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Gendered Metaphors of Women in Power: the Case of Hillary Clinton as Madonna, Unruly Woman, Bitch and Witch

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12.1 Introduction

Hillary Rodham Clinton was the first First Lady to move into the White House with a full-time professional career of her own, the first First Lady to win elected office in the US Senate, and the first woman to seriously contend for a major party's nomination for the US presidency. As Hillary Clinton stood at the frontier of women's struggle to break into the public sphere in their own right, she became the target for a number of highly stylised and gendered metaphors used to conceptualise her role in public life. Defenders and critics of Hillary Clinton have characterised her as a Madonna, an Unruly Woman and variants thereof: a Bitch, and a Witch.¹ In this chapter, I critically examine the usage of these metaphors in books and newspaper articles about the senator by neutral observers, her supporters and detractors to unpack the layers of resistance that still exist against women in American public life. My thesis is that gendered conceptual metaphors, in variously imposing and/or retracting 'masculine' and/or 'feminine' traits, empower *and* disempower woman leaders.² Indeed, while some gendered conceptual metaphors of women in power (Madonna and Unruly Woman) give only by taking, others (Bitch and Witch) mostly only take. When deployed by neutral observers and even supporters of Hillary Clinton in 2008, the gendered metaphor of the Unruly Woman typically assigned strength to Hillary Clinton, only at the cost of her likeability. When the Bitch and Witch metaphors were used to put Hillary Clinton in the worst possible light, her detractors, many of whom are women, inadvertently took from her gender generally just as they took from Clinton specifically. The

safest bet, I conclude, is to use gendered metaphors as sparingly as possible.

12.2 Women (still) in the double bind

In recent years, a post-feminist narrative has emerged among some political observers. Women no longer face obstacles in entering the workplace or the public sphere; they have, for all intents and purposes, achieved equality with men. In one declarative swoop, Bay Buchanan dismissed the historical oddity that no woman has ever lived in the White House other than as a political consort. 'According to at least one national poll', Buchanan (2007: 192) confidently asserted, 'America has caught up with the rest of the world. It is ready to elect a woman president.' Hillary Clinton came close, but the pertinent fact is that she did not make it. Indeed I aim to show that our language usage in the 2008 election cycle indicates that we are some way off a post-feminist era.

Not only do traditional role expectations preclude women's departure from the 'private' sphere of the family into the 'public' sphere, when women do enter into politics, they often have to negotiate the disjunction between social definitions of femininity and leadership in what Anderson and Sheeler (2005: 6) have termed a 'double bind'. To be taken seriously in the public sphere hitherto dominated by men, women have had to shed their 'feminine' traits to become Unruly Women, the modal type of metaphor used to describe tough woman political leaders. However, in doing so these woman leaders were often perceived as domineering, arrogant and cold. Elizabeth I (The Virgin Queen), Dowager Empress Cixi (The Old Buddha), and Margaret Thatcher (The Iron Lady) are all remembered to be strong leaders, but they were thought so at the expense of their 'femininity' and likeability. In return for respect accorded to them as Unruly Women, woman leaders who adopted the metaphor paid their dues in likeability.

If, on the other end of the double bind, a woman entering politics makes no serious effort to negotiate a 'masculine' demeanour and even embraces her 'femininity' as a Madonna or Beauty Queen, she is likely to be perceived as vulnerable, weak and out of her league. But, because she is only covertly or partially overturning traditional role expectations, she would also appear less threatening and more appealing. What she loses in respectability, she gains in likeability. Governor Sarah Palin, John McCain's vice presidential nominee in 2008, well exemplifies this other side of the double bind. A former Miss Wasilla and Miss Congeniality, Palin could not have been a more perfect antithesis to Hillary

Clinton. There may be objective reasons for thinking Clinton to be unlikeable and competent and Palin to be likeable but incompetent, but it is surely more than coincidence that the two most prominent women in American politics in 2008 so perfectly occupied the two sides of the double bind.

In other words, traditional expectations of how a woman should behave are mutually exclusive the moment she steps out of the private into the public sphere. The double bind squeezes woman leaders into a practically non-existent bandwidth of what is acceptable behaviour for them. When it comes to embracing 'masculinity' as a survival tactic in the public sphere, women are damned if they do, doomed if they do not.

By this analysis, Hillary Clinton's 'likeability' problem is likely more than an idiosyncratic problem of her character or personality, but merely a restatement of the double bind dilemma that woman leaders face. She was the Unruly Woman, par excellence; unlikeable, polarizing, but by God, in charge. 'No one doubts Mrs. Clinton's ability to make war', as Peggy Noonan (2007) put it. Instead, Noonan continued, 'one worries about what has always seemed her characterological bellicosity'. The gendered dimension of the 'unlikeability' charge was manifest when Podhoretz (2006: 69) observed, 'when the nicest thing that's said about someone by her colleagues is that she's "hardworking", you're not going to win any Miss Congeniality awards'. The implication here was that the best thing Hillary Clinton could (should) have hoped for from her colleagues in the Senate was a consolation prize in a beauty pageant. And she could not even manage that, presumably because she was hunting for bigger game.

On the campaign trail in 2008, Hillary Clinton confronted the double bind head on. In a debate on January 5 after her defeat to Barack Obama in the Iowa caucuses, moderator Scott Spradling, citing a CNN/WMUR poll, suggested point blank to Clinton that voters simply liked Barack Obama more than they liked her. Clinton famously responded, 'that hurts my feelings'. Was she playing the 'gender card'? No more than the debate moderator and her fellow candidates who were ungraciously squeezing her into a double bind that none of them had to confront. Even after Clinton conceded that 'he's (Obama is) very likeable', Obama dug his heels in without a flinch, saying, 'You're likable enough, Hillary' (*The New York Times* 2008). This was perhaps Obama at his ugliest in his nomination battle with Clinton, but the comment was not always perceived as such probably because the media and the public had accepted the double bind as a given premise for aspiring woman politicians.

Even though Hillary Clinton was able to purchase an image of toughness at the cost of her likeability, there were still other 'masculine' prerequisites for the office she sought that she did not meet (Kann 1998, Gordon and Miller 2001). Podhoretz (2006: 60–1) minced no words in communicating as much: 'A president is, first and foremost, a leader. And the very image of the word *leader* invokes a masculine image, a father image ... those indefinable "leadership" qualities are the reason many Republicans quietly doubt Hillary's chances in 2008.' In particular, the often repeated charge that Hillary Clinton is 'polarizing' (Troy 2006) showed that she faced a peculiar double bind as an aspirant to the Oval Office. The founders of the US Constitution placed a premium on great or heroic leadership and 'patriot kingship', not on petty, divisive and factious leadership when designing, and then filling, the Oval Office. The patriot king, the model of leadership envisioned by the founders, stood above faction and party, unifying the diverse components of the body politic by standing as an imposing and inspiring model of virtue (Ketcham 1987, Cohen 2003, Roper 2004). Against these mythic expectations, the 'polarizing' narrative of Hillary Clinton stood as a coded counterpoise to the 'masculine' metaphor of patriot kingship – a metaphor that Hillary Clinton could not possibly deliver by virtue of her biological sex.

Clinton's botched efforts to manage the 'polarizing' critique on the 2008 campaign trail highlighted the difficulty of traversing the gendered landscape of politics without tripping on the landmines laid for women. Her attack on Barack Obama as idealistic not only made her appear mean (unlikeable), it appeared to endorse the premises of the 'polarizing' critique used against her. In characterising herself as a realist and someone who took charge, she effectively conceded that he was above politics and more equipped to unify the nation with his inspirational rhetoric and post-partisan politics than she was. Her use of the 'experience' versus 'change' slogans also subtly reinforced a gendered reading of men as adventurous and women as more risk-averse. Whereas Obama championed the 'audacity of hope', Hillary Clinton represented her gradual evolution from First Lady to presidential candidate as 'living history' rather than overtly *making* history (Clinton 2003, Obama 2006). In all of this, Hillary Clinton's successes on the campaign trail can be attributed in part to her ability to mine the rhetorical and metaphorical tools that were available and consonant with what was culturally familiar, just as some of her failures must be attributed to her failure to transcend them.

12.3 Gendered conceptual metaphors of Hillary Clinton in politics

For better or, as I believe, for worse, gendered metaphors of power are not merely stylistic devices but foundational to the making and our understanding of political identities and realities. Hillary Clinton's meteoric rise to political prominence accelerated a collision between extant understandings of power and women's role in the public sphere. Indeed, her transition from First Lady to junior senator of New York was unique in American history and a particular catalyst for metaphorical inventiveness because for 17 days in 2001, she was, discordantly, both a Madonna as First Lady and also an Unruly Woman Senator trying to break out of her role as political consort. Her metaphorical ascriptions switched as quickly as her political fortunes did, becoming more invidious as her ambitions grew.

The manner in which Hillary Clinton's competition for power has been metaphorically conceived reveals the opportunities and constraints under which she acted. That is why the analysis of conceptual metaphors is necessarily a critical enterprise, because their usage is often driven or accompanied by implicit or unconscious habits of the mind. As Robert Ivie (1990: 73–4) observed, 'all motives (are) entangled in metaphor's linguistic web'.

Metaphors are, as Richards (1936: 94) argued, a 'borrowing between the intercourse of thoughts, a transaction between contexts'. They facilitate comprehension of a relatively more abstract or foreign concept (a target domain) by comparison to that which is known or experienced (a source domain).³ The target domain, for our purposes, is the relatively unknown phenomenon of women in power, and the source domain is our understanding and lived experienced of the role of women in society. It should be immediately evident why gendered metaphors of power – indeed all metaphors – are backward looking in so far as and when they describe the new and foreign in terms of the old and experienced. We are far more likely to have experienced and therefore understand women as mothers and beauty queens than as senators or presidents. In the case of Hillary Clinton, she has been metaphorically compared to a Madonna mostly when she was First Lady, and, especially on the campaign trail from 2006 to 2008, an Unruly Woman, and variants thereof: a Bitch and a Witch. I attempt here to pierce the linguistic surface of these metaphors to offer a statement on the resistance to the idea of women in power encapsulated in our metaphorical usage, as well as to trouble the ontologies embedded in them.

12.3.1 Madonna

The Madonna metaphor is the metaphorical expression of the ideology of 'maternal feminism' (Ruddick 1980, Dow 1996). Proponents of maternal feminism, also known as the ideology of 'true womanhood', do not dismiss, but instead affirm the psychological traits and moral virtues traditionally associated with women and advocate the introduction of maternal sensibilities into the public sphere (Johnston 1992). Maternal feminists do not think it is inappropriate for women to wield power, only that they should and would do so productively only by accepting the legitimate premises of traditional gender roles.

In her first two years as First Lady, Hillary Clinton's perceived high-handedness and intransigence turned off those who expected her to deploy a 'maternal' rather than a 'rational-contractor' approach to the healthcare reform agenda of 1993–94 (Held 1987). By 1995, she learnt her lesson and toned down her 'unruliness' when she devoted her energies to championing more traditionally feminine causes: children and women's rights. One of the high points of her first ladyship was when she spoke at the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women. In her first book, *It Takes a Village*, she portrayed herself as mother and protector of the nation's children (Clinton 1996). Not surprisingly, her approval ratings as First Lady revised upwards as she embraced her expected gender role (Cohen 2000).

By blurring the boundaries between femininity and feminism, the Madonna advances the latter cause with the former method. As Madonna, Hillary Clinton won some and lost some. The double bind she faced in this stage of her life was that she was free to champion traditionally 'feminine' causes, but in focusing as such she upheld and reinscribed society's expectations about women's role in politics and the legitimate boundaries of their 'care'.

12.3.2 The Unruly Woman

Unlike the Madonna, the Unruly Woman fundamentally rejects traditional gender roles. That is why the Unruly Woman offends those who believe in the ideology of maternal feminism. According to Edward Klein (2005: 13): 'She (Hillary Clinton) was a mother, but she wasn't maternal. She was a wife, but she had no wifely instincts.' For Peggy Noonan (2007), Hillary Clinton 'doesn't have to prove she is a man, she has to prove she is a woman. Her problem is not her sex, as she and her campaign pretend. That she is a woman is a boon to her, a source of latent power. But to make it work, she has to *seem* like a woman.'

Although Noonan did not distinguish sex and gender, it fair to say that she was opposed not to Hillary Clinton's sex, but her misgendering. Clinton's problem was that she failed to act the appropriate part of 'true womanhood'.

Far from being an object of reverence or sexual fantasy, the Unruly Woman is a threat to men precisely because she aspires to be more than a Madonna or a Beauty Queen. Bay Buchanan attributed Hillary Clinton's 'unruliness' to the charge that she was never comfortable with her 'femininity'. For Buchanan (2007: 18), her frequent changes in hairstyle betrayed 'a deep sense of insecurity'. For John Podhoretz (2006: 62), Clinton could not pass for a Beauty Queen because she 'never quite figured out what to do with her hair or her clothes, the fact that she's not a raving beauty, and the fact that she has a manner that is almost pathologically unsexy'. In one fell swoop, Podhoretz reinscribed the double bind by trivialising the Beauty Queen and stigmatising Hillary Clinton as a failed woman. Yet it was precisely because Hillary Clinton was an 'unwomanly' woman that Hillary Clinton would be a formidable candidate for the presidency. Thus in taking, Podhoretz also gave (though not necessarily in equal measure), for he was giving notice that this was no ordinary woman that would rest content with male flattery and bribed with a tiara.

The Unruly Woman metaphor has also been adopted by supporters of Hillary Clinton, because it is a familiar metaphor that could be used to highlight Clinton's 'toughness'. Thus Carville and Penn (2006) have argued that while previous Democratic candidates have lacked a 'backbone', Hillary Clinton was a viable candidate because she was 'tough enough to handle the viciousness of a national campaign'. But the potential pitfalls of the metaphor reveal that it does not escape the clutches of the double bind. It merely highlighted the perception, according to Gerth and Van Natta (2007), that Clinton's 'forced, artificial demeanor' did not endear her to voters. As we saw in the Iowa caucuses in 2008, Hillary Clinton was by no means the obvious choice of Democratic women, who appeared to have been persuaded by the 'softer', less transactional and more 'inspirational' appeal of Barack Obama. The irony of Clinton's defeat in Iowa was that after spending years toning down her liberalism and her feminist radicalism, she learnt that she had to tone up her 'femininity' in order to win in New Hampshire. Carville and Penn were supporters of Hillary Clinton trying to shore up her eligibility to the Oval Office, but they did not realise that in offering her gender-weighted, as opposed to gender-neutral symbolic capital, they were giving as well as taking away from her.

A more recent example of when seemingly innocent or even well-meaning usages of gender metaphors can have negative feedback effects is Hillary Clinton's comparison of the public sphere to the kitchen, and correspondingly her campaign's use of the 'kitchen sink' metaphor to describe their tactics. In a speech in November 2007, Clinton (2007) said 'as Harry Truman said, if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen. I'll tell you what, I feel really comfortable in the kitchen.' Three months later after the Super Tuesday primaries when Obama opened up his lead against Clinton, Clinton aides and the media began to speak of a 'kitchen sink' strategy against Obama in the days leading up to the Ohio and Texas primaries. No one knows for sure how the term first caught on, but according to Healy and Bosman (2008), it was a 'Clinton aide' who had announced that the campaign would be launching a 'kitchen-sink' strategy against Obama. The term evolved from the English phrase 'everything but the kitchen sink', to denote something like 'everything imaginable/possible'. To throw even the kitchen sink then, is to launch even the impossible. Intended or not, the 'kitchen sink' metaphor for Clinton's tactics sustained the narrative that while Obama played by the rules, Clinton, the Unruly Woman, would stop at nothing. According to *The Economist* (2007),

Mrs Clinton's problems have forced her to abandon the high horse of inevitability for the boxing ring. Yet so far she has proved to be no great shakes as a pugilist. She excused her poor performance in a debate in Philadelphia by accusing her fellow (male) candidates of 'piling on' ... She is certainly one of America's most accomplished practitioners of the politics of personal destruction. But the skills that she perfected behind the scenes seem to be far less effective when they are practised in the limelight.

The political sphere is characterised in this article as a dignified, above-board, noble space in which virtuous and talented men competed, not a place in which systematic exclusions and scheming have taken place to ensure the outcome of political contests. The Unruly Woman does not only break the rules of gender and politics, but she is further characterised as someone who breaks the rules of gentlemanly engagement in order to break the rules of gender and politics.

The 'kitchen' and 'kitchen sink' metaphors were a bold attempt to respace and therefore to regender politics as a domestic space in which women are in charge, but in overreaching what was metaphorically possible with the 'kitchen' and 'kitchen sink', the Clinton campaign

ended up reinforcing the very stereotypes that their candidate's metaphorical inventiveness was intended to destroy. The 'kitchen sink' metaphor reminded people of the traditional role of women (in the kitchen or home) and Clinton's rebellion at it. The metaphor insinuated that whereas Barack Obama used the conventional weapons of war, Clinton would launch an improbable *deus ex machina* accessible only to her – a kitchen sink. In doing so, the metaphor said something about both Hillary Clinton's ambition *and* her gender: here was a fanatically power-hungry woman who would launch a wildly unconventional (even unmanly) weapon of destruction at a gentleman competitor because she could not handle a bare-knuckle fight with him. The phrase caught on, and was used frequently, without quotation marks, to describe Hillary Clinton's allegedly ruthless tactics. Thus Maureen Dowd (2008) observed as a matter of fact, 'by threatening to throw the kitchen sink at Obama, the Clinton campaign simply confirmed the fact that they might be going down the drain'.

To adopt and exaggerate role reversals disrupts gender hierarchies by focusing our attention on the social construction (and deconstruction) of gender. But the perceived incongruities evinced by role reversals also help, in some cases, to reinforce gender stereotypes. In generating discomfort among those unused to such role reversals, Unruly Women reinforce the 'unnaturalness' of their political agency because they fail (and often refuse) to address the illegitimate reaction of those disoriented by their actions. The Unruly Woman attempts to redefine boundaries, but because the metaphor also calls attention to the fact that the woman who attempts to do so blurs sexual and gender dichotomies, she succeeds only if she is able to calibrate her transgressions according to what her audience can stomach. When she is perceived to have gone too far, as some believe Hillary Clinton has, she graduates from Unruly Woman to Bitch, and then to Witch.

12.3.3 Bitch

For some of her critics, Hillary Clinton was a particularly offensive breed of Unruly Woman to be denigrated outright as a Bitch. Hillary Clinton was 'no Pat Nixon or Mamie Eisenhower – a quiet political wife. Nor was she Barbara Bush, the hard-as-nails First Lady who was, nonetheless, still a lady' (Podhoretz 2006: 35). In this observation, Podhoretz implied that a strong First Lady was still a lady if she was feline, but Hillary Clinton was not even that. To his credit, Podhoretz (2006: 67) went on to say exactly what he meant to say: 'Just for vulgarity's sake, let me put it this way: She's got to be a bitch. And Hillary

is a bitch.' Even when Hillary Clinton deigns to act her sex, she is accused of 'whining'. Buchanan (2007: 192) subtitles a section of her book, 'I Am Woman, Hear Me Whine'.

Whereas the Madonna and Unruly Woman metaphors may be considered as backhanded compliments (for, respectively, motherliness and strength) when deployed, Bitch is squarely offensive. The Bitch is not only misgendered, as the Unruly Woman is, but dehumanised and animalised. As such, the Bitch is liberated from the double bind, at least in the sense that the metaphor takes without giving anything in return. (Bitch should not be mistaken for *Son of a Bitch*, which is, predictably and revealingly, a gendered metaphor of *men* in positions of power, and therefore occasionally construed as an accolade. In contrast, there are no redeeming qualities to a Bitch.)

Unlike the graceful Madonna and the classy Beauty Queen, the Unruly Woman qua Bitch can be picked out by her temper and bursts of profanity, a metaphorical entailment of her threatening disruption of traditional gender roles. Thus Carl Limbacher (2003: 89–90) devoted an entire chapter of his book detailing Hillary Clinton's 'scorching tirades'. Gail Sheehy (1999: 11) observed that 'She is angry. Not all of the time. But most of the time.'

12.3.4 Witch

Although the Witch may have become a more socially acceptable metaphor than the Bitch ('rhymes with witch', Barbara Bush once referred to Hillary Clinton), she is in fact the most resented breed of Unruly Woman. That is because while the Unruly Woman is just a bad mother or a disobedient wife, the Witch is in open rebellion with society and God (the guardian of social norms). She is not just dehumanised and animalised like the Bitch is, but demonised.

Witches are frequently identified by the shrillness of their voice and the deviousness of their laughter. Thus Rick Klein and Mike Chesney (2007) characterised Hillary Clinton as 'shrill on the stump and evasive in debates and interviews. Her laughter makes her sound like the Wicked Witch of the West.' The shrillness of the Witch's voice is observed not merely as an inadvertent mannerism of an Unruly Woman, it becomes, in a Witch, an expression of deviousness. For Sheldon Filger (2006: 36), there is method in the Witch's madness: 'Her voice became hysterical, jumping several octaves, while her cheekbones protruded with excitement, simultaneously with her eyes glaring with hypnotic intensity.' Maureen Dowd (2008) observed that Hillary Clinton's campaign for the nomination can be summarised as 'a primal scream against the golden

child of Chicago, a clanging and sometimes churlish warning that “all that glitters is not gold”.

Why this demonisation? In Hillary Clinton’s case, it was because she forged ‘a new kind of marriage’ in which she defended her husband’s infidelity in return for his political coat-tails (Podhoretz 2006: 36). The Clinton marriage was perceived to be ‘unnatural’, and therefore unholy because it was not merely (if at all) about the conventional and natural reasons of love and sexual intimacy but also about the unusual and unnatural reasons of ambition and expediency. Their marriage was perceived to be so ‘unorthodox’ that it ‘verged on partner swapping’, according to Carl Limbacher (2003: 162). To highlight its unnaturalness, Klein questioned the sex life of the former first couple: ‘Was it true they slept in separate beds? Were there any telltale signs on the presidential sheets that they ever had sex with each other? For that matter, did the Big Girl have any interest in sex with a man?’ As if the insinuation was not clear enough, Klein (2005: 12) continued, ‘or, as was widely circulated, was she a lesbian?’ Hillary Clinton was perceived to be an especially dangerous species of Unruly Woman just as a lesbian is especially threatening to men because, unlike other women, she is in direct competition with men for something that men want, be it female attention or political power.

Thus according to Bay Buchanan (2007: 80), ‘In a Faustian bargain, Hillary bartered it (her idealism) all away – sold the very contents of her heart – for a pint of power.’ Like a Witch, she is a cold, heartless entity. Crucially, the bargain Buchanan described was not between Hillary and Bill, but between Hillary and the devil. Bill could offer no incentive alluring enough for the avaricious Witch. Her compact for power was such a transgression of the natural order that it could only be guaranteed by the devil himself. This metaphorical invention allowed Buchanan to say both that Hillary Clinton’s power was derivative and illegitimate, but also formidable. It explains the apparent inconsistency when Hillary Clinton’s critics accuse her of riding on Bill’s coat-tails while also portraying her as partner-in-crime with Bill, calling the couple ‘the firm of Clinton and Clinton’ (Buchanan 2007: 186). The potential elaboration of the Witch metaphor also explains why it would be politically suicidal for Hillary Clinton to divorce Bill – she would then become an old widow, and even more easily compared to a sexually spurned and depraved Witch trading sexual favours with the devil.

The central metaphorical entailment of the Witch is the idea that she deceives. Just like the evil queen transformed herself into an old hag to trick Snow White into eating her poisoned apple, the Witch

must be made over in order that she may deceive her victims and achieve her ends. In the case of Hillary Clinton, she has been accused of attempting to bewitch the electorate with her 'extreme makeover'. 'For six years Hillary has been under the knife ... as the experts attempted to transform her from that spirited and divisive left-wing media darling who made such good right-wing copy into a more serious national figure' (Buchanan 2007: 186). After her makeover, the Wicked Witch of the Left became, according to Bay Buchanan (2007: 185), 'The Stepford Candidate'. And thus John Podhoretz (2006: 8) articulated the conservative fear that Hillary Clinton would be 'liberalism('s) ... Trojan Horse'. Barbara Olson (1999: 4) has conceded that Hillary Clinton was not alone in the virtuosity of her image reconstruction compared to other politicians, but it is revealing that she would compare Hillary Clinton to Richard Nixon and judge in favour of him by the criteria of 'conscience'. 'The supreme irony', Olson observed, 'is that this 1960s liberal ... has become even more darkly Nixonian in her outlook and methods – though without Nixon's knowledge, statesmanlike substance, and redemptive Quaker conscience'. Hillary Clinton, by Olson's reading, used methods even darker than the ones used by the only US president to resign in disgrace. And however corrupt Nixon was, Olson believed that he at least had a soul.

In reaching, at least rhetorically, for supernatural explanations, many of the criticisms made against Hillary Clinton are attempts to rationalise the putatively irrational. As Podhoretz put it quite straightforwardly, 'if a case is made that Hillary's elevation will profoundly alter the balance between the sexes ... every man might see Hillary as his antithesis, and every parent might see her elevation as a thwarting of his or her son's ambitions' (Podhoretz 2006: 59). The convenient way to make sense of the social, political and cognitive chaos that Clinton's intrusion into politics would make was simply to characterise her as a Witch and to hunt her down.

Consider the fact that the entire basis of Bay Buchanan's book places an incredibly high bar for Clinton's eligibility for the presidency that no observer of politics will expect of any politician: 'has an honest transformation taken place, a heartfelt conversion?' (Buchanan 2007: 11) But in what world has the path of power not been driven by ambition, marked by moral compromise and abetted by political U-turns? Certainly not in the case of Rudy Giuliani, who told CNN in 1999 that 'I'm pro-abortion. I'm pro gay rights', or Mitt Romney, who declared when he was running for the Massachusetts governorship that 'abortion should be safe and legal in this country' and promised that 'you will not see me wavering' on *Roe v. Wade*.⁴ Only Hillary Clinton's makeover has spawned a

cottage industry exposing the 'real' Hillary Clinton. Consider another charge: 'Hillary Clinton is traveling the country on a heavily orchestrated "listening tour", carrying on insipid "conversations" and "chats" with audiences that are predominantly women. It's enough to set the cause of women back a generation' (Buchanan 2007: 194). Buchanan does not explain how Clinton's 'listening tour' is any different from John McCain's 'Straight Talk Express' or the 'swings round the circle' that practically every president or presidential candidate since at least Theodore Roosevelt has embarked on. Yet only Hillary Clinton has been characterised as a scheming, deceptive Witch.

Here is what is suspect about the 'Trojan Horse' argument. If Clinton were so ambitious as to do whatever it takes to get to power, why would she come out of her centrist closet and risk getting booted out of power for her second term were she to be elected? Consider Bay Buchanan's musing: 'One wonders whatever happened to the Hillary who fought so long to keep her own name after she married ... But Hillary lost her way, giving in to her insecurity by conforming' (Buchanan 2007: 38). Yet the first sentence of Buchanan's book contradicts her own conclusion that Hillary had lost her way and conformed: 'Hillary Rodham Clinton has been many things throughout her life, but one thing she has always been is a dedicated, unapologetic liberal' (Buchanan 2007: 1). Either Hillary Clinton is a sell-out or she is an unapologetic liberal. The Trojan Horse argument insists, inconsistently, that she is both. Damned if she does, doomed if she does not.

12.4 Gendered metaphors of women in power: beware

Metaphorical politics is an art, and one that women politicians and people describing them must engage with delicately because they are working with entrenched popular and cultural stereotypes embedded in the structure of language itself. Gendered metaphors of women in power, in particular, are dangerous because they force their users into placing women in a double bind the moment they are deployed. Ultimately, gendered metaphors of women in power cannot avoid perpetuating gender-sexual systems that privilege masculinity and males (Haste 1994). As these metaphors are rooted, at least in part, on extant and therefore retrogressive understandings of women's roles, they should be deployed as sparingly as is possible. Instead of unreflectively using these metaphors as convenient figures of speech, even when they give to women leaders more than they take, we should question the ontologies embedded in their usage. We should not feel obliged to

conceptualise the unthinkable with unsatisfactory linguistic tools. The day we can disagree or even hate Hillary Clinton in a language which is not gender-biased is the day where we have transcended the real glass ceiling of equal respect among women and men.

Notes

- 1 I adopt the categories of Madonna and Unruly Woman from Anderson and Sheeler (2005).
- 2 I use 'masculine' and 'feminine' as categories that are reified in popular usage and cultural understandings, not to endorse their ontological reality.
- 3 I adopt the helpful language of 'source' and 'target' domains from Lakoff (1987). On 'entailments', see Lakoff and Johnson (1981: 287).
- 4 Giuliani cited in Podhoretz (2006: 232); Romney cited in Ruth Marcus, 'Mitt Romney's Extreme Makeover', *The Washington Post*, 21 February 2007, A15, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/02/20/AR2007022001266.html> (accessed 9 January 2008).

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