feminine speech patterns seems to intensify the gendered nature of the oratory, and will be further examined in the following rhetorical samples and explored in the conclusion to this chapter.

Ginsburg’s final politeness device occurs in line 60 when she discusses Mrs. Clinton, and the relationship the First Lady shares with Ginsburg’s granddaughter, Clara. “I hasten to add,” Ginsburg states, “that I am not the first member of my family to stand close to her [Mrs. Clinton].” Although this politeness device does not occur in the same sentence as another feminine gender-marker, the very next line includes the use of the word “dearly” as mentioned above.

**Hedge words:** Hedge words or phrases, which along with boosters “express[ed] a lack of confidence and reflect[ed] women’s social insecurity” appear three times in Ginsburg’s speech (Holmes 73). In line 13, Ginsburg qualifies her statement, or hedges, by using the phrase “I believe”: “The announcement the President just made is significant, I believe, because…” Obviously, the sentence would have functioned without this hedge, but it does serve to “soften the effect of the utterance” (Holmes 73).

Ginsburg employs the same type of hedge in line 21, when she first expresses her confidence “that more will soon join” the women who serve at the highest levels of the U.S. Justice system. “That,” says Ginsburg, “*seems to me* inevitable…” Finally, in line 36, Ginsburg
explains that “this afternoon is not the moment for extended remarks” regarding her views of the work of a “good judge on a High Court bench”: “but I might state,” she continues, and then offers up a few pertinent examples. “I might state” is a hedge which could have been re-phrased more strongly, in a masculine speech pattern, as “Here are three examples.” “I might state” serves, once again, to “soften” the speech in the feminine-style.

**Humor:** There are two humorous anecdotes within the speech, and both revolve around Ginsburg’s family. In both instances, the masculine speech-pattern of humor is juxtaposed with the feminine speech-subject of family. Lines 28-33 include the story of Jane’s yearbook entry which is discussed at length in section 1A: Jane’s ambition is to see her mother on the Supreme Court, and if necessary, Jane will appoint her. In lines 56 and 57, the humor involves the typical female trope of the “woman in the kitchen,” and Ginsburg overturns the stereotype by crediting her children with the realization that “Daddy cooks ever so much better than Mommy and so phased me out of the kitchen at a relatively early stage.” The humor here lies in the fact that “Mommy was phased out” – she didn’t leave, but was rather removed in order to allow a more capable cook to take over: in this case, a man.

In the speech sample which follows, however, there is little room for humor. Fourteen years have passed since Justice Ginsburg accepted the nomination to the Supreme Court. She is now the solitary woman serving in this capacity, and the issue at hand is the right of individual states to prohibit women from having late-term abortions, *even* in the case of serious health risks. Five of the justices have ruled that it is lawful for the states to enact such legislation: Ginsburg and three others have dissenting opinions. Here, Ginsburg writes *and* reads the dissenting opinion which she composed on behalf of the four justices who disagree with the majority ruling.
Fourteen Years Later: The Woman of the Court Speaks

The text of the dissenting opinion in Gonzales v. Carhart and Gonzales v. Planned Parenthood as read by Justice Bader Ginsburg

Four members of this Court, Justices Stevens, Souter, Breyer and I, strongly dissent from today’s decision.

Fifteen years ago, in Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey, the Court declared that “[I]liberty finds no refuge in a jurisprudence of doubt.” There was, the Court said, an “imperative” need to dispel doubt as to “the meaning and reach” of the Court’s 7-to-2 judgment, rendered nearly two decades earlier, in Roe v. Wade. One of the clarifications Casey provided concerned the State’s unconditional obligation to safeguard a woman’s health. At all stages of pregnancy, the Court reconfirmed, state regulation of abortion procedures must protect “the health of the woman.”

In reaffirming Roe, the Casey Court described the centrality of “the decision whether to bear . . . a child” to a woman’s “dignity and autonomy,” her “destiny,” her “conception of . . . her place in society.” Challenges to undue restrictions on abortion procedures, the Court comprehended in Casey, do not seek to vindicate some vague or generalized notion of privacy. Rather, they home in on a woman’s autonomy to decide for herself her life’s course, and thus to enjoy equal citizenship stature.

In keeping with this understanding of the right to reproductive choice, we have consistently required that laws regulating abortion, at any stage of pregnancy and in all cases, safeguard not only a woman’s existence — her life — but her health as well.

Faithful to precedent unbroken from 1973 until today, the Court held seven years ago in Stenberg v. Carhart, that a state statute banning the very procedure at issue today — intact
D&E — was unconstitutional in part because it lacked a health exception. If substantial medical authority maintains that banning a particular abortion procedure could endanger women’s health, we held, a health exception cannot be omitted by the legislators.

Despite our unambiguous ruling, Congress passed the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act — without an exception for women’s health, a ban that would operate nationwide. After lengthy trials and thorough review of volumes of medical evidence, each of the District Courts to consider the statute found that it was unconstitutional for the same reason:

Significant medical authority identified intact D&E as the safest procedure for some women.

In an alarming decision, the Court today reverses the judgments other federal courts have uniformly made. Today’s decision refuses to take Casey and Stenberg seriously. The Court’s opinion tolerates, indeed applauds, federal intervention to ban nationwide a procedure found necessary and proper in certain cases by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. For the first time since Roe, the Court blesses a prohibition with no exception protecting a woman’s health.

The Court asserts that its ruling furthers the Government’s interest in “promoting fetal life.” But the Act scarcely furthers that interest, for it targets only a method of abortion. The woman may abort the fetus, so long as her doctor uses another method, one her doctor judges less safe for her. The Court further pretends that its decision protects women. Women might come to regret their physician-counseled choice of an intact D&E and suffer from “[s]evere depression and loss of esteem,” the Court worries. Notably, the solution the Court approves is not to require doctors to inform women adequately of the different procedures they might choose, and the risks each entails. Instead, the Court
shields women by denying them any choice in the matter. This way of protecting women
recalls ancient notions about women’s place in society and under the Constitution —
ideas that have long since been discredited.
If there is anything at all redemptive about today’s opinion, it is that the Court is not
willing to foreclose entirely a challenge to the constitutionality of the Act. But the “as-
applied challenge[s] in discrete case[s]” the Court would allow put women’s health in
danger and place doctors in an untenable position. Even if courts were able slowly to
carve out health exceptions for “discrete and well-defined instances” through hard fought,
protracted piecemeal litigation, women whose circumstances have not been anticipated
by prior litigation could well remain unprotected. In treating those women, physicians
would risk criminal prosecution, conviction, and imprisonment if they exercise their best
judgment as to the safest medical procedure for their patients. The Court is thus gravely
mistaken to conclude that narrow, as-applied challenges are “the proper manner to protect
the health of the woman.”
As the Court wrote in *Casey*, “overruling Roe’s central holding would not only reach an
unjustifiable result under principles of stare decisis, it would seriously weaken the
Court’s capacity to exercise the judicial power and to function as the Supreme Court of a
Nation dedicated to the rule of law.” Although today’s opinion does not go so far as to
discard Roe or *Casey*, the Court — differently composed than it was when we last
considered a restrictive abortion regulation — is hardly faithful to *Casey*’s invocations of
“the rule of law” and the “principles of stare decisis.”
In candor, the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, and the Court’s defense of it, cannot be
understood as anything other than an effort to chip away at a right declared again and
again by this Court — and with increasing comprehension of its centrality to women’s
lives. A decision of the character the Court makes today should not have staying power.
Section 2A: Negotiating the Double-Bind

On April 17th, 2007, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg not only offered up a written copy, but also “took the unusual step of reading,” the dissenting opinion of the court in the cases of Gonzales v. Carhart and Gonzales v. Planned Parenthood (“Supreme Court Watch”). The opinion of the court in these cases allows for a state to ban “partial-birth abortions,” technically known as “D & E’s” with “no exception protecting a woman’s health” (line 37). Ginsburg is one of four justices who disagree with the majority opinion.

As the only woman on the nine-member U.S. Supreme Court, Ginsburg faces a unique double-bind as she talks about the rights of women to have the option of a partial-birth abortion to protect their health. First of all, she must work upon the assumption that, even in the midst of this court decision which clearly undermines a woman’s rights, the majority of her audience grants her, as a woman, the basic right to speak. It is quite possible that some of her detractors will dismiss her viewpoint summarily because they do not grant her legitimacy as a judge or a speaker in the public sphere. Ginsburg utilizes a number of rhetorical techniques to assure that even as a woman – perhaps especially as a woman – her voice on this matter will be heard.

Immediately, Ginsburg establishes that she is not alone in her minority opinion: she is one of four justices, the other three male, who disagree with the court’s ruling (line 3). Therefore, she assures her listeners that this is not an issue decided solely by the gender of the justice; it is more complex than that. In lines 5-17, Ginsburg calls upon the voices of her forebears to shore up her position: she recites a list of precedents which the court has neglected to follow here, beginning with Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey and continuing on to recall Roe v. Wade. In the case of Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey, only one justice was female: Sandra Day O’Connor, and in the case of Roe v. Wade, all nine of
the justices were male ("U.S. Supreme Court"). With the use of these references, Ginsburg reassures her audience that the issue has not been determined based upon the gender of the members of the court. Therefore, if any listeners do not trust Ginsburg as a speaker because she is a woman, they have no reason not to trust the men to whose wisdom she cleverly salutes.

In lines 16 and 17 Ginsburg notes that these past decisions “home in on a woman’s autonomy to decide for herself her life’s course, and thus to enjoy equal citizenship stature.” Ginsburg echoes here a familiar American trope: the Declaration of Independence, which begins with the words “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness…” (“Declaration of Independence”). The 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which ensured women’s suffrage, was one step toward changing the ubiquitous “men” to the more inclusive “men and women,” as portended in the “Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions” at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 (Ritchie and Ronald, 138-39). The audience to whom Ginsburg speaks has been immersed in a culture that at least superficially values equality, and she calls upon this common American theme to work her way out of the double-bind. She reminds her listeners that not only should the issue at hand be examined in light of the promise of full citizenship for men and women, but also the very presence of her female body at the microphone ought to be accepted, as she too is a citizen in full.

Lines 18-26 of Ginsburg’s dissenting opinion echo the first portion of the piece: she turns again to citing a prior ruling to buttress her position, this time a ruling with which she herself was involved, Stenberg v. Carhart. In lines 23-25, Ginsburg turns not only to the prior court decisions as a dependable source of authority, but she also enlists the considerable influence of the medical community, stating that “If substantial medical authority maintains that banning a
particular abortion procedure could endanger women’s health, we held, a health exception cannot be omitted by the legislators.” Furthermore, Ginsburg notes that “each of the District courts” are in agreement with the minority opinion in the current case because “significant medical authority identified D & E as the safest procedure for some women” (lines 28-31).

Ginsburg’s methodology, which consists of compiling authorities, many of them male, who are in agreement with her decision, allows her to escape the double-bind in a manner which is grounded in historical precedent. Over the course of centuries, women who were silenced found the power to speak by invoking the words of male authorities, or, the more inarguable authority: God.

For example, Margaret Askew Fell turned to God as her authority, refusing to “justify her public speaking” through the “inherently humble” role of a prophet, “implying… that she would subside when the divine spirit left her” (Bizzell and Herzberg 751). Pointedly, Fell declares “Mark this, you that despise and oppose the message of the Lord God that he sends by women, what had become of the redemption of the whole body of mankind, if they had not believed the message that the Lord Jesus sent by these women [Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the Mother of James and other witnesses of the resurrection]?” (Bizzell and Herzberg 754). In Fell’s estimation, the Scriptures prove that if women had not spoken, all of mankind might be unredeemed. Centuries later, Sojourner Truth would echo these words in her Speech at the Woman’s Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio, reminding her listeners: “Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman. Man had nothing to do with him” (Ritchie and Ronald 145).

Invoking the authority of a man – or of God – worked well for Fell and Truth, and Ginsburg employs the same rhetorical technique hundreds of years later to navigate the double-
bind into which she has been thrust. She calls upon the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists in lines 35 and 36, and in the collective American conscious, “doctors,” especially a large group of them, are god-like figures. Here, Ginsburg calls upon the highest authority she can marshal without slipping from the realm of the secular into that of the sacred.

At this point, a little more than halfway through her opinion, Ginsburg has both invoked authorities such as previous courts, different courts, or medical professionals, and called upon the trope of America as a land dedicated to freedom and equality. In lines 47-49, Ginsburg combines the two: she names the Constitution (where before it has only been alluded to) as an authority in which the trope of freedom is made explicit. “This way of protecting women,” writes Ginsburg, expounding upon the idea of shielding women from making their own choice, “recalls ancient notions about women’s place in society and under the Constitution – ideas that have long since been discredited.” In the closing lines of the opinion Ginsburg reiterates her argument, explaining that the court’s decision cannot be understood as “anything other than an effort to chip away at a right declared again and again by this Court – and with increasing comprehension of its centrality to women’s lives” (lines 68-70). This powerful image of “chipping away” at rights which previous courts have upheld is Ginsburg’s final attempt to undo the double-bind. Although it sounds unpleasant, Ginsburg understands and utilizes the fact that men have granted her the authority to speak, and now she lays claim to that authority and speaks on behalf of the women who depend upon her voice.

Section 2B: Examining the Opinion for Feminine Gender Markings

Tag questions: This decision, as written and read by Justice Ginsburg, is devoid of tag questions. In fact, not one sentence within the manuscript ends with a question mark. Likewise, there are no
empty adjectives or women’s words within the text, and Ginsburg never uses the intensive so throughout the sixty-eight lines of speech. When evaluated using these four linguistic constructs, Ginsburg’s linguistic performance in this speech is decidedly “masculine” in flavor: not at all surprising, considering the genre - a legal setting, a public decision, traditional courtroom oratory as performed by men. As Helene Cixous explains, “nearly the entire history of writing is confounded with the history of reason… it has been one with the phallocentric tradition” (878). Suzanne Romaine points out that this phallocentric tradition can be used advantageously: “women use standard speech to gain respect and exert influence on others” (179). It certainly seems that Justice Ginsburg has made the decision on this occasion to engage the phallocentric tradition and use a standard (and therefore masculine) linguistic approach in order to gain the approval of her listeners.

Politeness devices and hypercorrect grammar: The grammar throughout the decision is precise and correct. Although there are no instances of “please” or “thank-you” in the speech, the tone is polite: as would be expected in a professional setting such as the U.S. Supreme Court, there are no obscenities hurled despite the inflammatory nature of the subject at hand. However, underneath the polite veneer, the speaker clearly expresses her agitation. In line 4, Ginsburg notes that she, along with three other justices, “strongly” dissent, and in line 34 Ginsburg calls the decision of the court “alarming.” Ten lines later, Ginsburg states that “the court further pretends that its decision protects women” and in lines 57-58 Ginsburg concludes that “the court is gravely mistaken.” Although Ginsburg adheres to traditional forms of politeness, this civility does not preclude the Justice from offering succinct criticism. The speech ends on a clear note of vigorous dissent: “In candor,” says Ginsburg, “the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, and the Court’s defense of it, cannot be understood as anything other than an effort to chip away at a
right declared again and again by this Court — and with increasing comprehension of its centrality to women’s lives. A decision of the character the Court makes today should not have staying power” (lines 68-70).

Janet Holmes, in her work on gender and politeness, reports that “women tend to soften their disagreeing utterances more often than men” and “men seemed more willing than women to disagree baldly” (64). In this carefully prepared speech, Ginsburg in no way lessens or “softens” her disagreement with the five men who comprised the majority in this ruling. Instead, she forcefully expresses her dissent, employing a “masculine” approach in this traditional courtroom-speech genre.

There are no hedge words, nor is there any humor, in this rhetorical presentation. The absence of hedge words is considered a masculine linguistic move, while the lack of humor is ascribed to a feminine linguistic pattern. However, in a speech of this genre, few people of either gender would be likely to employ humor; therefore, it is not likely the result of a feminine linguistic approach, especially considering the overall masculine approach which the speaker has maintained in relation to the other linguistic markers.

This rhetorical example affirms an important tenet of linguistics research: context, and genre, is of paramount importance and must be accounted for in all studies. As Camille Roman, Suzanne Juhasz and Cristanne Miller remind readers in The Women & Language Debate: A Sourcebook, “empirical research has demonstrated that people do not speak the same way all the time and in every context” and, furthermore, “one must qualify generalizations that women speak one way, and men another” (267). In this genre, Justice Ginsburg adopts a more “masculine” approach. As is evidenced from her first speech sample, and as will be witnessed in the interview which follows, this is not her approach in every setting.
The following interview took place in May of 2002, after Ginsburg had been serving on the court for slightly less than a decade. The occasion for the interview is the forthcoming book, *Some Memories of a Long Life*, for which Ginsburg has written the forward. The text, which was discovered by Ginsburg during the course of her research on women who have been involved with the Supreme Court, is a 200-page memoir written by Malvina Harlan, wife of Justice John Harlan, who served on the Supreme Court in the years following the Civil War until 1911 (“Now with Bill Moyers”). During the course of the interview Ginsburg has the opportunity to discuss not simply the court at the present time and her work therein, but also the impact women have had in the past, including women such as Malvina Harlan.

**The Transcript of the “PBS NOW” Interview of Ruth Bader Ginsburg (2002)**

1 NARRATOR: Once again, Bill Moyers.

2 MOYERS: As the first tenured female professor at Columbia Law School, she made a name for herself challenging discrimination against women.

3 Twenty years later, Ruth Bader Ginsburg herself overcame the glass ceiling to become the second female appointed to the Supreme Court.

6 NPR's Nina Totenberg has covered the Supreme Court for over 25 years. She talked recently with Ruth Bader Ginsburg about the issues facing the court today, as well as its long and rich history.
NINA TOTENBERG: On the walls of the Supreme Court there are paintings of men — 129 in all. There are only four portraits of women, all wives of former justices. None of this has escaped the notice of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

A long-time advocate for women's rights, Justice Ginsburg recently set out to learn more about the women behind the men who served on the court. Along the way, she stumbled upon a 200-page memoir written by Malvina Harlan, wife of Justice John Harlan. He served in the years following the Civil War until 1911.

Next week, Malvina's memoirs will be published under her designated title, SOME MEMORIES OF A LONG LIFE. Justice Ginsburg has written the forward.

GINSBURG: She is a woman of her time, and she sees her primary job, building up her husband's career. Everything that she can do for him, she does, and yet she has a certain sense of herself.

TOTENBERG: Malvina Harlan married John Harlan when she was 17, and her mother gave her an instruction that I'd venture to say very few mothers would give today: "His interests are your interests; his home is your home; his life is your life."

GINSBURG: "You will have no other." Yes.

TOTENBERG: The memoir begins with Malvina, the daughter of an anti-slavery family becoming the teenage bride of John Marshall Harlan, a slave-owner.
The book moves through their marriage, the hardships of the Civil War, and Harlan's eventual appointment to the Supreme Court, where he authored opinions that continue to influence civil rights law, even today.

GINSBURG: John Marshall Harlan is an interesting character because he starts out as a slave owner. He fights with the Union Army in the Civil War because Kentucky, although a slave state, was devoted to the Union. And in the process, becomes more and more interested in promoting the equality ideal.

TOTENBERG: In her memoir, Malvina describes her own very subtle influence on her husband. On one occasion, she even helped crack his writer's block. In 1875, Congress passed a law banning racial discrimination in public places — from restaurants to trains. Later, the Supreme Court struck down that law.

Harlan was the lone dissenter, and was having trouble putting his argument into writing, so to give him inspiration, Malvina unearthed an old inkwell used to pen the notorious Dred Scott decision, the decision that upheld slavery. She placed the inkwell on his desk.

GINSBURG: And then she said that her husband, when he saw that inkwell and recalled the part that it had played in the retaining the shackles of slavery, she said that that made his thoughts just fly. And he wrote and he wrote, and he soon finished his dissenting opinion.

TOTENBERG: Not that the Harlans were civil rights proponents in the modern sense.
GINSBURG: It's a portrait of the time. Now, Malvina came from an abolitionist family, but even she had attitudes that today we would regard as unthinkable. There was no question in her mind or her husband, John's, that there was a superior race. They believed in formal equality, but they didn't believe in mixing of the races on the same plane in a social setting.

TOTENBERG: Even so, John Marshall Harlan's dissents articulated the idea that the law should be colorblind, an idea eventually adopted some 75 years later.

He is famous for his dissents. Why are Supreme Court dissents important?

GINSBURG: Dissents speak to a future age. It's not simply to say my colleagues are wrong and I would do it this way, but the greatest dissents do become court opinions.

TOTENBERG: Tell me, how do you feel when you are on the dissenting side? Are you ever angry?

GINSBURG: Not angry, but disappointed... Both disappointed and hopeful, because some of my favorite opinions are dissenting opinions. I will not live to see what becomes of them, but I... I remain hopeful.

TOTENBERG: On today's Court, the Justices are split, 5-4, on a variety of issues, and more often than not, Justice Ginsburg is among the four.
I am wondering if today, when there are so many important decisions on this court that are decided by a 5-4 vote, I wonder if you think it harms the respect for the Court that it's often a 5-4 decision.

GINSBURG: It shows the security that we now have in the place of the Court in the nation. Most courts abroad do not publish dissents. They don't even indicate that there was any dissenting vote.

TOTENBERG: While Justice Harlan's dissents are well known to history, his political career before becoming a judge is less celebrated.

GINSBURG: He ran for governor, I think, in 1871 and 1875, and then, in 1877, he got a better job; he was appointed to the Court.

But he describes these campaigns: he and his opponent would ride horseback together to the various locations where they would then debate, and they would have a debate. One day one would go first and the other would follow, and the next day it was the reverse. But they stayed at the same boarding house on the way, and sometimes they slept in the same bed.

TOTENBERG: I don't think our politics is quite like that anymore.

Back in Malvina Harlan's day, the Presidential election that was too close to call was not Bush vs. Gore, but Hayes vs. Tilden. The similarities are eerie. For in 1876, as in 2000, the votes in Florida were also critical and contested. In the Hayes-Tilden election, though, the winner was ultimately picked not by the Supreme Court, but by a specially appointed
commission, something that Justice Ginsburg, in her vehement dissent in Bush vs. Gore, pointed out to her colleagues.

GINSBURG: It was Congress that provided for that commission.

TOTENBERG: The point being that Congress can resolve these things?

GINSBURG: It did in that instance. In fact, it provided a law that was supposed to guide similar controversies in the future, a law that provided for a decision by Congress.

TOTENBERG: You know, when Bush vs. Gore was being decided and when it was decided, there was a lot... Well, there were some very hard words in the majority, dissent, et cetera, in the footnotes to each other. And there was a great effort, then, on the on the part of some members of the Court to say, "Oh, we never disagree in bad humor."

But why shouldn't you disagree in bad humor? The whole rest of the country was having a bad humor about this election. Why shouldn't you?

GINSBURG: One thing is what you read in the opinions, and that's a lot of the Justice's personal style.

You won't find that kind of thing in my opinions, and maybe they make for dull reading, but I would rather just concentrate on the arguments and not have distracting denunciations of my colleagues.

Some of my colleagues who are given to spicy remarks, their opinions perhaps make more interesting reading, but whatever the tensions were that day of the Bush vs. Gore
decision, we knew that we had to come together for the January sitting that was fast
approaching, and that all of us really do prize this institution more than our own egos.

TOTENBERG: You know, one of the things about the Harlan memoir that's interesting to
me is she talks a lot about the work of the Court in some ways and what's going on in the
world.

There's no discussion of capital cases at all, I assume because they were just accepted as
the way. You know, capital punishment was very much a widely accepted practice in that
day, and of course, it's... the Court has ruled capital punishment to be Constitutional.

In your confirmation hearing, you said that was accepted, but I'm wondering whether
those cases take a toll on you at all.

GINSBURG: They take a terrible toll, and I expect they always will. I was a judge for 13
years before my appointment to the court, but I sat on the U.S. Court of appeals for the
District of Columbia Circuit. We had no death penalty in the district, and so this was a
whole new experience for me.

The first time I was part of this process, it was a bloody murder. It was just a horrendous
crime. But I stayed up past the hour that the execution occurred and I cried. And then I
was over it, and there was the next day.

I don't cry anymore, but I still... every time I'm part of that process, I am unsettled,
unsettled by it.

TOTENBERG: And do you think all of your colleagues react that way?
GINSBURG: Probably some are satisfied that it's the will of the people — the people want a death penalty, they'll have it. If they don't want it, they won't have it — that it isn't our job to make that decision.

TOTENBERG: You know, Justice Ginsberg, Malvina Harlan lived in a time of great peril for this country during the Civil War and the years afterwards. One might say that this is a similar time, in some ways. And I wonder if you've thought at all recently about the role of the Supreme Court at a time like this, when we are improvising new ways of doing investigations, new ways of doing... handling immigrants, new ways of all kinds of things.

GINSBURG: The Chief Justice has written a book about civil liberties in wartime — civil liberties, or the lack thereof — and that book cites one example after another of how the finest minds were willing to sacrifice the liberties we hold dear in the face of a war. Lincoln was the most notable. He suspended the writ of habeas corpus. Civilians were tried in military tribunals. But on the other side for him was the preservation of the union, and he thought that had to go before everything else. One can hope that we will learn from the history of the past.

TOTENBERG: For the most part, Malvina Harlan was only able to watch history being made. Just a few generations later, Ruth Bader Ginsburg was able to help shape it. As a young law professor, she was among the first to challenge in court laws that discriminated against women.
When you started out, you started doing what you called gender discrimination cases. It was an idea whose time really had not come yet.

You had graduated first in your class from a prominent law school, and yet there were no big law firm jobs. There were no... there was no Supreme Court clerkships offered, but you came up with an idea that you were simply determined about.

GINSBURG: Nina, I certainly didn't come to that alone. I had much help, and it started in the 60s. It's a notion quite different from race discrimination.

Not a right discrimination, not of an inferior race, but as women being delicate creatures who needed to be cared for by men, who needed to be put on a pedestal.

So there were all these barriers to women doing this, that, and the other thing that were rationalized as favors to women.

Who wants to serve on juries? Women don't have to serve on juries.

Who wants to work in a bar? We're going to spare women from that.

All those protections were really barriers to women who said, "We should be able to choose the work that we think we're able to do."

TOTENBERG: As we've talked about, Malvina Harlan was a woman of a different era, a different role of women in American society. Do you think she would like what's happened to the role of women?

GINSBURG: I think so. I think she would say, "Yes, that's fine."
Section 3A: Negotiating the Double-Bind

In this interview, the issue of the double-bind is foregrounded, although it is not specifically labeled as such. In the opening lines, Bill Moyers introduces Ginsburg as “the first tenured female professor at Columbia Law School” who “overcame the glass ceiling to become the second female appointed to the Supreme Court” (lines 2-5). While the interview is supposedly concerned with “the issues facing the court today, as well as its long and rich history,” the content deals less with the variety of issues facing the court and more with the place of women in society, specifically through the lens of a recent book which was recovered and published by Ginsburg (lines 7-8).

Nina Totenberg, who conducts the interview, begins by making explicit the unusual position which Ginsburg occupies: “On the walls of the Supreme Court there are paintings of men – 129 in all. There are only four portraits of women, all wives of former justices” (lines 9-11). Evidently, the space in which Ginsburg works is masculine; she is surrounded by men – there are those eight who sit on the bench, and an additional hundred and twenty-nine who hang on the wall.

However, Ginsburg, “a long-time advocate for women’s rights” is aware that for millennia women have elided the double-bind through “putting words in the mouths” of men. This technique was used as early as 440 B.C.E. by Aspasia of Miletus, in Athens, whose words emerged from the mouths of some of the great orators of her time: Pericles and Plato, among others (Bizzell and Herzberg 58). While no fragments of Aspasia’s “own” writing remain, she is immortalized through the words of Socrates, and “if indeed she did teach Socrates the so-called Socratic method, her contribution to the history of both philosophy and rhetoric is far-ranging” (Bizzell and Herzberg 59, Glenn, “Rhetoric Retold” 41). Bearing in mind the influence which
women yielded over the men in their lives, Ginsburg “set out to learn more about the women behind the men who served on the court” and in so doing she “stumbled upon a 200-page memoir written by Malvina Harlan, wife of Justice John Harlan… Malvina’s memoirs will be published under her designated title ‘Some Memories of A Long Life’” (lines 12-17). Malvina Harlan, like Aspasia and a multitude of others, did the best she could to express her voice through her only available means: the men in her life. Unlike Aspasia, Harlan’s own writing does remain, and Ginsburg makes it her mission to enable Harlan to speak, finally, for herself. In so doing, Ginsburg illuminates not only the historical reality of the double-bind, but also the way in which Ginsburg herself has managed to overcome it.

In lines 18-31, Totenberg and Ginsburg discuss a bit about the content of Harlan’s book. Following a brief biographical sketch of Harlan, Totenberg notes that “Malvina describes her own very subtle influence on her husband… Congress passed a law banning racial discrimination in public places… the Supreme Court struck down that law… Harlan was the lone dissenter, and was having trouble putting his argument into writing…” (lines 34-40). At that moment Malvina employed visual rhetoric to influence her husband: she placed an inkwell on his desk (line 40). The inkwell, which had been used to “pen the notorious Dred Scott decision [that upheld slavery]” provided for Justice Harlan exactly the inspiration he needed (lines 40-42). Malvina explained that the inkwell “made his thoughts just fly… And he wrote and he wrote, and he soon finished his dissenting opinion” (lines 42-44). Malvina was not in a position to speak to her husband about the opinion, much less the court: but through that old inkwell, her voice was heard, and the double-bind, if not shattered, was at least cast aside for a moment.

It isn’t until more than fifty lines later when Ginsburg once again addresses the issue of the double-bind, and this time it is explicitly in relationship to herself. When Totenberg asks why
the current justices don’t “disagree in bad humor,” Ginsburg responds “you won’t find that kind of thing in my opinions, and maybe they make for dull reading, but I would rather just concentrate on the arguments and not have distracting denunciations of my colleagues” (lines 97-99). In this instance, Ginsburg is reaffirming her strong character, her positive ethos: this attempt to justify her position on the court hearkens back to the historical precedent set by women such as preacher Frances Willard (1839-1898) who escaped the double-bind of silence or shame by claiming that the role into which they have been unwillingly cast – that of moral superior and nurturer - provides them with the perfect potential to provide solace to an ailing public beset with the problems of patriarchy. Frances Willard was a prime example of a woman who overcame the double-bind, and likewise Ginsburg promotes her unimpeachable character as hard evidence for her propriety in the role of Supreme Court Justice. Ginsburg will not impugn her fellow justices: her ethics will not allow for it.

In lines 116 and following Ginsburg again displays her “feminine” side in a positive, ethical light. When asked about the death penalty, Ginsburg explains that “The first time I was part of this process, it was a bloody murder. It was just a horrendous crime. But I stayed up past the hour that the execution occurred and I cried. And then I was over it, and there was the next day. I don’t cry anymore, but I still… am unsettled by it” (116-120). Shedding tears, which is typically feminine-marked activity, is here enlisted in the service of the double-bind. Not only is this Justice compassionate to the extent that she can shed tears over the death of a murderer, she is also resilient enough to get “over it, and there was the next day.” This combination of compassion and toughness is an attractive juxtaposition. Mayhead and Marshall write about such combinations in regard to the rhetoric of women in politics, noting “the evolution of women’s political discourse from simply ‘feminine’ in style and content to a more gender-neutral rhetoric
that occupies and androgynous in-between space” (18). When Ginsburg lays claim to an ethos which is feminine – crying – with masculine undertones – she “got over it” – her character appears to be quite balanced: as the character of any Justice should be.

At the end of the interview, Totenberg summarizes: “For the most part, Malvina Harlan was only able to watch history being made. Just a few generations later, Ruth Bader Ginsburg was able to help shape it…” (lines 138-139). Ginsburg responds to Totenberg’s remarks by noting that she had “much help” in her journey to the Supreme Court, and then Ginsburg addresses the double-bind directly.

“Women,” Ginsburg explains, “[were thought of as] being delicate creatures who needed to be cared for by men, who needed to be put on a pedestal. So there were all these barriers to women doing this, that, and the other thing that were rationalized as favors to women” (lines 149-152). Ginsburg gets to the heart of the matter: women are thought of as delicate. This delicacy precludes certain activities, and if the delicacy is absent, the absence precludes womanhood. Therefore, it is impossible to simultaneously be female and strong. Ginsburg herself is the antithesis of this double-bind: clearly, she is a woman and her position is one of power and competence. Even as Ginsburg explains the double-bind, she disempowers it, and never more precisely than in lines 155-156 when she states: “All these protections were really barriers to women who said ‘We should be able to choose the work that we think we’re able to do’.” Ginsburg has overcome the barriers and done just that: she chose the work that she wanted to do.
Section 3B: Examining the Interview for Feminine Gender-Markings

An interview situation, unlike a prepared speech or written judicial opinion, leaves less opportunity for carefully prepared linguistic patterns. Instead, in the interview, more “natural” patterns of speech, conversational in tone, are likely to emerge. In the following paragraphs, the text of Ginsburg’s interview with Totenberg is examined for feminine-gender markings.

Tag questions: This interview is devoid not only of tag questions, but also of empty adjectives, women’s words and the intensive “so.” The only word, or phrase, which could potentially be conceived of as “feminine” is in line 149, when Ginsburg refers to the misconception of women as “delicate creatures.” Likewise, throughout the interview, Ginsburg is polite, but her responses to the questions put before her are not sprinkled with “please” or “thank you.” In the same vein, her grammar is proper, but not to the extent where it becomes noticeable; to conclude that her conversation is “marked” with politeness devices and hypercorrect grammar would be an exaggeration. Neither are there any “boosters,” such as “very” or “actually,” which appeared in her acceptance speech, the first sample in this chapter.

The primary “feminine linguistic marker” which occurs throughout the duration of the interview are hedge words. In fact, as the interview goes on, and Ginsburg seemingly “relaxes” in the presence of her interviewer, the hedge words become more frequent: perhaps Ginsburg “lets down her guard” and allows her personal, rather than professional, persona to emerge as her level of comfort increases. This is ironic since “hedge words,” according to Robin Lakoff, serve the purpose of protecting the speaker and “give the impression that the speaker lacks authority” which leaves the speaker “far less vulnerable to an attack” should the statements be later disproved (79). Repeating a phrase for the purpose of emphasis can serve the same purpose: a speaker, unsure that the audience’s trust in her words, repeats them. In the case of this interview,
there are three instances of this repetition: in lines 32 and 33, Ginsburg notes that Harlan became “more and more interested” in promoting equality. In line 41, Ginsburg again describes Harlan with a repetitive linguistic device: in this case, he “wrote and wrote.” Finally, in lines 119 and 120, when discussing the death penalty cases, Ginsburg notes that she is “unsettled, unsettled.”

Along with these repetitive devices, Ginsburg hedges with words such as “just,” “maybe,” “perhaps,” “probably,” and “I think.” “Just” appears in line 43 and again in line 116; “maybe” is present in line 97, when Ginsburg states that “maybe” her opinions make for dull reading, and then she notes in line 100 that “perhaps” her colleagues’ writing makes for “more interesting reading.” In line 122, Ginsburg says that “probably” some of her colleagues are satisfied that the death penalty is the “will of the people.” The most frequent hedge Ginsburg uses is “I think,” and she uses it three times. The first occurrence is in line 71, when Totenberg asks when about Harlan’s political career: Ginsburg responds “He ran for governor, I think, in 1871 and 1875…” The final two incidences of the “I think” hedge occur together, which is doubly impactful, since the feminine-marked device of repetition is coupled with the hedge. Interestingly, this occurs in the last line of the interview. Ginsburg, when asked by Totenberg whether or not Malvina Harlan would “like what’s happened to the role of women,” responds that “I think so. I think she would say, ‘Yes, that’s fine’” (line 160). At this point, Ginsburg is asked to literally “put words in the mouth” of Malvina Harlan, and clearly she hedges here, while trying to provide an honest answer. Since it is impossible for Ginsburg to know what Harlan would say given the opportunity, she lays claim to the hedge and at the same time offers respect for Harlan: Ginsburg protects her own integrity, and Harlan’s, by twice including “I think.”

Humor: While there is no explicit humor in the text of the interview, Ginsburg does reveal a sardonic wit when speaking about the role of women in society. “Who wants to serve on juries?”

“We’re going to spare women from that,” Ginsburg explains as the rationale for the multiple barriers put in place to provide “protection” for women (line 154). This mordant repartee reveals Ginsburg’s view of the irony of the situation, and demonstrates that her sense of humor, albeit restrained, is intact.

Conclusions: Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Supremely Adaptable Rhetorician

As I mentioned in the conclusion to the previous chapter, it is not possible nor is it wise to make broad-based rhetorical claims on the merits of three samples, such as those analyzed in this chapter. Not only would such sweeping generalizations lack integrity in relationship to the rhetoric of Justice Ginsburg, they would also risk ignoring the intersectionality which affects all speakers and verge on essentialism. However, like the observations drawn from the rhetoric of Bishop Jefferts Schori, these rhetorical moments do provide a thought-provoking glimpse into the oratory of Justice Ginsburg, the sole female member of the U.S. Supreme Court, now in the midst of her fourteenth year on the bench.

Linguistics and feminine language markers aside, Ginsburg demonstrates a remarkable rhetorical range and a multiplicity of techniques for undoing the double-bind. Capable of laying claim to the kairos of the moment, Ginsburg employs diverse strategies to gain the attention and respect of her audience. In Revisionary Rhetoric, Feminist Pedagogy and Multigenre Texts, Julie Jung refers to the “fact” that “our ‘authentic’ voices change, depending upon the contexts in which we speak” and Ginsburg exemplifies this construct (81).

The three samples here offer a window into the variety of approaches Ginsburg uses, and how her “authentic voice” and approach changes: first, in her nomination acceptance speech, she
relies upon the trope of family, and her role within it, to validate her viability for service on the Supreme Court. In a completely dissimilar genre, the dissenting opinion, Ginsburg draws upon the authority placed upon her not by her family but by her male colleagues and forebears in order to escape the double-bind. Finally, in the third rhetorical sample, the interview, Ginsburg addresses the double-bind directly, referencing not only herself, but the historical figure of Malvina Harlan, wife of Supreme Court Justice John Marshall Harlan. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg possesses a keen awareness of not just the existence of the double-bind, but also how to escape it under various conditions.

Alongside a rhetorical analysis of her speech patterns, it is informative to study the linguistic moves which Ginsburg employs in these three samples, particularly in relation to what are considered by Lakoff to be markers of feminine-gendered language. Across these three quite disparate genres, Ginsburg is much more consistent in her linguistic approach than in her rhetorical approach. While her rhetoric shifts considerably, always in order to undo the double-bind, her linguistic style is much more stable. Tag questions, empty adjectives and “women’s words” are either completely absent or scarce in all three of the speech samples, despite the range of situations presented. On the other hand, the “intensive so” is present in the acceptance speech and absent in the other two rhetorical samples. It is possible to conjecture that time may play a role in this variation: the acceptance speech was nine years prior to the interview, and preceded the decision by fourteen years. However, to further that hypothesis, it would be necessary to examine a more recent rhetorical moment in a similar genre, since it very well could be the genre driving the use of “intensive so” rather than the time period in the speaker’s life.
Hyper-correct grammar and politeness are present in each of the discourse samples, yet it is possible that all of these moments are examples take place in formal, public settings. While the settings differ, and neither the audience nor the person of the speaker is “stable,” each of these events is “public” enough to demand a rather high degree of formality in communication-style. It would be a fallacy, then, to extrapolate a “feminine-gender marking” from a kairotic moment which would demand formality of any speaker.

Hedge words, another linguistic marker identified as “feminine” are present in both the interview and the acceptance speech, and absent in the dissenting opinion. The opinion, which is clearly a legal document, provides little room for hedging: this is the place in which a rhetor is expected to express his or her opinion without hedging, and Ginsburg conforms to that expectation. However, in the less constrictive rhetorical space of the interview and the speech, Ginsburg has a bit less of a formula to follow, and as a result, hedges appear, particularly in the interview in which she talks about another woman – not wishing to speak for this woman, she hedges when asked what this counterpart from an earlier time would have to say.

Some of the many interesting questions which arise from this analysis of hedge words are the following: is Ginsburg so adept at oration that she knows when to slip in and out of “feminine language?” Is this rhetorical and linguistic adaptability, in part, what has enabled her to become powerful? Lakoff claims that “women are systematically denied access to power, on the grounds that they are not capable of holding it as demonstrated by their linguistic behavior” (42). Is it Ginsburg’s demonstration of linguistic capability – the fact that she can drop all feminine-gender linguistic markings if need be, as evidenced in the dissenting opinion – the reason she has gained access to power? If Ginsburg insisted on “hedging” in the traditional patriarchal discourse of the legal opinion, would she have been banished long ago from such a
position of power? Do the male justices on the court “play by these same rules” – simply put, would they also use “hedge words” in personal interviews or speeches, while eliminating them in legal opinions? While I can answer none of these questions based upon this research, they have fascinating implications for the continuing study of gender, power and language, and I will look further at these queries in the final chapter, when the information from chapters two, three and four is compiled and mined for additional insights.

The final feminine gender-marking which was explored in these three speech-samples was the use of humor. As expected, Ginsburg did not use humor in the dissenting opinion, although, unexpectedly (according to the theory of “feminine language”) Ginsburg did use humor in her nomination acceptance speech. In the interview, she turned a bit sardonic for a moment, but remained generally serious and succinct in her responses to the questions asked.

In the next chapter, Nancy Pelosi’s rhetorical and linguistic patterns will be examined, again bearing in mind the limitations of the analysis. In the final chapter, the overall findings will be looked at side-by-side, to see if they present connections worthy of further study.
CHAPTER FOUR:  
THE RHETORIC OF NANCY PELOSI  
SPEAKER OF THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  

Introduction and Chapter Format

Nancy D’Alesandro Pelosi of the 110th Congress is the first female Speaker of the United States House of Representatives since its inception in 1789, when Frederick A. C. Muhlenberg of Pennsylvania originally served in that capacity (“House Journal”). Furthermore, Pelosi, who has served continuously since her election in 1987 as the U.S. Representative from California’s eighth district (San Francisco), is the first female member of any major political party to occupy one of the three chief roles: President, Vice-President or Speaker of the House (“Women’s Political Discourse”). She is “two heartbeats away” from the U.S. Presidency, which is the highest position a female has occupied to date.

However, Pelosi did not come to this position without foremothers who traveled ahead of her: Pelosi’s journey to the House of Representatives follows in the footsteps of and has been shared by a multitude of women throughout the past ninety years, beginning with Jeannette Rankin, a Montana Republican who served in the 65th congress from 1917-1919 (“Women Representatives”). Today, a total of seventy-four women, including Pelosi, serve in the four-hundred-and-thirty-five member House, bringing the percentage to just over seventeen female and just under eighty-three percent male (“Women Representatives”). Obviously, a disparity still exists, and yet it is markedly diminished from the day when Jeannette Rankin was the sole female member of that branch of congress, serving as a “token woman” among men who had not yet granted women the right of suffrage.
In the early years of women serving as representatives in the U.S. House, “the belief shared by most… female contemporaries on the Hill—Democrat and Republican—[was] that the surest way for women to attain power and influence in Congress was to work within the prescribed system to mitigate gender differences” (“I’m No Lady”). This was reflected in the language women chose: they tried to emulate men, and eschewed traditional feminine trappings. For example, Mary Norton, who served in the early mid-1920’s, “rebuffed a male colleague” when he “deferred to her as a ‘lady’ during a debate”: “‘I’m no lady, I’m a Member of Congress,’ Norton replied,” thereby creating, or reinforcing, the binary of lady/Congressmember – one or the other, but not both (“I’m No Lady”). As women became more of a commonplace in the U.S. House, “that belief would be subsequently reevaluated and challenged” - perhaps one could be feminine, or “ladylike,” and simultaneously a member of Congress (“I’m No Lady”).

Nancy Pelosi is now, in some ways, in the place of Jeannette Rankin: she is the first woman in her position. Will she enact, through her language, the more feminine traits which women have supposedly reclaimed as Congresspeople, or will she instead try to retain her newfound power and influence by emulating a masculine style? Prior to Pelosi’s selection as Speaker of the House, political discourse analysts Mayhead and Marshall wrote, in regard to Pelosi’s rhetoric, that “it is important to note that she [Pelosi] speaks in terms neither masculine, nor feminine… her language span gender and class boundaries” (86). This chapter will further examine this claim.

Three speech samples are examined in the following pages: the first is Pelosi’s speech upon receiving the gavel and the position of Speaker of the U.S. House in early January of 2007; the second is a eulogy delivered at the funeral service of Parren Mitchell in June of 2007; and
finally, the chapter concludes with a Newsweek/MSNBC interview from October 2006, shortly before Pelosi became Speaker of the House.

Although these samples are all taken from a relatively condensed time-span of four years, there are three distinctive genres and audiences. Each sample is analyzed, once again, in light of the rhetorical framework of the double-bind and the linguistic framework of feminine language markers. As in chapters two and three, each rhetorical sample is followed by sections “A” and “B,” wherein “A” is “Negotiating the Double-Bind” and “B” is “Examining the Speech for Feminine Gender-Markings.” The chapter concludes with a section which reviews the findings from each sample and constructs tentative connections based upon similarities and disparities between the samples.

**Pelosi Calls for a New America, Built on the Values that Made Our Country Great**

01/04/2007

Washington, D.C. – Speaker Nancy Pelosi spoke on the House floor today, giving opening remarks as the 110th Congress began. Below are her remarks:

“Thank you, Leader Boehner. Thank you, my colleagues. Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speakers.

“I accept this gavel in the spirit of partnership, not partisanship, and I look forward to working with you, Mr. Boehner, and the Republicans in the Congress for the good of the American people.

“After giving this gavel away in the last two Congresses, I am glad someone else has the honor today.”
“In this House, we may be different parties, but we serve one country, and our pride and
our prayers are united behind our men and women in uniform. They are working together
to protect the American people; and in this Congress, we must work together to build a
future worthy of their sacrifice.

“In this hour, we need and pray for the character, courage, and civility of a former Member
of this House, President Ford. He healed the country when it needed healing. This is
another time, another war, and another trial of American will, imagination, and spirit. Let
us honor his memory not just in eulogy, but in dialogue and trust across the aisle.

“I want to join Leader Boehner in expressing our condolences and our appreciation to Mrs.
Ford and to the entire Ford family for their decades of leadership and service to our
country.

“With today's convening of the 110th Congress, we begin anew. I congratulate all
Members of Congress on your election. I especially want to congratulate our new Members
of Congress. Let's hear it for our new Members.

“The genius of our Founders was that every 2 years, new Members would bring to this
House their spirit of renewal and hope for the American people. This Congress is
reinvigorated, new Members, by your optimism and your idealism and your commitment to
our country. Let us acknowledge your families whose support have made your leadership
possible today.

“Each of us brings to this Congress our shared values, our commitment to the Constitution,
and our personal experience. My path to Congress and to the speakership began in
Baltimore where my father was the mayor. I was raised in a large family that was devoutly
Catholic, deeply patriotic, very proud of our Italian-American heritage, and staunchly
Democratic. My parents taught us that public service was a noble calling, and that we had a responsibility to help those in need.

“It is a moment for which we have waited for over 200 years. Never losing faith, we waited through the many years of struggle to achieve our rights. But women were not just waiting; women were working. Never losing faith, we worked to redeem the promise of America that all men and women are created equal. For our daughters and our granddaughters, today we have broken the marble ceiling. For our daughters and our granddaughters, the sky is the limit. Anything is possible for them.

“The election of 2006 was a call to change, not merely to change the control of Congress, but for a new direction for our country. Nowhere were the American people more clear about the need for a new direction than in the war in Iraq.

“The American people rejected an open-ended obligation to a war without end. Shortly, President Bush will address the Nation on the subject of Iraq. It is the responsibility of the President to articulate a new plan for Iraq that makes it clear to the Iraqis that they must defend their own streets and their own security, a plan that promotes stability in the region and a plan that allows us to responsibly redeploy our troops.

“Let us work together to be the Congress that rebuilds our military to meet the national security challenges of the 21st century.

“Let us be the Congress that strongly honors our responsibility to protect the American people from terrorism.

“Let us be the Congress that never forgets our commitment to our veterans and our first responders, always honoring them as the heroes that they are.
“The American people also spoke clearly for a new direction here at home. They desire a new vision, a new America built on the values that have made our country great.

“Our Founders envisioned a new America driven by optimism, opportunity, and courage. So confident were they in the America that they were advancing that they put on the seal, the great seal of the United States: "Novus ordo seclorum," a new order for the centuries. Centuries; they spoke of the centuries. They envisioned America as a just and good place, as a fair and efficient society, as a source of hope and opportunity for all.

“This vision has sustained us for over 200 years, and it accounts for what is best in our great Nation: liberty, opportunity, and justice.

“Now it is our responsibility to carry forth that vision of a new America into the 21st century. A new America that seizes the future and forges 21st-century solutions through discovery, creativity, and innovation, sustaining our economic leadership and ensuring our national security. A new America with a vibrant and strengthened middle class for whom college is affordable, health care is accessible, and retirement reliable. A new America that declares our energy independence, promotes domestic sources of renewable energy, and combats climate change. A new America that is strong, secure, and a respected leader among the community of nations.

“And the American people told us they expected us to work together for fiscal responsibility, with the highest ethical standards and with civility and bipartisanship.

“After years of historic deficits, this 110th Congress will commit itself to a higher standard: pay-as-you-go, no new deficit spending. Our new America will provide unlimited opportunity for future generations, not burden them with mountains of debt.
“In order to achieve our new America for the 21st century, we must return this House to the American people. So our first order of business is passing the toughest congressional ethics reform in history. This new Congress doesn't have 2 years or 200 days. Let us join together in the first 100 hours to make this Congress the most honest and open Congress in history.

“This openness requires respect for every voice in the Congress. As Thomas Jefferson said, "Every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle." My colleagues elected me to be Speaker of the House, the entire House. Respectful of the vision of our Founders, the expectation of our people, and the great challenges that we face, we have an obligation to reach beyond partisanship to work for all Americans.

“Let us stand together to move our country forward, seeking common ground for the common good. We have made history; now let us make progress for the American people.

“May God bless our work, and may God bless America.”
Section 1A: Negotiating the Double-Bind

In the 1981 text *Women and Men Speaking*, Cheris Kramarae speaks of the concern that “by using the words and delivery constructed and valued by males, women would fail to provide the base for a new social system based not on competition and division but on connections between people” (23-4). Kramarae, writing a quarter of a century before Nancy Pelosi would become the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, identified a salient issue for women as they continue to enter traditionally male rhetorical spaces. Kramarae was not the first to posit this claim: she herself mentions Virginia Woolf, Helene Cixous and Adrienne Rich, all of whom note the struggle that women have with entering a discourse which was not of their design (25).

However, not all scholars were in unqualified agreement with Kramarae. Rhetorical scholars such as Jane Blankenship and Deborah C. Robson drew on the work of Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, and in the same year as Jamieson’s *Beyond the Double Bind* was published (1995) they argued in the essay “A ‘Feminine Style’ in Women’s Political Discourse: An Exploratory Essay” that “women understood the multiple binds they faced as they stepped into the public arena and that they were sufficiently astute and resourceful to successfully function within those strictures” (Mayhead and Marshall 16). Certainly, women are operating within the realm of discourse created by men, and yet women – and certain men - bring their distinctive qualities to that discourse and change and shape it patiently, and gradually.

If Nancy Pelosi’s speech is analyzed strictly on the terms of rejecting the entire male discourse paradigm, then it is a certain failure, because she does follow the traditional format of a speech by the Speaker of the House: she stands at the podium, she addresses the audience rather than engaging in conversation, and her words are strong, even masculine, at times (this is discussed further in section 1B). Yet, within this proscribed, formulaic rhetorical moment, Pelosi
manages to re-appropriate bits and pieces of the discourse – she manages to speak in ways that exemplify the often-dismissed feminine values of relationship, family, and faith, and she does so by employing the trope of patriotism in such a way that she makes herself into a more, rather than less, viable political leader. Relationship, family and faith are discussed below as commonplaces which Pelosi employs to work her way through the double-bind.

Susan Gal, in the chapter “Between Speech and Silence: The Problematics of Research on Language and Gender,” writes that “the linguistic form of political meetings defines not how decision making actually occurs, but rather what can be shown ‘onstage’; what can be focused on as the legitimate reality” (Roman, Juhasz and Miller 418). Pelosi brings a new reality to the long-standing political stage, physically and through the words she speaks, and as she does so, the grip of the double-bind begins to fall away.

The “new reality” which Pelosi brings is evident immediately. After offering the customary words of appreciation to her colleagues, Pelosi begins by establishing her focus as one of relationship, and working in harmony to get tasks completed. Her work will be done in “the spirit of partnership, not partisanship,” Pelosi explains, and then graciously acknowledges that she “look[s] forward to working with you, Mr. Boehner, and the Republicans in the Congress for the good of the American people” (lines 5-7).

This theme recurs throughout the speech. In lines 11-19, Pelosi talks about the men and women serving in the military, and offers her condolences to the Ford family on the recent death of Gerald Ford. All the while, she continues to stress the importance of relationship and unity, despite inherent differences: “In this House, we may be different parties, but we serve one country… in this Congress, we must work together to build a future…. in dialogue and trust across the aisle.”
The unspoken reality is that not only are different parties present in the House, but different genders; Pelosi urges the Congress to put aside differences, to concentrate instead on commonalities, and to work to build a better country. Through this coalition-building strategy, Pelosi undermines the double-bind. Simply put, her message is “We are all in this together.” In lines 29 and 30, Pelosi reminds her audience that, despite their diversity, “Each of us brings to this Congress our shared values, our commitment to the Constitution.” Several sentences later, Pelosi names the gender issue at hand, and employs a patriotic ethos to further undo the double-bind: it is “the promise of America that all men and women are created equal” (lines 37-38). Therefore, to question the presence of a female Speaker of the House is to question the equality of men and women – and that reflects an uncertainty about the very “promise of America.”

In addition to the ideograph of relationship, Pelosi also works with the concept of family as a way to move through the double-bind. Her first reference to family is not in regard to her own family, but rather to the mourning family of former President Gerald Ford. Pelosi wishes to lead the House is “expressing our condolences and our appreciation to Mrs. Ford and to the entire Ford family for their decades of leadership and service to our country,” thereby acknowledging that a leader does not work without the support and sacrifice of family (lines 18-20). Immediately after addressing the Ford family, Pelosi turns to the subject of the new members of the House, welcomes them, and again includes the notion of the sustenance of family: “Let us acknowledge your families whose support have made your leadership possible today” (lines 27-28). Using this approach, Pelosi is validating the concept of family. Having established that family was vital for President Ford, as well as for the newly elected members of the U.S. House, then Pelosi can turn to a discussion of her own family, and how her position as a
member of that family contributes to, rather than detracts from, her suitability for the position of House Speaker.

In lines 30 and following, Pelosi introduces the subject of her own family, using the example of her father, an established politician: “My path to Congress and to the speakership began in Baltimore where my father was the mayor. I was raised in a large family that was devoutly Catholic, deeply patriotic... My parents taught us that public service was a noble calling, and that we had a responsibility to help those in need” (emphasis mine). Again, as in the sections dealing with relationships, patriotism emerges as a theme. It was Pelosi’s family, notably her deeply patriotic father, who led her into politics.

Engaging the image of a strong male leader as a role model further solidifies Pelosi’s qualifications for those who might struggle with accepting a female House Speaker. Pelosi’s reference to her father invokes images of a female leader from a much different time: Queen Elizabeth I, daughter of Henry VIII, who ruled as monarch of England for forty-five years, from 1658 until her death in 1603. As the daughter of a powerful male ruler, Elizabeth was “blurring the boundaries between queen and king” and “taking on the persona of a male military commander” (Ronald and Ritchie 48). Perhaps Pelosi is using the same tactic.

Pelosi moves from the position of daughter to that of mother in lines 38-42, extolling the fact that the momentous occasion is one of celebration because “for our daughters and our granddaughters, today we have broken the marble ceiling. For our daughters and our granddaughters, the sky is the limit. Anything is possible for them.” Again, she ties this into the patriotic theme by noting that “we worked to redeem the promise of America that all men and women are created equal” (emphasis mine). By the rhetorical move from “women” to “daughters and granddaughters,” Pelosi personalizes the double-bind. Abruptly, the rupture she has created
as a female Speaker becomes a bastion of potentiality for the children – the daughters and the granddaughters – of those who might question her ascendance. Had Pelosi simply noted that “for women and girls, the sky is the limit,” her speech would have been significantly less effective and personal.

The issue of faith is the final rhetorical commonplace Pelosi uses to undo the double-bind. The double-bind which questions whether a woman can be “good” or “faithful” and also a leader is addressed at length in chapter two, with the discussion of the leadership and rhetoric of Bishop Katherine Jefferts Schori. Of course, it is expected that a Bishop of the Christian church would reference faith, but Pelosi is in a position where the mention of God, faith and prayer is optional. However, Pelosi chooses to make multiple allusions to religion, perhaps to indicate that, as a person of faith, she is to be trusted, regardless of her gender.

In line 11, Pelosi combines a reference to the military, a typically male topic, with the religious subject of prayer: “our prayers are united behind our men and women in uniform.” Then, Pelosi notes that “we need and pray for the character, courage, and civility of a former Member of this House, President Ford” (lines 14-15). In lines 31-32, Pelosi refers directly to her own religious heritage, noting that her family is “devoutly Catholic.” When Pelosi speaks about the progress that women have made, she speaks also in terms of faith: “Never losing faith, we waited through the many years of struggle to achieve our rights… Never losing faith, we worked to redeem the promise of America that all men and women are created equal” (lines 37-38).

The end of the speech, line 90, reinforces the role that religion plays in Pelosi’s rhetoric: “May God bless our work, and may God bless America.” “God bless America” is a commonplace; therefore, not only does Pelosi invoke God’s blessing upon her work and the work of her colleagues, she also echoes a familiar sentiment which reminds her audience that she
is not so different, even though she is a female. She is another one of the many whose voices have intoned “God bless America” throughout the past centuries. She may be a woman, but more importantly, she is an American: and patriotic Americans take pride in the belief that men and women are created equal.

Through the framework of relationship, family and faith, Pelosi employs the trope of patriotism to work through the double-bind. It is no small feat to speak as the first woman in the U.S. House of Representatives, and Pelosi must perform this obligation on terms that may not be wholly her own, or wholly feminist: yet, she works within the rhetorical space she has to re-affirm her right to be where she is, and for others to follow.

Section 1B: Examining the Speech for Feminine Gender-Markings

As might be expected in a carefully prepared speech such as Pelosi’s opening address as Speaker of the House, there are no tag questions: in fact, there are no questions at all throughout the ninety-two line address to fellow members of the U.S. House of Representatives. Likewise, there are no empty adjectives or women’s words in the speech; there are, however, a number of what might be termed “masculine words.”

In line 51, for example, Pelosi urges her colleagues to be the Congress that “strongly honors our responsibility to protect the American people from terrorism” and in lines 70-71, she exhorts them to work toward “a new America that is strong, secure, and a respected leader among the community of nations (italics mine).” “Strength” and “toughness” are recurrent themes in this speech: various manifestations of the word “strong” appear three times (lines 51, 67 and 70) while in line 78 Pelosi refers to the ethics reforms which face the new Congress as the
“toughest congressional ethics reform in history.” While women’s words and empty adjectives are absent, strikingly masculine words are present.

The intensive so appears only once, and in an interesting location in Pelosi’s opening speech. In line 58, “so” is the initial word in the sentence. Pelosi invokes the image of the Founders, who labeled the United States with unbridled optimism by placing “Novus ordo seclorum,” a new order for the centuries, on the country’s seal. She refers to them as “so confident.”

Politeness devices appear at the beginning of the speech, but again, in such a formal setting a certain degree of politeness is expected, irrespective of the gender of the speaker. In line 5, Pelosi thanks the minority leader (Representative Boehner) and her colleagues, and then she seems to thank the former Speaker, Representative Dennis Hastert: “Thank you, Leader Boehner. Thank you, my colleagues. Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speakers.” Interestingly, in a text of this speech which appeared on her website as the “prepared version” (the version analyzed here is a transcription of what was actually said, rather than a pre-printed copy), the line reads simply “Thank you, Leader Boehner” (“Pelosi Calls for”; “Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi”). Perhaps the more extensive politeness which appeared in the actual speech could be considered the result of a female speech pattern. No matter who wrote the speech, Pelosi felt the need to heighten the level of politeness already present in the prepared text.

Hypercorrect grammar, again, is not present. The grammar is correct, except in one place (line 27) where Pelosi uses “have” instead of “has”: “your families whose support have made your leadership possible today.” Interestingly, this is Pelosi’s own grammatical construction, because in her remarks as prepared, rather than as transcribed, the verb is “has” (“Pelosi Calls for”; Congresswoman Pelosi). This may indicate a level of comfort with her audience, and she
slips into a colloquialism. Although this line of thought will not be pursued here, it is fascinating to read the text as prepared in comparison to the speech as delivered, for there are a number of variations, in content as well as form.

**Hedge words** such as “kinda” and “y’know” are not expected and do not appear in this prepared speech. However, Pelosi does offer a few hedges. In lines 18-20, Pelosi states that “I want to join Leader Boehner in expressing our condolences and our appreciation to Mrs. Ford and to the entire Ford family…” when it would be equally appropriate to begin with “I join Leader Boehner…” (emphasis mine). Three lines later, Pelosi uses the same speech pattern, with the addition of the word “especially”: “I especially want to congratulate our new Members of Congress” (lines 22-23, emphasis mine). Again, a simpler linguistic approach would be: “I congratulate our new Members…” Use of the phrase “I want to” qualifies as a hedging speech pattern, and this hedging device is not present in the prepared form of the speech: this is Pelosi’s personal addition (“Pelosi Calls for”; Congresswoman Pelosi).

**Humor** appears once, near the beginning of Pelosi’s speech. In lines 8-9, she notes that “After giving this gavel away in the last two Congresses, I am glad someone else has the honor today.” She is referring to the fact that as the House minority leader, one has the responsibility of giving the gavel to the Speaker. The humor here is obviously somewhat subtle: she is simultaneously acknowledging that it was an honor for her to be the minority leader, and yet it is a higher honor to have abandoned the position of minority leader for the position of House Speaker. Additionally, by reminding her audience that she had been in such a leadership position for several years, she reaffirms the propriety of her current position.

The next speech takes place several months after Pelosi becomes Speaker of the House. It is, in fact, quite a different occasion: in this second speech sample, Pelosi eulogizes Parren
Mitchell, a former congressman from Maryland, the state in which Pelosi was born. Here, the audience is much more limited. Whereas the first speech was widely broadcast and analyzed, this second rhetorical sample is not of interest to such an extensive audience, and therefore Pelosi does not need to work as hard to encompass a variety of listeners. Additionally, it is culturally considered in poor taste for critics to dissect a funeral eulogy to the same degree as they might acceptably scrutinize an acceptance speech. Therefore, Pelosi is speaking under less of a “watchful eye” in the speech below, and this is worthy of consideration as the speech is analyzed.

Pelosi Delivers Eulogy for Former Congressman Parren Mitchell of Maryland

06/05/2007

Baltimore – Speaker Nancy Pelosi delivered a eulogy today in Baltimore at the funeral of former Congressman Parren Mitchell of Maryland. Below are her remarks as prepared:

“With the passing of Parren Mitchell, our nation has lost one of its most passionate champions of justice and equality. I offer my deepest condolences on behalf of all of my colleagues in the House to Congressman Mitchell’s family, friends, and all who loved him.

“Growing up in Baltimore, I learned to revere the Mitchell family for their dedication to economic and social justice. Parren, his brother Clarence, and indeed his entire family, were devoted to economic and social justice. For that, we have all benefited. That is
because their advocacy brought us closer to the ideal of equality that is both America’s heritage and our hope.

“In 1971, equality took a great leap forward when Parren Mitchell was sworn in as the first African American congressman from Maryland. It was a tremendous achievement. But our excitement over this achievement was tempered by another sad fact – Parren Mitchell was the first African American congressman from below the Mason-Dixon Line since 1898.

“It is also a great testament to the leadership of Parren Mitchell that the organization he helped found – the Congressional Black Caucus – continues to serve as the conscience of the Congress and increase its ranks to the benefit of all Americans. I am sure Mr. Mitchell is looking down upon us today and that he is pleased that so many CBC members are here to honor him today.

“Across the 85 years of Parren Mitchell’s life – in his own story and the story of America – we see the slow march of progress. We celebrate today a man who made sure that, however slow at times, we continue to march in the right direction – toward peace, understanding, and justice for all.

“For that service to his country, I am proud to present to Michael Mitchell this American flag, which was flown in honor of Congressman Parren Mitchell. It is a fitting tribute for a man who spent his life fighting for the ideals that are represented by the Stars and Stripes.
“With Congressman Mitchell’s passing, we have lost a friend, a former colleague, and a passionate advocate for seeing that America’s promise of freedom and equality are realized by all of our citizens. I hope it is a comfort to Congressman Mitchell’s family and friends that so many people mourn their loss and are praying for them at this sad time.”
Section 2A: Negotiating the Double-Bind

In this setting, Pelosi has less of a responsibility to negotiate the double-bind than in the previous speech sample for several reasons: first, as mentioned above, the audience is considerably smaller and more peaceable. Secondly, the memorial service honors a man who also wrestled with the double-bind. Parren Mitchell, as “the first African American congressman from Maryland” had to overcome not his gender, but his race as he entered the public sphere (line 15). Because the audience has accepted Parren Mitchell, and appreciated his leadership, it is reasonable to expect that they will also receive Pelosi with a similar degree of warmth.

Pelosi stresses equality and justice in this speech, noting that Mitchell was a “passionate champion[s] of justice and equality” and “a passionate advocate for seeing that America’s promise of freedom and equality are realized by all of our citizens” (lines 4-5, 31-32). When Pelosi refers to freedom, equality and justice, she clearly not only acknowledges the work that Mitchell has done, but also untangles her own double-bind. If Mitchell is a man to be revered, whose life is one to “celebrate,” then clearly his values, “which… brought us closer to the ideal of equality that is both America’s heritage and our hope” are worthy and compelling (lines 11-12, 24). If the values of equality and justice are celebrated by Americans in general, by this audience in particular, and by the House whose condolences Pelosi bears, then logic dictates that certainly the equality of women is included under this ideological umbrella (line 6).

Near the end of the brief eulogy, Pelosi strengthens her position even further, by uniting Mitchell’s values with the values of the United States of America through the commonplace of the U.S. flag. Pelosi presents a flag to Michael Mitchell, and explains that “it is a fitting tribute for a man who spent his life fighting for the ideals that are represented by the Stars and Stripes” (lines 27-30). With this rhetorical move, including the visual rhetoric of the flag, Pelosi has
equated true patriotism with a thirst for equality such as that possessed by Mitchell. Therefore, a true patriot would support not only the first African-American congressman from Maryland, but also the first female Speaker of the U.S. House.

Section 2B: Examining the Eulogy for Feminine Gender-Markings

There are no tag questions or women’s words in this eulogy for former Congressman Mitchell Parren. Pelosi employs two empty adjectives, which in this space might also be termed intensifiers. In line 13, Pelosi notes that “in 1971, equality took a great leap forward.” Again Pelosi uses the term “great” in line 18, when she discusses the still-active CBC, founded by Mitchell and remarks that it is a “great testament to the leadership of Parren Mitchell.” “Great,” used in this manner, could be interpreted as either an intensifier or an empty adjective, or both.

The intensive so appears twice in the short speech. First, in lines 21-22, Pelosi notes that Mitchell would be pleased because “so many CBC members are here to honor him today” (emphasis mine). Later, in line 34, when discussing the comfort that the many condolences might give Mitchell’s family, Pelosi uses the intensive so again: “so many people mourn their loss and are praying for them” (emphasis mine).

As would be expected in a speech of this sort, Pelosi is polite and her grammar is correct, although no specific politeness devices or hypercorrect grammar is used. Likewise, there is no humor in this speech, although Pelosi does speak with compassion. On the other hand, there is one hedge word (phrase) in the speech, at the very end: “I hope it is a comfort to Congressman Mitchell’s family and friends that so many people mourn their loss and are praying for them at this sad time” (lines 33-33, emphasis mine).
Obviously, the speech sample is brief, and a longer sample might yield more significant results. However, it is possible that an occasion such as this is simply a rhetorical moment which results in not only a briefer speech, but also fewer traditionally feminine linguistic markers.

The speech sample which follows, an interview which took place just days before the November 2006 election in which Democrats took control of Congress, is a considerably less somber, less scripted occasion. In the interview, Pelosi’s rhetoric is significantly different than it is in the eulogy. Again, this is expected, and indicates a polished speaker who knows and caters to her audience. Following the analysis of this interview I will offer some conclusions based upon the observed differences and similarities in the samples analyzed.
Clift: I think the issues that brought you into politics were the environment and also choice. [You had] five children in six years, a Catholic background…Was embracing choice an issue with your family?

Pelosi: To me it isn’t even a question. God has given us a free will. We’re all responsible for our actions. If you don’t want an abortion, you don’t believe in it, [then] don’t have one. But don’t tell somebody else what they can do in terms of honoring their responsibilities. My family is very pro-life. They’re not fanatics and they’re not activists. I think they’d like it if I were not so vocally pro-choice.

You’re presented as a wealthy woman from San Francisco when you’re really this middle-class kid from Baltimore …

Little Italy—downtown …

How do you get more of who you are across?

Somebody said to me recently that modesty is a private virtue and a public vice. You have to self-promote at some point, and that’s probably the hardest part of this job for me. But if we win, I think it won’t be so hard. The spotlight will be there. I’ve just got to do the job I do with the respect I have from my colleagues—they know how impressive I am.

You get very high marks for holding the caucus together, a very diverse caucus on a lot of different issues.

One of the big differences between the Democrats and Republicans [is that] we don’t
have anything coming from on high … it all bubbles up. We talk it through, and we
respect the diversity. We get mocked for having diversity, but that’s really our strength.
And these problems that we’re facing are complicated problems. We need a lot of good
thinking, including in a bipartisan way. And I’m fully committed to that.

[What] skills will you bring to the Speakership if the Democrats win?
We’re not there yet.

What about your fund-raising ability?
Well, I have a following in the country and I have a large base in California. If you
believe in something and you have a plan on how to get something done, you can attract
support. So I do have a following.

Strategy—it seems to me you’re pretty good at that.
You have to have consensus. You have to have everybody bought into it.

You’ve said that you find it hard to promote yourself. I’m sure you’ve had your television
appearances and your public appearances scrutinized, and you’ve gotten all kinds of
advice. Can you talk about learning to become a public presence?
I will say this—Washington sees all these things one way. Across the country, people like
what I do. I’m not saying I’m great. I’m just saying I don’t think everybody else is that
great, either [laughs]. For the first few years of my being whip, much of the criticism
[came] from Democrats who couldn’t stand the fact that I won, and they were more on
the conservative side, and they didn’t want a progressive to prevail in the leadership. It
wasn’t really personal with me. It was just who they were.
How did you let them know that you were boss?

Here’s what I tell people, and now I benefit from my own advice. I learned this at my father’s knee: you have to act, you have to be intuitive. The minute you falter, people will be taking away your options.

The one controversy was about the war. When you came out in support of Rep. [John] Murtha, [the Democratic Congressman who called for a troop withdrawal from Iraq] a lot of Democrats said that was a mistake.

I would never be political about a war situation. Murtha didn’t want us to come out any sooner. He wanted to go out on his own the way he did. But the people who thought I made a mistake were the people who wanted to send more troops into Iraq. Understand Murtha’s power—he changed the debate in this country. He is the worst nightmare the Republicans could have, to have a person of his standing on national security issues, his conservative standing, his support of the troops, the respect he commanded. He was always looking out for the troops, and he said, ‘this is wrong.’

Do you have a role model as Speaker?

I haven’t even given it a thought ... These are our priorities: fair economy, expanding opportunity for college, energy independence, affordable health care, stem-cell research and retirement security. The Republicans wanted us to put out great big blimps that they could shoot down. These are just deliverables we can do in the first 100 hours. [We also plan to] implement the 9/11 commission recommendations. The point being we won’t let them define us.
I read that your husband buys your clothes. Will he take me on?

I hate to shop. I go in and I’ll say, ‘Do you have a white sweater, size medium that zips...

... No? ... Goodbye.’ And he’ll be saying, ‘Why don’t you look and see what else they have and get something in case you need it.’

How do you keep it all together?

I think raising the five children, you have to do everything—you’re cook, chauffeur,

laundress, mom, this and that, so you get a system and you assign duties.
Section 3A: Negotiating the Double-Bind

Nancy Pelosi negotiates the double-bind using numerous rhetorical techniques in this 2006 interview, preceding her election as Speaker of the U.S. House. In her response to nearly every question, she employs at least one technique to impress upon her audience that she is indeed a woman, and also a strong leader. The most effective approach to analyzing this rhetorical sample, since it is so heavily-laden with rhetoric aimed at undoing the double-bind, is to move through each question rather than focus on specific emergent themes. Indeed, at times her approach is so comprehensive in its effort to undo the double-bind that there are multiple maneuvers presented in the answer to a single question.

The first question posed to Pelosi deals with her political stance as a pro-choice Democrat. Clift, the interviewer, brings up the fact that Pelosi, a Roman Catholic, had five children in six years as a young woman, and then asks her if “embracing choice was an issue with your family?” (lines 2-3). This question highlights the double-bind by fronting Pelosi’s status as a woman, a mother, and a member of a religious organization that eschews the pro-choice stance. As Jamieson notes in the chapter entitled “Newsbinds,” “No matter how you dress it, maternity remains more relevant than paternity to those who put together the news pages” (168).

The fact that Pelosi’s maternity is mentioned simultaneously with her political stance on abortion is likely specific to her gender; to illustrate the point, imagine the interviewer asking a Congressman the same question: does it seem a contradiction that he has five children and is also pro-choice? While “the presence of children certifies that a woman is sufficiently warm to pass the femininity test,” the interviewer sets Pelosi up to look like a traitor, or a hypocrite: on the one hand, Pelosi claims to be Roman Catholic, and has enacted the procreative doctrine of her faith
by birthing five children in six years, and yet she now vocally advocates for pro-choice legislation which is in direct contradiction to the teaching of the Roman Catholic church (Jamieson 168).

Pelosi gracefully handles this difficult question. First, she exposes the lack of validity of the painted scenario by summarily dismissing it: “To me it isn’t even a question” (line 4). Then, Pelosi segues into a theological discussion, explaining that “God has given us a free will,” and “we’re all responsible for our actions” (lines 4-5). Pelosi does not avoid the issue of faith, which was introduced by Clift, but implicitly acknowledges her belief in God, and her interpretation of humanity’s relationship with God: humanity has free will, and must take responsibility for their choices.

Pelosi is not hindered by these double-binds. Instead, she turns them inside out and uses them to her advantage. For example, in the face of these seeming incompatible dichotomies, Pelosi repeatedly points out her position as a straddler: she is clearly a woman, a mother, a wife – undeniably feminine traits. And yet, her responses suggest that Pelosi is a tough and independent thinker, not afraid to disagree with her family when abortion is the issue at hand. Furthermore, in the context of her interview with Clift, Pelosi adheres to the feminine ideal of downplaying her own talents: ironically, she promotes herself by choosing not to promote herself! Using a public venue to proclaim that one cannot publicly promote one’s self is the ultimate unraveling of the double-bind.

In the last line of her answer to this question, Pelosi refers to her family and admits that “I think they’d like it if I were not so vocally pro-choice” (line 8). This is an interesting statement. Linguistically, it begins with a hedge, “I think,” typically identified as feminine speech pattern and further discussed in section 3b below. This hedge serves to soften what is
coming next: Pelosi establishes herself as a person who is able to step away from her family, to self-identify and form her own opinions. Not only does she possess the warmth associated with motherhood and feminity, she also owns the confidence to hold views which differ from those held by other family members.

In her answer to this question, Pelosi challenges the notion about women with which Jamieson struggles: that “femininity and competence in the public sphere are mutually exclusive” (127). Pelosi does not need to demonstrate that she is feminine – Clift has done that, by pointing out that she is a mother of five – but her competence still hangs in the balance. By referencing God and then making it plain that she is not hesitant to take a stand independent of her family if it appears to be in keeping with the example provided by God, Pelosi proves that she is not just feminine, but also highly competent.

The interviewer’s second question is more of a statement. Clift points out that while Pelosi is “presented as a wealthy woman from San Francisco… you’re really this middle class kid from Baltimore” (lines 9-10). Pelosi barely answers: “Little Italy – downtown…” (line 11), and then the interview moves on. The interviewer tries to stay with the theme that Pelosi is not always what she seems, but doesn’t give Pelosi much opportunity to respond or expand before moving on – Pelosi simply acknowledges that she is from Baltimore, and then the interview continues.

The third question, which builds off of the second, asks Pelosi how she can better communicate who she is, how she can “get more of who you are across?” (line 12). Pelosi responds that, because of her modesty, self-promotion is a difficult task for her. Modesty is a traditionally desired feminine trait: as Campbell writes, “passivity, modesty, patience, and submissiveness were integral parts of ‘true womanhood’” (16). Unfortunately, Jamieson notes
that “public speech was considered immodest” and “a loose tongue bespoke loose morals” (9). Faced with the double-bind of advocating for herself while maintaining a traditionally modest feminine demeanor, Pelosi invents her own strategy. By framing herself as “too modest” to self-promote, Pelosi avoids the double-bind which demands that women be modest in order to be respected, and said modesty precludes public speaking. Then, Pelosi adds an element of humor to her response, and simultaneously shifts the responsibility for assessment of her leadership ability to her colleagues: “they know how impressive I am” (lines 16-17). In other words, Pelosi does not need to self-promote; she can retain her modesty, because others already are aware of her abilities.

In line 18, Clift notes that Pelosi “get[s] very high marks for holding the caucus together, a very diverse caucus on a lot of different issues.” Pelosi uses this opportunity to point out that the diversity which exists is “our strength” although “we get mocked for having diversity” (line 22). Again, Pelosi works with the double-bind by acknowledging the differences which exist among the democratic caucus, but instead of labeling these divisions as challenges, she regards them as strengths. Therefore, so too can the difference presented by the reality of a woman as House Speaker also be considered a strength, rather than a cause for mockery.

The fifth and sixth questions, which occur in lines 25 and 27, do not lead to answers which directly involve Pelosi’s disentanglement of the double-bind, but the seventh question – or statement – which occurs in line 31, does. Clift is referring to strategy, and she notes that “it seems to me you’re pretty good at that.” Pelosi’s succinct response follows: “You have to have consensus. You have to have everybody bought into it” (line 32). If “everybody” buys into the strategy, then obviously the strategy is not divided along gender lines, or other personal distinctions. By using the term “you,” which Pelosi uses along with the term “we” in this
interview, the focus is taken off of Pelosi as specific subject and the idea becomes more generalized. It is not simply that Pelosi needs people to “buy in” in order for the strategy to succeed: “you,” or anyone seeking successful strategy, will need the support as well.

The conversation returns to the subject of public persona and the issue of modesty resurfaces in question number eight. Clift wants Pelosi to “talk about learning to become a public presence” (line 35). Pelosi states that “across the country, people like what I do” but is quick to retain her modesty by adding “I’m not saying I’m great. I’m just saying I don’t think everybody else is that great, either” (lines 36-38). When Pelosi discusses those who haven’t been pleased with her success, she claims that “it wasn’t really personal with me… just who they are” (lines 40-41). By explaining that the problems people had with her were not personal, Pelosi works to avoid the potential for the difficulties to be linked to her gender. If the problems are not personal with her, then they cannot be the result of her anything personal about her, such as race, gender or religious background.

In line 42, the ninth question of the interview, Clift asks Pelosi “How did you let them know you were boss?” Clift is referring to the other Democrats in congress who served under Pelosi in her position as minority whip. Pelosi’s response is a classic dodge of the double-bind: she refers to her father, and what she learned “at his knee”-“you have to act, you have to be intuitive” (line 44). By linking herself to a male political leader – her father, Thomas D’Alesandro, the mayor of Baltimore for twelve years following a five-term stint in Congress – Pelosi establishes more than a modicum of respectability (“Speaker Nancy Pelosi”). If Pelosi is acting upon what she learned “at her father’s knee,” then logic dictates that she is, at least in part, acting in harmony with what was acceptable for a respected male leader in the political arena.
Question number ten, (lines 46-48), deals with the Iraq war, and Pelosi does not use it as an opportunity to work with the double-bind, but the final three questions each provoke answers with unique approaches to undoing the double-bind. In question number eleven, Pelosi is asked if she has a role model for Speaker of the House, an interesting query for the first woman who is to occupy the position. If she does have a role model, one would expect it to either be a former Speaker, which would necessitate a male role model, or a strong female from another sphere of leadership. Pelosi responds that “I haven’t even given it a thought…” (line 57). Then, she outlines Congressional priorities such as fair economy, energy independence, etc. She ends her response to the question by stating that “the point being we won’t let them define us” (lines 61-62). The “them” and “us” in this statement are the Republicans and the Democrats, but a deeper rhetorical meaning can be imagined if the ending statement is considered in light of the question itself: Who are her role models? And the answer – “We won’t let them define us.” In the same way as the Republicans will not define the Democrats, neither will Pelosi allow her predecessors, or any potential “role models,” to define her.

Suddenly, Clift shifts her line of questioning in a radical direction. Now, the subject is no longer Congress, but shopping! “I read that your husband buys your clothes,” states Clift (line 63). This statement is reminiscent of Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s discussion of cooking, another traditionally feminine activity, wherein Ginsburg claims that her husband is a far superior cook. If traditional women enjoy shopping, and yet Pelosi’s husband buys her clothes, how does this reflect upon both her femininity and her ability to lead in the political sphere, which is traditionally a man’s world? Is Pelosi de-feminized, and therefore made more masculine and increasingly likely to be an effective leader? Nancy Weitz Miller writes, in an essay entitled “Ethos, Authority and Virtue for Seventeenth-century Women Writers,” that “a woman who left
household duties undone while trying to compete with men in the public arena was perverting the social order and was perceived as committing a supreme act of disobedience” (273). If a seventeenth-century woman eschewed that which made her feminine - her “household duties,” such as shopping or providing clothing for the family – in favor of the public arena, she was chastised. Now, four centuries later, the idea that a woman would prefer public service to shopping is apparently still an item worthy of mention in the interview of a woman. Such a question would be unlikely in the interview of a male leader, and demonstrates that the double-bind is alive and well in 2006.

Jamieson notes that the double-bind known as Femininity/Competence, into which category this question clearly falls, “draws energy from our tendency to think in dichotomies characterized as masculine or feminine” (121). When Clift asks the question, she seems to perpetuate the dichotomy: Pelosi is not traditionally feminine in that she does not enjoy shopping, and therefore she is a better leader because she is more masculine. Ideally, Pelosi could enjoy or despise shopping, and it would be of no interest to her listeners in relationship to her leadership ability.

Asked the question, Pelosi does not equivocate: “I hate to shop.” At the same time, she casts her husband into the role of the shopper in the family, explaining that she is ready to leave the store and “he’ll be saying, ‘Why don’t you look and see what else they have and get something in case you need it,‘” (lines 65-66). In this way, she does what she can to maintain her integrity by telling the truth – that she really does not like to shop – and then telling more: her husband does. While her dislike of shopping demonstrates a lack of femininity, the very existence of a husband reveals an inherent femininity. This woman who is “not-feminine” is
married to a man who cares enough about her to support her, even to the point of shopping for her.

The final question of the interview is open-ended: “How do you keep it all together?” In contrast to her answer to the previous question, when Pelosi comes across as more masculine, at this point Pelosi draws deeply upon her femininity through the use of her maternal role. “I think raising the five children, you have to do everything – you’re a cook, chauffeur, laundress, mom, this and that, so you get a system and assign duties” (lines 68-69). Madeline Kunin, former governor of Vermont, expressed the same sentiment in regard to the significance which the life-experience of a homemaker can hold within the political sphere: “I was unknowingly preparing for a political life… I had underestimated the enormous amount that I had learned in the community and was unaware of my ability to transfer my knowledge into public life” (74).

Similarly, “Senator Patty Murray,” write Mayhead and Marshall, “packaged herself as a ‘mom in tennis shoes’” while Senator Jeanne Shaheen “did not spurn the ‘volleyball mom’ moniker others attributed to her” (177). The womb/brain bind, outlined by Jamieson, which produces the binary of mother or leader in the public sphere, is inverted by these women, and used to explain why women, (especially mothers, in Pelosi’s case), are particularly suited to leadership in the public realm (62).

Throughout the interview, Pelosi relies upon a number of techniques to loosen and escape from the tentacles of the double-bind. The techniques she employs, such as both embracing and rejecting certain traditional feminine traits and roles, work well and are similar to the approaches used by both Ginsburg and Jefferts Schori in previous chapters. In chapter five, these similarities will be further examined.
Section 3B: Examining the Interview for Feminine Gender-Markings

There are no tag questions or women’s words in the text of Pelosi’s interview. However, there are a few instances of empty adjectives: Pelosi seems especially fond of the word “great.” She uses it in reference to herself – that she is “not great” and everybody else is also “not that great” (lines 37-38). The word “great” reappears in line 59, when Pelosi mentions that “the Republicans wanted us [the Democrats] to put out great big blimps that they could shoot down.” There are no other empty adjectives, and the intensive so is present at two points during the conversation. It first appears in line 8, when Pelosi states that she thinks her family would “like it if I were not so vocally pro-choice.” The second instance appears in line 15, when Pelosi is discussing how to “get more of herself across” to the public. She hypothesizes that if the Democrats win [in the 2006 election], then it won’t be “so hard.” These are the only two instances of the “intensive so” in this interview.

Politeness devices and hypercorrect grammar do not seem to be present at all in this interview – in fact, there are several places where the grammar seems incorrect, as in line 32 when Pelosi explains that her strategy is to build consensus and “you have to have everybody bought into it” – a more correct formulation might have been “you have to have everybody buy into it” or “buying” into it. Perhaps Pelosi is at ease in this situation, and her speech thus becomes more colloquial. Similarly, her responses are not scripted, and so she is less likely to maintain the perfected level of grammar which is more possible when a speaker reads from a text.

The most prevalent of the feminine linguistic markers in this interview are the hedge words Pelosi uses throughout the conversation. Three times she uses “I think,” first in line 8 when she discusses her family, and what they think of her pro-choice stance on abortion; then
again in line 15, when she discusses her public persona; and finally, in line 68 when Pelosi discusses her ability to “keep it all together” as a result of mothering five children.

Along with “I think,” Pelosi also uses “probably” in line 14, and there are four instances of the use of the word “just,” as if to minimize the opinion presented. Interestingly, “just” appears three times within the context of Pelosi’s use of humor which occurs within the context of her responses to her public persona. In line 15, Pelosi states that she “just” has to do the job she does; in lines 37 and 41, when Clift asks Pelosi about self-promotion, she uses the word “just” twice – “I’m just saying” and “It was just who they are.” Perhaps Pelosi is hedging here to “soften” or mitigate the message that she is a woman in possession of real power. The final use of the hedge “just” appears in line 60, when Pelosi is discussing what can be accomplished in the first one hundred hours of the new Congress: “these are just deliverables we can do in the first hundred hours,” remarks Pelosi. Pelosi’s hedges are more prevalent in this interview than in either of the preceding speech samples, but again, that is not unexpected: the other samples were prepared texts, and this is a glimpse of Pelosi speaking in a less artificial setting.

Humor appears twice in the interview, and both times the humor is gently self-deprecating, as if to prove to her audience that she can laugh at herself, and also to maintain the trope of modesty, as discussed in section 3A above. The first instance of humor appears in lines 16-17, when Pelosi remarks that in order to communicate who she is, she need only “do the job I do with the respect I have from my colleagues – they know how impressive I am.” This is said with a touch of sarcasm; her self-effacing humor surfaces again in lines 37 and 38, when she notes that “I’m not saying I’m great. I’m just saying I don’t think everybody else is that great, either.”
This self-effacing approach to humor has been documented in linguistic studies of other powerful women, as well: Judith Mattson Bean and Barbara Johnstone discuss an interview of Linda Chavez-Thompson who was at the time of the interview “one of the few women in the top echelon of the U.S. labor movement” (238). According to the research completed by Bean and Johnstone, “most of her laughter is self-deprecating, mitigating her success” (242). Pelosi echoes Chavez-Thompson, employing humor to mitigate her own success – she is, in her own words, “not that great” (line 37).

Pelosi does use some typically feminine patterns of speech in this interview, especially by employing hedge words. In the conclusion, which follows, I examine the patterns revealed both rhetorically and linguistically throughout Pelosi’s three speech samples. In the following chapter, a larger-scale comparison is drawn between Pelosi, Ginsburg and Jefferts Schori, and implications for further work are discussed.

Conclusions: Undermining the “House” from Within Its Walls

Nancy Pelosi clearly faces multiple double-binds as the first woman to occupy the position of Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. As a mother and a political leader, she encounters the womb/brain bind. As a public speaker in a society that prizes silence in women, Pelosi is caught in the silence/shame bind. The femininity/competence bind confronts Pelosi as well: she struggles, as evidenced in the third rhetorical sample (the interview) to juggle competence and feminine stereotypes - some of which she fits, such as mother, and others, which she does not, such as “shopper.”

Pelosi is not hindered by these double-binds. Instead, she turns them inside out and uses them to her advantage. For example, in the face of these seeming incompatible dichotomies,
Pelosi repeatedly points out her position as a straddler: she is clearly a woman, a mother, a wife – undeniably feminine traits. And yet, Pelosi is a tough and independent thinker, not afraid to disagree with her family when abortion is the issue at hand. Furthermore, in her interview with Clift, Pelosi adheres to the feminine ideal of downplaying her own talents: ironically, she promotes herself by choosing not to promote herself! Using a public venue to proclaim that one cannot publicly promote one’s self is the ultimate unraveling of the double-bind.

Another tactic Pelosi utilizes across genres and situations is the attachment of the ideal of patriotism with the concept of equality, and this linkage persists throughout her rhetoric. By connecting patriotism, which is an unquestionable virtue, with equality, Pelosi establishes her indisputable right to serve as Speaker of the House. The logic is simple: if the country is built on the foundation of equality, and patriots respect the foundations upon which the country is built, then true patriots believe in and subscribe to equality. This rhetorical move is very similar to that made by Jefferts Schori, who links true faithfulness with equality.

While Pelosi works through the double-bind, she also uses some feminine-language markers in her rhetoric; however, with speech-writers involved, it is difficult to determine the extent of Pelosi’s personal affectations. The interview is the least-scripted, and, not surprisingly, seems to contain the most feminine-language markers. As mentioned previously, a study comparing transcript versus delivered speech might also offer a window into Pelosi’s more instinctual patterns of language.

Pelosi, like Jefferts Schori and Ginsburg, demonstrates some cross-genre patterns in both her approach to the double-bind and usage of feminine-language markers. In the final chapter, I examine the similarities between the rhetors and their rhetoric overall, and then specifically through the lenses of the various genres. I also propose some ideas for further research.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Introduction and Chapter Format

This chapter is dedicated to summarizing the findings of the previous chapters and offering possibilities for further research on the topic of present-day female orators. The three women who comprise this study, Katharine Jefferts Schori, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and Nancy Pelosi, are women in unprecedented positions of public power and presence who demonstrate, through both their linguistic speech patterns and their rhetorical choices, the ability to control their language and make meticulous decisions about the verbal communication styles they use. I discovered that these speakers seem to be very conscious of the language choices they have, and that numerous variables other than gender - such as genre, context and length of time spent in the particular role – have a significant impact upon the communication styles of these women.

This chapter begins with a summary of the findings, based on the genres examined: acceptance speech or sermon, alternative speech sample (such as a eulogy or sermon from another occasion), and interview. In keeping with the structure of the previous chapters, there are three sections, each with a sub-section labeled “A” and “B.” In each section, “A” is devoted to comparing how the rhetors dealt with the double-bind in that specific genre, and section “B” summarizes how the rhetors presented feminine language markers. The “B” sections include a table intended to visually demonstrate the variations between rhetors within the same speech genre. At the end of section 3, tables are included which show the variation within the speeches of each rhetor, for a more complete presentation of the information gathered.

Following these summaries, I provide a call for future work and further reconsideration of the rhetorical canon. The inclusion of contemporary female rhetors such as Jefferts Schori,
Ginsburg, and Pelosi is of paramount importance as we strive to restore and maintain the integrity of the rhetorical tradition.

Section 1A: Negotiating the Double-Bind in the Acceptance Speech

The acceptance speech, for each of these women, is the place where the eyes and ears of the public are turned upon them, and it is their first opportunity to demonstrate competence for the position to which they have been elected or appointed. For Pelosi and Jefferts Schori, these speeches are the first of a kind: as the first women elected to the positions of Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives and National Bishop of the ECUSA, Pelosi and Jefferts Schori are making history with their words. Bader Ginsburg is the second woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court, so while her words do not constitute the first acceptance speech by a woman in that position, they are certainly not commonplace, either.

Each of these speakers is aware that at this particular juncture, in this speech genre, they have two audiences: first, the audience which is present before them, and second, the audience which listens at a distance, on the radio or in front of the television sets at home. These audiences are disparate: the physical audiences which sit or stand in front of the rhetors are primarily supportive. The audiences at a distance may be less so. Each of the three rhetors must negotiate this audience issue, aware that while their female gender has not significantly alienated them from their physical audience (since this is the group that elected/appointed them), the audience at a distance may struggle with seeing and hearing a woman where the traditional speaker had been a man.

This dynamic, of two audiences with one at a distance, did not exist before the advent of radio and certainly became most prevalent with the proliferation of the television into every
home. Orators in earlier eras, from the ancients such as Aristotle through the suffragists of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, were primarily concerned with those in their immediate audience (although word-of-mouth has always carried the message beyond the original forum). Now in the twenty-first century, telecommunications dictates a different approach, an increased awareness of the broad spectrum which constitutes the listening public.

One difficulty which the general public might struggle with in relationship to women in leadership positions is highlighted by Kathleen Hall Jamieson, who writes that female leaders need to “mute the question is she tough enough while communicating that she is indeed caring enough to lead” (197, italics in original). Jefferts Schori, Ginsburg and Pelosi face this bind, this seeming dichotomy, and utilize similar approaches to overcoming it. All three of the rhetors establish themselves as “caring” by referencing relationships: for Ginsburg and Pelosi, the focus is on family, while for Jefferts Schori the focus is the more generic trope of relationship. At the same time, each of the rhetors answers the question of “is she strong enough?” by drawing upon examples of strong leaders whom they have chosen as role models: Pelosi speaks of her father, Ginsburg talks about not only Sandra Day O’Connor, but also Justice Rehnquist and Oliver Wendell Holmes. Jefferts Schori does not use a human leader as her example, but turns instead to God as her role model, which also enables her to stress God’s call to equality and justice (thereby further establishing herself as an appropriate leader).

Defining themselves as strong women in caring relationships works to undermine the binary double-bind which dictates that a person can be either feminine (read: relationship-oriented) or competent. Rather than reinforcing the binary, these women use their relationships as the very basis for establishing their competence: it is Pelosi’s beloved father, Ginsburg’s dear
friends, and Jefferts Schori’s God, those with whom relationships are deep and sustaining, from whom strength is drawn.

Through this blending and undoing of traditionally incongruent roles (caring female in relationship/competent male in power), the stereotypes are confounded, and a transformed public space emerges, where the leader not only is allowed to be both in relationship and competent, but one depends upon the other. bell hooks writes that for feminism to succeed, “our emphasis must be on cultural transformation: destroying dualism, eradicating systems of domination” (Foss, Foss and Griffin 79). Certainly, while systems of domination are painfully still in place, the foregrounding of relationship as vital in the lives of our competent leaders can begin to lead to hooks’ ideal of dualism destroyed.

Section 1B: Feminine Gender-Markings in the Acceptance Speech

The table below summarizes the numbers of each feminine language marker for the first speech sample. Following the table, I provide an interpretation of the results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tag Questions</th>
<th>Empty Adjectives</th>
<th>Women’s Words</th>
<th>“So”</th>
<th>Politeness Devices</th>
<th>Hedge Words</th>
<th>Use of Humor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jefferts Schori (11)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ginsburg (17)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pelosi (5)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This table summarizes, in a strictly quantitative form, the use of feminine language markers in the first speech delivered by each rhetor in her current role—the “acceptance” speech. Behind the rhetor’s name is the total number of feminine language markers used in the speech (the sum of columns 1-7). Beneath each column is the total number of occurrences of the given language marker by the three rhetors combined.

It is readily apparent that in this sample Ruth Bader Ginsburg uses the greatest number of feminine language-markers at seventeen. Jefferts Schori has eleven, and Pelosi lags behind with five. Interestingly, Pelosi’s speech was certainly the most public of the three, with news cameras rolling around the world as she took her place as House Speaker. This may have had an impact upon her performance, although her speech was also more likely crafted by a speechwriter than the speeches of either Ginsburg or Jefferts Schori. A number of components may have contributed to Pelosi’s lack of feminine language markers. As we look at the breakdown between Pelosi, Ginsburg and Jefferts Schori in the other rhetorical samples, it is easier to determine if this is an enigmatic sample or if Pelosi is consistently lacking in feminine-language markers.

Overall, it is notable that “tag questions” do not play a role in this type of speech for any of these rhetors, which is not unexpected. As these women introduce themselves in their new roles, to audiences which are not in a position to offer an immediate verbal response, tag questions would be of little use. “Women’s words” and “empty adjectives” are also scarce; however, all of the women employ the “Intensive so” along with “politeness devices,” “hedge words,” and some degree of humor. Again, this breakdown will be a pattern to watch for as the other two speech samples are analyzed.
Section 2A: Negotiating the Double-Bind in a Typical Prepared Speech Sample

The three speech samples chosen for the second rhetorical example are speeches made at very specific times and in very specific situations. Jefferts Schori is preaching on Maundy Thursday; Ginsburg is offering the dissenting opinion on an abortion ruling; and Pelosi is offering up an eulogy at a funeral service. For each of these samples, unlike the previous acceptance speeches, the audience is much more limited, and in the case of Pelosi and Jefferts Schori, the audience is also much more receptive. Perhaps as a result, Jefferts Schori does little or nothing to negotiate the double-bind; Pelosi, as mentioned in chapter 4, also has “less of a responsibility to negotiate the double-bind” but she does stress justice and equality, implicitly indicating her position as on par with not only the deceased but also with every other member of the listening audience.

Ginsburg is in a more tenuous position than Pelosi or Jefferts Schori. Since she is offering up the dissenting opinion, she needs to deal with the double-bind to prove that although she is a woman, and holds a different opinion than the male majority, her judgment is valid. In order to do perform this rhetorical feat, Ginsburg invokes the memory of well-respected male leaders, past and present.

It is evident from these three speech samples that the rhetors have a high degree of audience awareness, and a keen sense of their situation: the kairos of the moment determines the approach employed. Based upon these extenuating circumstances, which often lie beyond their control, the rhetors decide on the amount of energy which needs to be invested in overcoming the double-bind. If the double-bind is dormant in the particular situation, then it can perhaps be simply alluded to, as Pelosi does in the eulogy. If, on the other hand, the double-bind is glaringly present, then it needs to be dealt with as Ginsburg does so effectively in her dissenting opinion.
Section 2B: Feminine Gender-Markings in a Typical Prepared Speech Sample

Table 3: Gender-Markings in Prepared Speech Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tag Questions</th>
<th>Empty Adjectives</th>
<th>Women’s Words</th>
<th>“So”</th>
<th>Politeness Devices</th>
<th>Hedge Words</th>
<th>Use of Humor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jefferts Schori (2)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ginsburg (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pelosi (5)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in this section are strikingly dissimilar from the results in section 1B. Ginsburg, who had more than three times as many feminine language markers in the first speech sample as Nancy Pelosi, drops here to zero. Jefferts Schori decreases from eleven down to two, while Pelosi holds constant at five. These results are remarkable on a number of levels. First of all, the speeches are all quite brief, and so it would be expected that the total numbers are less, which is indeed the case. However, Pelosi’s number does not decline at all, despite the change in circumstance and audience.

Ginsburg, on the other hand, has a complete change of style. Of course, fourteen years have elapsed since her previous speech: fourteen years of sitting and serving with a group that is overwhelmingly (and now completely, with the exception of Ginsburg) male. Perhaps the experiences of the past decade and a half have altered Ginsburg’s speech patterns, although it is also possible that she is remarkably adept at adapting to different genres, and the genre presented here, a judicial opinion, is not the forum in which she utilizes language with feminine-gender markings.

The results of the final speech sample offer yet another frame through which to view the linguistic patterns of these speakers. The third sample, which consisted of a recent interview,
completes the triad of samples which form the basis for tentative hypotheses and implications for further study presented in section four.

Section 3A: Negotiating the Double-Bind in the Interview

An interview is a different genre of language use than a prepared speech. While it is not evident how much time or preparation the interviewees had with the questions prior to the actual interview, it can be assumed that the rhetors are speaking without detailed notes as might be present in a prepared speech, and, perhaps more significantly, they are involved in a conversational rather than speech-making mode of language-use. The rhetors need to “think on their feet,” so to speak, and respond to cues from the particular audience of the interviewer while maintaining an awareness of the greater audience that will be listening.

In each of the interviews, the interviewees demonstrate a vivid awareness of the double-bind, and the impact it has upon the positions which they hold (or will soon hold, as the Pelosi interview took place shortly before she became House Speaker) as leaders of the church, the court and the state. Jefferts Schori and Pelosi are newcomers to their positions at the times of the interviews, while Ginsburg has been in her position for over a decade. Perhaps the “newness” of both Jefferts Schori and Pelosi contributes to their extensive rhetorical work with the double-bind, as discussed in Section 3B of both chapters two and four, while Ginsburg addresses the double-bind, but less incessantly. Also, the subject of the interview, for Ginsburg, is not necessarily “how does it feel to be the first women of the ________?” as it is for Pelosi and Jefferts Schori; rather, Ginsburg has a forthcoming book and that is the main thrust of the interview.
The section below, which examines feminine gender markings, yields results consistent with the findings above. Jefferts Schori and Pelosi use a greater number of feminine linguistic indicators, as well as putting more effort into undoing the double-bind. Again, the subject of the interview and the length of time in the leadership role may play a part in these results.

**Section 3B: Feminine Gender-Markings in the Interview**

Table 4: Gender-Markings in Interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tag Questions</th>
<th>Empty Adjectives</th>
<th>Women’s Words</th>
<th>“So” Politeness Devices</th>
<th>Hedge Words</th>
<th>Use of Humor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jefferts Schori (17)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ginsburg (9)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pelosi (16)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the context of the interview, it is clear that “hedge words” are by far the most common feminine gender marking which emerges with each of the rhetors. Even while other devices are totally absent, hedge words permeate the speech of all three of these women during the less-formal, unscripted interview process. All three women also use humor, which is thought to be a masculine language marker; but no trend emerges as fully as the use of hedge words, especially when placed in contrast with the number of hedge words used by the same rhetor in another speech sample. To clarify, the three tables on the following page contain the results for each individual rhetor’s linguistic markers across the speech samples.
Table 5: Jefferts Schori Gender-Markings in Speech Samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jefferts Schori</th>
<th>Tag Questions</th>
<th>Empty Adjectives</th>
<th>Women’s Words</th>
<th>“So” Politeness Devices</th>
<th>Hedge Words</th>
<th>Use of Humor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance Speech (11)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maundy Thursday Sermon (2)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview (17)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Ginsburg Gender-Markings in Speech Samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ginsburg</th>
<th>Tag Questions</th>
<th>Empty Adjectives</th>
<th>Women’s Words</th>
<th>“So” Politeness Devices</th>
<th>Hedge Words</th>
<th>Use of Humor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance Speech (17)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissenting Opinion (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview (9)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Pelosi Gender Markings in Speech Samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pelosi</th>
<th>Tag Questions</th>
<th>Empty Adjectives</th>
<th>Women’s Words</th>
<th>“So” Politeness Devices</th>
<th>Hedge Words</th>
<th>Use of Humor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance Speech (5)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eulogy (5)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview (16)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While this investigation is not strictly scientific in nature, and does not use any type of linear regression or regulated statistical analysis in order to reach conclusions, the numbers do reveal certain patterns, or the potential thereof. For example, clearly there is an absence of “tag questions” and paucity of “women’s words” across genres and speakers. “Empty adjectives”
have a slightly better showing, and the “intensive so” along with “politeness devices” appear occasionally.

“Humor,” which is supposed to be a masculine language marker, is present nearly as much as the “Intensive So” and the “Politeness Devices.” However, regardless of genre or speaker, “Hedge Words” are employed. In these nine speech samples, there are a total of thirty-nine “Hedge Words” used. To put that in perspective, the total number of all feminine gender markers (excluding humor, which is considered male) is seventy-one. More than half (54.9%) of all the feminine gender markers in all of the speech samples by all of the rhetors consisted of “Hedge Words.” Such a striking finding in a small experimental sample such as the one used in this study begs for further investigation.

Section 4: Implications for Further Study

Upon reflection, it is interesting and invigorating to discover the multitude of directions in which this study could lead. For the sake of clarity and brevity, I limit myself here to three suggestions for future work. In Part A below, I make a simple appeal for research which includes not only a textual analysis of the speech, but consideration of the oral delivery as well. Part B is a call for further examination of the linguistic aspect of this analysis, with a focus on both men and women, and accounting for different variables such as genre, context, and tenure in a given position; and finally, and most vitally, Part C is a direct summons to rhetorical scholars, inviting further research on the communication of Jefferts Schori, Ginsburg, and Pelosi, and calling for their inclusion in a modern-day rhetorical canon alongside their foremothers.
Part A: Reading the Text, Listening to the Words

Among Lakoff’s forms which comprise “women’s language” are two linguistic markers that, because of the strictly textual approach of this dissertation, remain unanalyzed. Those two markers are “question intonations where we might expect imperatives” and speaking in italics - “the more ladylike and feminine you are, the more in italics you are supposed to speak” (Bucholtz 78-81). I did have the opportunity to actually listen to several of the speeches and one of the interviews in this study, and I did notice the presence of these markers, although I did not pay specific attention to the extent, since it was not a part of my research. It would be worthwhile to engage in further research wherein oral samples are used rather than simply textual specimens.

Part B: Men, Women, and Intersectionality

In this dissertation, my work is focused on three specific women and the way in which they communicate in three distinct genres: the acceptance speech, an occasional speech, and an interview. Comparisons are then made within and between the rhetors: in the preceding sections, I delineate how the same rhetor performs differently in dissimilar genres, and also how the different rhetors perform in uniform genres. These comparisons lead me to conclude that variables such as genre, context, and the length of time the orator has spent in their professional position are much more significant than I had previously anticipated.

Linguist Ronald Wardhaugh supports this point, writing that “any differences that do exist surely must interact with other factors, e.g., social class, race, culture, discourse type…” (320). Rather than assume that speech variations result from gender differences, greater integrity can be gained from looking beyond gender toward genre, context and positional longevity.
especially since this study strongly indicates that genre has a great influence upon the language patterns of the speaker.

However, what makes a future study such as this particularly interesting is the potential tension in the findings: consider, for example, Mary Talbot, whose research indicates that, at least in the interview genre, men and women perform differently. Talbot’s research shows that “the woman’s interviewing style is highly cooperative, with emphasis on facilitating… in contrast, the man’s style is competitive, often cutting off…” (116). Additionally, the gender of the interviewer plays a role; in Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s interview with Nina Totenburg, Totenburg herself “venture[s] to say” that “very few mothers… today” would give the advice “‘His interests are your interests; his home is your home; his life is your life’” (lines 22-23). The question arises: is it genre or gender – of the interviewer or the interviewee - that dictates the linguistic differences? As expected, we dismantle the binary at this point and say both, and neither.

Further research that focuses on genre and isolates other markers, such as gender, race, social class or culture, will add to the conversation. Nancy Henley and Cheris Kramarae advocate a “multi-determined social context approach,” which embraces intersectionality and admits that “the difference in feminine and masculine cultures is real, but it is not the only fact of existence for men and women in our society; differences due to race, ethnicity, class, age, sexual preference and so on may compound and interact with gender differences” (400). Linguistic differences are complicated and not easily explained away: each person has many identities and a fluid self, as well – differences are multi-dimensional, as are the people who create them.
Part C: Continuing the Work and Entering the Canon

In Chapter One of this dissertation, I note with enthusiasm the work that has been done on female rhetors, both contemporary and historical. The work by Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Dianne Bystrom, Mayhead and Marshall, to name only a few, appears promising. Dow and Condit write that the “study of women as public communicators is one of the most visible legacies of the emergence of feminism in the field of communication,” (450). Yet, as I transitioned from work on the literature review to research on the rhetoric and communication of Katharine Jefferts Schori, I scoured academic journals and continually came up empty-handed.

To illustrate the lack of sources, consider the following: there were articles about Jefferts Schori in *Newsweek*, and *Christian Century*, and *Time Magazine* – but there were none to be found in the three hundred and ninety academic publications through which I searched under the umbrella of “Communication and Mass Media Complete.” This list includes *The American Communication Journal*, *Women in Language*, *Women’s Studies in Communication*, *Women and Language News*, *Speech Communication* and *Studies in Communication Sciences*. Pelosi fared a bit better, with seventeen articles in the three hundred and ninety journals over a period of several years. Ginsburg, who has served for nearly a decade and a half, had six articles, and only one was longer than a page. Richard Cheney, who as the current Vice-President is only one “rung” higher than Nancy Pelosi, the Speaker of the House, had one hundred and fifty-nine articles in these same journals.

If this is the “most visible legacy,” then perhaps the emergence of feminism in the field of communication has not yet become what we hope it can be. Jefferts Schori, Ginsburg and Pelosi are three prominent rhetors, exemplifying and breaking ground in women’s oratory, and
yet little or no scholarly research has been done on their rhetorical work. Clearly, more research is needed. Even as we work to undo and rectify the “the erasure of women” and work to further the “assertion of the talents of women as public speakers,” scholars need to engage with the oratory of current females in leadership roles (Dow and Condit 450). It is simply not acceptable to disregard these rhetorical pioneers in our midst.

Scholars such as Cheryl Glenn are to be lauded for beginning this work in the rhetorical tradition, uncovering and recovering our rhetorical foremothers, and establishing the importance of including women within the rhetorical canon. Glenn writes that “our first obligation… as scholars is to look backwards at all the unquestioned rhetorical scholarship that has come before,” with our eyes open for “women who are hidden in the shadows of monumental rhetoricians…[or] remain misidentified as holes and bulges on out-of-the way territories” (15, 3).

Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, among others, had done just that, looking backward and gathering together the speeches of women, explaining that “the obstacles early women persuaders faced persist, although in altered forms, in the present… I believe that the works analyzed… represent a particularly abundant mother lode of rhetorical creativity from which contemporary women speakers and activists may draw examples and inspiration” (15).

The focus of Campbell’s work was to preserve and honor the past while providing assistance for the present and future. We must continue and extend the work of Glenn and Campbell by focusing on rhetors such as Jefferts Schori, Ginsburg, and Pelosi, lest they also become “hidden in the shadows.” It is not enough to simply uncover and recover: we must also “cover” those female rhetors who speak today. We must pay attention to them, and “cover” their oratory as a part of our scholarly efforts. It our calling as scholars to preserve the oratory of such “firsts” as Nancy Pelosi and Ruth Bader Ginsburg, along with Katharine Jefferts Schori, who
often slips beneath the scholarly radar. Ritchie and Ronald explain, in the introduction to Available Means: An Anthology of Women’s Rhetoric(s), that “we also want to unsettle this emerging canon with other works that have caused us to examine our assumptions about women’s rhetorics” and then go on to clarify that “we also picked some of the writers who have advanced the cause of women’s rights to public participation” (xx). Ginsburg is included in this canon. Jefferts Schori and Pelosi deserve a place alongside her. I call upon those who compile anthologies of women’s rhetoric(s) to include these three women, or risk visiting upon our ancestors the same lack of her-story with which we struggle today.

**Final Thoughts**

I began this dissertation with many questions about the ways in which women speak. While I approached my questions from an academic angle, these questions were not borne of a cold intellectual interest, nor could I move near to them with a detached scholarly impartiality. These questions emerged as the result of my personal experiences: like the women in the study, I too am a rhetor – like Katharine Jefferts Schori, I am an ordained pastor, although I serve in the ELCA rather than the ECUSA. Like Nancy Pelosi, I have political aspirations, and am currently engaged in my first run for public office. I look to these women as examples, as role models, as proof positive that the noose of the double-bind can be slipped, and that I am not consigned to life as a second-class citizen in a world of men.

I was pleased to discover that the women in this study are as savvy as I had hoped they would be. When it “paid” to speak “like a woman,” they were able to do so. When it was more to their benefit to adopt what is traditionally considered a “masculine” approach, they did just that. Keenly aware of their audiences, these rhetors were able to claim their status as women –
mothers, daughters, and wives, caretakers and nurturers, and then command respect and power for these very traits. These women seem to say “I am a woman; and it is precisely my womanhood which allows me to be powerful and compassionate – and should one (power or compassion) be capable of existing without the other?”

Having said all of this, and expressing my joy at the creative uses of language and audience awareness which these women employ in order to successfully communicate, I do have a concern to mention, and it is a rather serious one. When women adapt to their circumstances, using a specific language-style in a specific context in order to accommodate their audience – such as Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s dissenting opinion, which was completely devoid of all feminine language-markings – is this, in some way, “selling out to the system?” Is the victory a hollow one, where a woman simply subscribes to the patriarchal system and by “playing a man” gains power and prestige?

Numerous feminist rhetorical scholars would likely answer “yes.” Sonia Johnson, for example, explains that “to maintain her personal integrity… [she] stopped reading newspapers, listening to the news, and voting – acts she believes only continue to support patriarchy’s version of reality” (Foss, Foss and Griffin 299). Helene Cixous, while not as adamant as Johnson, “rejected political feminism because it merely attempted to reform existing patriarchal structures and hence was in danger of reproducing their inequalities” (Bizzell and Herzberg 1523, emphasis mine). Trinh T. Minh-ha echoes Cixous, noting that “feminism is not the attempt to gain the power that men have or to extend the rights of men to women…feminism should not be content with reforms that simply allow women to be more like men” (Foss, Foss and Griffin 235). The three women included in this study have accomplished precisely what Johnson, Cixous and Minh-ha rail against: they have attained traditional positions of male power. They have not
inverted the system, or created a new system – they have instead worked within the system to be in the very positions of power with many of their feminist sisters would have eradicated.

The language used by these women is, in many ways, the language of the patriarchal system into which they have entered. In the genre of the acceptance speech, for example, the women do not give their language over to écritoire feminine, as defined by Cixous: “burst[ing] through conventions, rupture[ing] cultural and rhetorical restraints” (Ritchie and Ronald 283). They do not, in the midst of the interviews, burst into poetry like Adrienne Rich, nor do they slide, as feminist rhetorician Gloria Anzaldua does in her writings, across the borderlands from one language into another. Instead, they adhere to the customary, patriarchal style, using an introduction and a conclusion in the acceptance speech, answering the questions which are asked in the interview: in a word, they are “behaving.” As Cixous admits, “one pays a certain price for the use of a discourse,” and in an effort to retain their positions, these women have opted out of radical rhetorical performances (“The Newly Born Woman” 92). They are playing by the rules.

Or so we might think. In the process of this study, I came to realize again that much of the world is neither black nor white, but gray. Dualistic thinking (for example, imagining that one can either play by the rules, or not play by the rules) is, in itself, a mistaken patriarchal concept. If I conclude that these rhetors have played by the rules, I have missed the entire opportunity afforded us by this study: namely, that these women chose “letter D: all of the above.” They play by the rules, bend the rules, break the rules, dismantle the rules, re-examine the rules, and more: all at the same time. There are many levels to a rhetorical act. Cixous, for example, embodies these very tensions: while she implores women to “write the body,” and break from traditional modes of discourse, she also declares that a woman’s discourse “even when ‘theoretical’ or ‘political,’ is never simple or linear… she involves her story in history”
(“The Newly Born Woman” 92). It is not either/or, but both/and. We witness, in this dissertation, that even when a woman speaks in a “man’s mode” of discourse, she involves her story, and the rules begin to bend and the borders blur.

As I mentioned earlier, I began this dissertation with questions about the rhetoric of women in leadership positions. Embedded within my research questions was this single deep personal query and struggle which I did not even wish to address, for fear of an answer I didn’t want to hear: If a woman remains and works within the existing system is she necessarily a fool, catering to a cruel patriarchal regime?

The answer does not have to be yes. It can be no, as the women in this study have demonstrated. bell hooks writes that while feminism should be concerned with more than simply “gaining equal access to domains of white male privilege,” she acknowledges that the “struggle will be gradual and protracted” (Foss, Foss and Griffin 79). Jefferts Schori, Ginsburg and Pelosi are a part of the “gradual and protracted” struggle. As they engage with the patriarchal system, there will be moments when perhaps they must “play the game” – and there will be other moments when the words these women speak and the actions they choose can work to undermine the very system that has placed them in positions of power. Consider the poignant example found in Chapter 3, section 2, where Ginsburg uses the very masculine discourse conventions of the dissenting judicial opinion to argue in favor of a woman’s right to have an abortion. Laboring deftly within the system, Ginsburg methodically chips away at the very structure of oppression. For some women, certainly, to move outside the established system is the preferable course of action. For others, such as Ginsburg and the other two women in this study, working within the system seems to serve as well. Perhaps the most empowering aspect of this realization is the fact that women are beginning to have a choice: the system, broken as it
may be, is no longer completely inaccessible for women. Now that the door has cracked open, perhaps the house can eventually be re-modeled from the inside out. Certainly, there is hope.
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