THE SPLIT SUBJECT IN (NEO-)LIBERAL GLOBAL CONTEXT: GENDERED LEADERSHIP IN MEDIA SPECTACLE

By

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Abstract

Leadership is performed, neither innate nor learned, and gendered. There are impossible performances of the "leader" and failings in such performance that play out in mass media representations. These representations accumulate into spectacle that re-inscribes leadership as masculine and reconstitutes gendered and minority difference and consequent disadvantage in attaining leadership positions. Because liberal democratic rhetoric circulates (and sometimes enforced) globally through transnational organizations, there is a ideal belief in equal opportunity for anyone who uses the tools of liberalism such as independence, perseverance, and choice. Media spectacle plays a transnational role in articulating and reinstating these impossible performances of women leaders through repetition of normative masculine leaders and restating the preponderance of liberal opportunity. I use Butler's theory of performativity of gender and apply this to leadership. Through Debord's discussion of spectacle and society, I locate within the spectacular production the impossible performance expectations and stereotypes that work to undermine women's leadership potential. I show how the media representations, in their urgent, rapidly-produced present, work against the discourse on equality and international cooperation and inclusion. I conclude that, in order for equality of access to leadership to become a possibility, media representations and spectacle must enact a more nuanced approach to their representations. Because of the pressures of profit and consumer appeal, this proposition remains without incentive for media groups and companies involved. I also suggest reconceptualizing the nation-state and implementing educational reforms to foster media literacy.

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[1] As my leg muscles atrophy in this chair in the basement of the CEU library, I want to list "You all," in no particular order, with some side comments: Mihai (for the inspiration and collaboration), Irina (my muse through the clouds), Zuska (walks, talks, and district XIII!), Heather (running and rejuvenation of all kinds), Orsi (Erinnerungen von Győr), Rachel (moral support from L.A.), and many others…

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Introduction

"The engineering of consent is the very essence of the democratic process, the *freedom* to persuade and suggest."[2]

Democracy presupposes informed voters; a capitalist economy presupposes betterment through competition; liberalism and neoliberalism emerged out of the philosophy of "free men" and choice. The assumptions and presumptions contained within these monolithic terms are the flaws which prevent attention to detail and to difference. As with a blind faith in myopic economic and governmental systems, presumptions and stereotypes within the social are detrimental, constraining, and the opposite of *free*. Unanswerable questions like: What is a "real" democracy? Who is a "real" leader? What characteristics set apart a women leader? Why does neither the neoliberal capitalist model nor the seemingly inclusive liberal social ideal function adequately everywhere? Among the many gendered effects brought on by globalization, media consolidation is tantamount in its reach and dominance of the public sphere. A less discussed effect is that, because of this consolidation and profit-oriented business of the media, the accepted and hetero-normative elements of society are perpetuated as they are perceived to be comfortable for entertainment purposes and for the pleasure of the audience. This keeps an inflexible leadership model in place.

Transnational mass media entertainment is heavily gendered in the areas where women are visible and invisible. As leaders, women are rarely shown without some allusion to their sex and gender roles, and their life experiences present spectacular possibilities for entertainment. Leadership is performed, neither innate nor learned, and gendered. There are impossible performances of the "leader" and failings in such performance that play out in

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[2] Ewen, Stuart. *PR! A Social History of Spin.* New York: Basic Books, c. 1996, p. xiv, quoting Edward L. Bernays' *The Engineering of Consent*, 1947, my italics.

mass media representations. "Leader" is an empty subjectivity used in contemporary neo-liberal discourse as a model for others, a symbol of the nation-state, and a reminder of a traditional governmental institution which is supposed to provide some sort of continuity in the global marketplace. Spectacular representations accumulate into spectacle that re-inscribes leadership as masculine and reconstitutes gendered and other minority disadvantage. These democratic regimes that continue to rely upon the same leadership qualities for their leaders cannot claim itself as an opponent or opposite of non-democratic regimes. Media spectacle within these regimes relies on impossible performances of women leaders to keep a normative check within society. This plays upon difference of women in a purportedly "post-feminist" age when "equal opportunity" is a household word. This liberal social discourse on freedom, responsibility, and "self-starters" within the capitalist meritocracy over-shadows women's and other minority efforts and struggles to break out of stereotypical roles.

My paper seeks to elaborate further on this topic by bringing together what I see as some of the pre-dominant ideology of the twenty-first century and women's leadership possibilities. I argue that, while women have some success in receiving more egalitarian media coverage in their leadership positions, the media, with their language, inference, images, and commentary, continue to use whatever difference and transgressions they can to unmask women's performance of any authority or leadership with the spectacle of entertainment. I analyze media representations of German Chancellor Angela Merkel and US Senator Hilary Clinton in particular in order to show the subtleties of media representation and to critique what I see as the media's license to exploit difference, sex, and gender under the safety of a liberal and Enlightenment-based ideal of the free democratic society. I propose two solutions in the conclusion regarding education and media literacy as well as a rethinking of the nation-state as the main culprit of power which the media should

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monitor. Globalized media contribute to a proliferation of private mega-industries and networks of media which, in their size, cloud individual responsibility to presenting coherent and intelligent information. Women leaders work to construct themselves as legitimate figures of authority using a vocabulary of traditional leader characteristics. With historical precedent and sexist expectations (however subtle) against women leaders, there is an on-going struggle for meaning and value in different (gendered) characteristics.

Chapter 1 Theoretical Framework

In a media saturated society, members of this society use the performativity of leadership to code and establish themselves as appropriate leaders. Performance signs and styles police boundaries of gender identity and likewise work to stabilize the concepts of authority and leadership. I argue that there is a correlation between leadership and gender in that they are both socially constructed, culturally dependent, and rely upon a series of seemingly unified enactments in an attempt to justify their importance and legitimize power hierarchies. These power hierarchies are contained within a patriarchal and heteronormative social and political context which is infused with spectacular media production and information dispersal regimes.

1.1 Gendered Performance & Leadership Performance

I situate my work within the discourse on performativity, particularly among Judith Butler's theory of repetition of the performative; she argued that gender is a "reenactment and re-experiencing of a set of meanings already socially established."[3] This applies to the performance of leadership. Leadership rituals are enacted constantly as the leader is constructed as a coherent subject within media spectacle, and yet this construction of leadership is always incoherent and splintered. Gender, likewise, is constructed as clear and yet it is constantly destabilized. According to Butler, gendered roles are performed again and again; established as "natural," and not predicated on any authentic original.[4] Supposedly stable gendered identities must be performed to maintain their influence and dominance; "actors" perform and rehearse gender and leadership over time, and the "script" of gender-appropriate behavior and characteristics remains.[5] Gender-appropriate stylizations and signs constitute leadership performance because leadership is a heavily gendered social role. The

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[3] Butler, Judith (1988) "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" *Diaspora*, p. 906

[4] Ibid., p. 905-6

[5] Ibid., p. 906

repetition of that masculine role within media representation works to reconstitute specific leadership qualities considered masculine such as strong, stoic, decisive, unemotional, and even combative or aggressively individualistic.

Leadership performance has at its disposal a style script of gendered and heteronormative components. Actors in the public spectacle make use of previous styles of the body, comportment, adornment, and other visual, physical, and rhetorical cues. In managing his/her leadership performance, the leader can pull from historical and cultural precedents what appropriate signs to use in evoking capability and legitimacy in their position. Although I argue later on that types of leadership are shifting, the disciplined repetition of certain signs and stereotypes sustained through media spectacle endure. Butler describes how the "disciplinary production of gender effects a false stabilization of gender in the interests of the heterosexual construction and regulation of sexuality within the reproductive domain."[6] While the regulation of sexuality maintains itself within Butler's heterosexual matrix, the disciplined enactment of gendered roles and norms works to reproduce leadership as masculine. "An illusion of a gender core" is created by the performance.[7] A woman leader's gendered performance is in direct tension with the performance of leadership which requires a masculine gender performance, insofar as leadership schemas, while becoming more flexible, remain tied historically to classical notions of (paternal) authority and affiliations with the military. The common assumption about leaders is that they must possess innate characteristics and talents which confer his/her authority to lead. These characteristics, which I discuss later, are altering in the context of liberal social ideals and a neoliberal economic system which has made certain narratives of living and success more prominent through international mass media spectacle.

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[6] Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge, 1990, p. 184-5

[7] Ibid., p. 186

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Because gender is believed to have visible cues that indicate an individual's (sexual) identity to observers, the important point of performativity in this context is that gender is not naturally occurring or inherent within human difference. According to Butler, gender is "a kind of a doing, an incessant activity performed, in part, without one's knowing."[8] The woman leader, her presence and roles being simultaneously problematic *and* welcomed (in terms of state-level diversity policy and transnational gender-mainstreaming efforts), embodies the paradox of the female-gendered body in a high-level position of authority. "Some performative accomplishments claim the place of nature or…symbolic necessity," a process which gives the masculine model of leadership its dominance through repeated enactment in public and mass media cultures.[9]

In performing a leader role, women (and some men) re-inscribe themselves with certain signs to signal their capabilities, personalities, and shared styles of those leaders who preceded them. More specifically, women have employed a *leadership drag* to imitate and perform leadership authority within (Western) political and corporate contexts. By using drag to connote women's leader performance, I rely on what I see as the connection and informative relationship between the two performances, the way they are normalized and reified, and the reliance upon them of power relationships. Through a critique of these performances, I aim to undermine the stock of signs and spectacles the leadership performative continues to utilize through mass spectacle. Furthermore, leadership drag functions in the same fashion as drag relating to gender; according to Butler:

"In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself—as well as its contingency…between sex and gender in the face of cultural configurations…assumed to be natural and necessary."[10]

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[8] Butler, Judith. *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge, 2004, p. 1
[9] Ibid., p. 209
[10] Butler (1990), p. 187

Gender's inherent imitation indicates its performativity and fabricated "configurations" of activities, positions, and performances. Within lifestyle, self-help, and leadership literatures, often the naturally talented and capable leader appears and functions as a legitimate enactment and embodiment of leadership. Likewise, within the media spectacle "what makes certain kinds of parodic repetitions effectively disruptive, truly troubling, and which repetitions become domesticated and recirculated" is what I pinpoint in my data collection.[11]

While the performativity of leadership acknowledges the illusion of coherence and stability of leaders in their performances and subjectivities, the coding of leadership as male situates the performances within a tradition of the non-performative, naturalized masculine. A lexicon of signs that are taken up and performed by many (not just political, international leaders, but local leaders, also utilized within the business and economic contexts) continue their un-marked masculinity. Halberstam writes of the "non-performative nature of masculinity" in that it is conventionally seen as "just" being, "no-nonsense," and not to be imitated. Therefore, masculinity and all of its associations "adhere 'naturally' and inevitably to men."[12] Outcomes of this unseen masculinity and hetero-normative assumptions of leadership within the political and the social are therefore rarely examined in Anglo-American and European mass media and public discourse.

1.2 Debord, Spectacle, and Gender

Through his formulation of the spectacle and society, I gender Debord's analysis by applying it to the media spectacle's production of the political leader. Because leadership is a performance and an insubstantial repetition of previous styles, I attend to the impossible performances of women politicians by critiquing their re-presentation and image circulation and audience expectation. Debord's gender-less analysis is useful in deconstructing the

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[11] Ibid., p. 189

[12] Halberstam, Judith. *Female Masculinity*. Durham, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998, p. 235

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function and phenomenon of media today. I put Debord into dialogue with elements of Appadurai's concept of "scapes" in the globalizing modern with the objective of bringing Debord into the current schizophrenia of international mass media production and the complexity of the dynamics between that production and audience.

The performance of leadership works, as in the performance of gender, within a specific cultural context. My analysis is situated within the post-industrial, democratic, and (post-)capitalist "West," focusing on Anglophone and German media contexts. Within this, the "spectacle is both the outcome and the goal of the dominant mode of production…[and] is the very heart of society's real unreality."[13] The spectacle constructs "realities" of people's lives within capitalism (manipulation and propaganda permeate new media) and presents them back to the viewer/audience. Experiencing news media reports and representations is witnessing a spectacle, which has been orchestrated by a variety of actors (researchers, writers, producers), with the aid of public interest surveys, opinion polls, and dependent upon resources available to the news source. Spectacular logic, incorporating entertainment spectacle and sustaining itself upon its self-made image accumulation, effectively flattens the leader into a simplified and stereotyped star. According to Debord, the individual "who is in the service of the spectacle is placed in stardom's spotlight" becomes the "opposite of an individual" as he or she is "a model to be identified with" whose individuality (deviations perhaps) must be subsumed under the spectacular necessity to represent a "model."[14] This individual "renounces all autonomy in order himself to identify with the general law of obedience to the course of things."[15] Here Debord describes a giving up of the self, whatever part that may be for a public figure and specifically for leaders.

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[13] Debord, Guy. Transl. By Donald Nicholson-Smith. *The Society of the Spectacle*. New York: Zone Books, 1995 , p. 13

[14] Ibid, p. 39

[15] Ibid

Women, in order to go along with this "law of obedience" to a leadership "model" simultaneously deny and use their gender in the spectacle. Public figures in leadership positions utilize this system of signification to (re-)create their image within the media, as the media simultaneously (re-)presents the leaders' performances within the spectacle. These spectacular representations also pay homage to these models or stereotypes and also play upon audience anxieties. Twentieth century leadership examples offer "abundant evidence that [transferring responsibility onto a leader] can be powerful in an age of mass society, formal freedoms, and sometimes disastrous economic pressures."[16] The leader must submit to the spectacle by enacting the model of leadership. Through this model, they are commodifed (and commodify themselves) in the condition of "stardom's spotlight."

This spectacular media permeates society and through repetition of images of seemingly coherent leadership (authority) reconstitutes gendered assumptions with respect to leaders. Images of women's leadership are often sensationalized to their fullest as political leadership remains male-dominated. For example, the exceptional occurrence of a woman leader in international leadership lineup (German Chancellor Angela Merkel) is highlighted with zeal in the media spectacle; her leader status is simultaneously factual (she is lined up on equal ground with other leaders at the G8 summit) and impossible and unbelievable (she does not *fit* in). Her performance is impossible in its embodiment of her as a leader; her existence as a leader is justified and analyzed in terms of her gender.[17] While numerous normative (masculine) leadership traits are performed by the woman leader with varying degrees of visual, diplomatic, and political success, she is the "other" and scrutinized as such. The attraction to a newness and exceptional quality of the woman leader is recreated again

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[16] Edelman, Murray. *Constructing the Political Spectacle*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1988, p. 39

[17] Her difference is further reiterated through actions of her male counterparts. A supreme example of difference establishment through action is the "Groper Gate" incident of US President George W. Bush attempting to massage the shoulders of the German Chancellor.

and again through the media spectacle for the sake of audience fascination. The entwining of

state priorities and traditions and myths of gendered leadership with mass media's spectacle,

reliant upon economic and governmental systems using gender stereotypes and divisions of

labor, function to reinstate a seemingly 'unnatural'-ness of female leadership. Furthermore,

according to Debord, "media stars are the spectacular representations of living human beings,

distilling the essence of the spectacle's banality into images of possible roles."[18] Hence, the

representations of 'personalities' such as Clinton's or Merkel's simultaneously claim to

depict them and reproduce assumptions about "female" leadership.

The spectacle as "the ruling order," its "most stultifying superficial manifestation"

being the mass media, "discourses endlessly upon itself."[19] This "endless" process is in

correlation with the endless repetition of gendered performances needed to legitimate the

leader image. Debord writes of the all-pervading "discourses" of the spectacle:

> "The fetishistic appearance of pure objectivity in spectacular relationships conceals their true character
> as relationships between human beings and between classes; a second Nature thus seems to impose
> inescapable laws upon our environment."[20]

The "mass media" appears to be an infecting or infectious "*apparatus*."[21] The spectacle is

the product of the "field of economy" which has become the dictator of the "spectacular

market" and the leader is commodified and packaged by image managers.[22] Due to the

social-capitalist obsession with efficiency, the spectacle's "consummable pseudo-cyclical

time…the time appropriate to the consumption of images"[23] is one cause for the reduction of

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[18] Debord (1995), p. 38

[19] Ibid., p. 19

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., p. 37-8

[23] Ibid., p. 112

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women leaders (and men) into personalities awash in stereotypes and dramaturgy[24] which appeal to what is supposedly always already assumed or believed about gender.

Media characterizations of women leaders are parts of a repertoire of *already recognized meaning*. Through visual and linguistic choices, media presentations form the leader; Debord states that the "choice [is] *already made* in the sphere of production…[and] serves as total justification for the conditions and aims of the existing system."[25] Its "omnipresent" force is indefatigable and is also a "celebration" of choices having already been made.[26] A further alienation of the spectator occurs by way of mimicking the "external" spectacles' actors' gestures; "the individual's gestures are no longer his own, but rather those of someone else who represents them to him."[27] Here, Debord could be referring to the performativity of leadership; "the individual" figure in the spectacle that is a supreme model of success and stamina and who, through that alienated performative, dictates to the viewer the gestures of that success.

1.3 Conclusion

Butler's theory of performativity strongly supports my argument about the performativity of leadership within the public spectacle. Through repetition of both unstable identities (a gender role that is traditionally and historically constructed to exist separately from a leadership role), leadership is continuously reinstated as male. The spectacle of global media still saturates social space with predominantly masculine leadership images. Debord's "society of the spectacle" anticipated the twenty-first century dilemma of information dispersion and obsession with image control, particularly in his discussion of

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[24] Edelman (1988), p. 40 "The term 'leader' evokes an ideal type which high public officials try to construct themselves to fit. In this sense leadership is *dramaturgy*; for regardless of the consequences of officials' actions, which contemporaries cannot know, the ability to create oneself as the ideal type maintains followings."

[25] Debord (1995), p. 13

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid., p. 23

media "stars" and in his critique of an apparatus that perpetuates itself with its own "internal logic." Butler's is a theory honed at the end of a millennium and a century of unprecedented technological invention. My goal is to make clear that leader constitution is inseparable from the constitution of gender roles and stereotypes and that its performance for women leaders, due to current re-presentation and glossing over with liberal rhetoric, remains intensely problematic and, at this point, impossible.

Chapter 2: Impossible Performances

2.1 Contemporary Leadership: Circulating Global Enlightenment

Contemporary ideas about leadership and shifts in the beliefs about its acquisition and maintenance create a space for re-conceptualizations of the leader regarding gender, race, and indicators of the "Other." With the increased media options and globalizing currents of information affecting societies previously unconnected, certain discourses on leadership and authority (and their attainment) are locally and globally accepted, judged, and rejected or implemented. In particular, because of hegemonic political values and economic policies of transnational regimes (the United Nations, and World Bank and International Monetary Fund respectively) attempting to regulate across borders, there has been a spread of neoliberal capitalist economic reforms and liberal social values which espouse a doctrine of equality and equal opportunity in what Appadurai termed "mediascapes" and "ideoscapes."[28] Within his examination of globalization and modernity, Appadurai's "ideoscapes" are particularly salient here because they are "concatenations of images" particular to state ideologies and are often politically motivated. The ideoscapes contain "elements of the Enlightenment worldview, which consists of a chain of ideas…including freedom, welfare, rights, sovereignty, representation, and the master term democracy."[29] These Enlightenment ideals and liberal values are incorporated into the international media spectacle and inform the "spectacular logic" of creating leaders. For example, a new type of governance pushed in the 1990's by the "New Labour" party of Britain "goes beyond politics and government to include, for instance, business, non-governmental organizations, and international agencies

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[28] Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, p. 35: Mediascapes provide "large and complex repertoires of images, narratives, and [persons constituting the shifting world] to viewers throughout the world, in which the world of commodities and the world of news and politics are profoundly mixed."

[29] Ibid, p.36

such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund."[30] Within this "Third Way"

doctrine of "agency" and "causality" is the prioritization of "fundamental American values"

like opportunity and responsibility.[31] Fairclough traces these developments in governance

among the UK, US, and European Union countries. European Union documents use similar

language regarding "investment" in training and education on "an equal basis."[32]

Internationalization of media has brought about a new level of influence for these

organizations who have "taken on increasingly powerful roles in managing relations among

the most developed nations and negotiating the terms of development (and

underdevelopment) in the rest of the world."[33]

In this chapter, I discuss the performance of leadership as not only always imperfect,

but also impossible for those who do not fit into the historical hegemonic typing of a leader

as white male.[34] I critique how dominant media sources reinstate inequality of gender

through their own prioritization of leaderships (political or governmental leaders versus

social leaders) and the abbreviation of political leaders into stereotypes even as they advocate

liberal values within representational narratives. New conceptualizations of leadership,

ushered in by classic liberal political and social discourse described above, have paved a

possible route for women to access leadership positions and to fit more into the prescribed

role of a leader. This possible route begins where the value of equality, equal representation,

rights and freedom is espoused because, theoretically, women are formally considered

citizens in most countries where the international media spectacle operates. Women and

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[30] Fairclough, Norman. *New Labour, New Language?* Routledge: London, 2000 , p. 66

[31] Ibid., p. 69

[32] Ibid., p. 75

[33] Mosco and Rideout in Corner, Schlesinger and Silverstone (1997), p. 174

[34] Due to how news is prioritized globally and where media groups and networks are centered, the white male is the dominant presented race within the global media spectacle.

other minorities, although thoroughly excluded from the Enlightenment philosophy centuries before, are now supposed participants within the "chain of ideas" Appadurai outlines above.

Women's inclusion, however, is strategic within media representations; where the woman leader figures advantageously into the spectacular logic of entertainment and cohesion of illusion and personalities, she is used and highlighted. When her gendered performance imitates (masculine) qualities of the proscribed leadership stereotype of costume and action, the conventional narrative of liberalism is meant to ignore her gender and render her performance successful in the equal opportunity context. These image imitations and stereotypes are made visible through her gender, although they remain unaddressed in media, pinpoints the unsuccessful performance in its inherent reliance upon signs of authority and leadership, draped or enacted by the woman leader. Alternatively and simultaneously, the visibility of the woman leader, as it accumulates within the spectacle, alters the leadership stereotypes and promotes new leadership subjectivities. However, within mass media representations, control of production and representation of leaders is in hyper-temporal flux, with (women) leaders strategically crafting their own images while being subject to an unmasking of their performance. This tension, I will argue in the next chapter, works to destabilize all performances of leadership to varying degrees, but especially for individuals with managed identities.

2.1.1 Circulating Global Enlightenment

A leader performs and embodies authority. Leadership is possible with different types of authority and consent of the led. The term "leader" suggests "an ideal type which high public officials try to construct themselves to fit. In this sense leadership is dramaturgy; for regardless of the consequences of officials' actions, which contemporaries cannot know,

the ability to create oneself as the ideal type maintains followings."[35] Authority or

"auctoritas" connotes a "top-down command" with even "forceful implementation."[36]

Roman conceptualizations of authority were associated with the virtues of honor, dignity,

glory, or, translated into today's socially salient and marketable terms, profitability, self-

determination, "selling yourself" on the market, and success. For example, the "auctoritas

senatus" was the governmental body leading (male) governing persons and consisted of

many political and military elite who were members for life.[37] Contemporary authority is

also associated with trust and faith, having origins of "auctoritas" within religion (as "God

the Father"), the state (the U.S. motto of "In God We Trust"), and the family. Edelman

paints very gendered images of "a leader apparently offers the security and also the sternness

associated with the father."[38] The highly gendered "family metaphor" of legitimate and

"natural" authority, while explicit in personality cults of leaders (Stalin, Mussolini, Hitler,

and Mao), implicitly continues to represent even personify institutions themselves.[39]

Ideas about leadership as they circulate transnationally may contain some or all of

these associations as historical notions of military, spiritual, government, and business

leadership change. The former hierarchies of enforcement and coercion of top-down leaders

are renamed in liberal-friendly language as inspirational, motivational leaders who are team

players who nurture cooperation and compliance. The current, global executive or chief

executive is cloaked in dichotomies: tough but sensitive; common but extraordinary;

"natural" yet achieved. The shift in desired leadership qualities from an authority based on

enforcement to a leadership based on inclusion, teamwork, understanding (particularly across

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[35] Edelman (1988), p. 40

[36] Nippel, Wilfried. "The Roman Notion of Auctoritas" in Pasquale Pasquino and Pamela Harris, eds. *The Concept of Authority: A Multidisciplinary Approach: from epistemology to the social sciences.* Rome: Fondazione Adriano Olivetti, 2007, p. 13

[37] Ibid., pp.14-15

[38] Edelman (1988), p. 39

[39] Ullmann-Margalit (2007), pp. 55-56

cultures), and creativity within global social and economic governance has opened up possibilities for alternative conceptions of leadership. This is especially true for women who are essentialized as possessing many of these attributes. However, traditional schemas remain. For example, in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, Britain's former Prime Minister Tony Blair's decision to send troops in support of the US went against massive public anti-war demonstrations. His determination was "lauded in many [media] quarters as a sign of principled leadership." Blair becomes the epitome of the masculine in "his belief that dealing with Saddam Hussein is essential to rescue the Iraqi people and protect the world from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction." Blair becomes the epitome of the masculine in "his belief that dealing with Saddam Hussein is essential to rescue the Iraqi people and protect the world from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction." [40]

Performing the masculine leadership role of leader becomes partially more attainable for the female/woman performer when traditional signs and actions are discussed quite plainly within a culture. For example, Schein's (2001) investigations on managerial leadership over two decades confirm the assumptions that "successful, ideal executives [in business and in government] were depicted with qualities presumed to be masculine."[41] In numerous studies of interaction, the gender of the leader affects the way they are viewed and represented; a woman's gender creates a problematic formulation for spectator or colleagues who are used to male leadership. Pioneering reformulations of leadership are spurred on by necessity or optimistic wishes for sustainable cultural diversity and tolerance. Discussions of a way of leading that is "feminine," reference nurturing behavior (associated with mothering) as necessary traits in a new conceptualization of authority.[42] This "style" is now discussed as

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[40] Lewis, Inthorn and Wahl-Jorgensen (2005), p. 29-30. A *Financial Times* (March 18, 2003) article is quoted: "The crisis over the past few months has already redefined Mr. Blair's leadership. Few accuse him now of being a Prime Minister who sways with the latest focus group or opinion poll."

[41] Nagy & Vicsek (2007), p. 5

[42] Tanton (1994); Nagy & Vicsek (2007); Carli & Eagly (1999), p. 209

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beneficial to organizations due to the more inclusive, collaborative, and non-hierarchical nature of this leadership model.

2.1.2 Conquering Authority: Media Spectacle, Authority and Power

Governmental or state authority is often referred to in academic literature as being under threat by globalization and related forces.[43] The "disjuncture" and uprooted-ness created by modern communication technologies that shorten distances and create new forums for interaction transnationally throw hierarchically-based entities into controlling potential loss of authority and power.[44] Multi-national media networks jockey for hegemony. Currently, theorists in diverse academic fields speculate about the multitude of globalizing factors, especially the "free" (unregulated) market, contributing to a weakened state and governmental loss of authority. In the "absence of authority," who or what decides on the "authoritative allocation of values"?[45]

In Appadurai's theory about mass migration and electronic "mediation," both travelling and transforming terrains, he uses the term "postnational" and moves away from a "fundamentally realist" modernization theory grounded in the significance and force of the nation-state.[46] Political authority is now more important than political borders, and authority is no longer determined in public figures or constituted within a state-mandated chain of command. Self-determination and hard work (like the once-promoted "American dream") were concepts of liberal philosophy that relied on a subject free of contextual constraints and able to overcome obstacles. The opportunities, the liberal philosophy goes, are there for anyone within democratic systems. If failure occurs in the individual's use of opportunity and will, then they were not leadership material. Yet, the woman leader's subject position

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[43] Lipschutz (2000), pp. 158-159; Appadurai (1996)

[44] Appadurai (1996) terms used throughout his text

[45] Lipschutz (2000), pp. 158-159

[46] Appadurai (1996), p. 9

and her body directly defy the preconceived neutral space of political office as a gendered institution. Public governmental office holding, still dominated by men and gendered as a male space, remains in most nation states as a frontier for women.

However, this promise of opportunity is a mere promise. Because of the gendered power relations instituted and working within authoritative political offices, these relations are also defined, described, overlooked, and couched by media spectacle selectively. Gramsci's theory of hegemony is useful here "when conceptualizing existent, emergent and decaying power elites."[47] Hegemonic media groups "are not 'conspiracies'; they are the outcome of hard hegemonic labour which can, in the contemporary era, involve coordinating the interests of millions of people."[48] The deregulation, particularly in the United States, and the conglomeratization of media companies in the last two decades creates easier routes for interest coordination. With cooperation among media sites both local and global operating under the same management, repetition of images, messages, and figures can become more uniform. In other words, the spectacle can be better engineered with a more unified front of media production. Authority shifts from governmental regulation to media ownership monopoly. For the woman leader, this creates a more united front against which to assert her leadership. This united front (hetero-normative, racist, and classist) creates a seemingly coherent leader stereotype the "impossible performer" must work to break into and transform.

2.1.3 Leader Performance and Gender Performance

Through a reading of Butler's theory of gender performance, I show how the leader's performance is similarly reproduced and always on the verge of failure. The "disciplinary production of gender effects a false stabilization of gender in the interests of the heterosexual

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[47] Louw (2001), p. 8

[48] Ibid.

construction and regulation of sexuality within the reproductive domain."[49] With attention to the performance of past leadership, would-be leaders take cues from history using a vocabulary (words and gestures), wardrobe and other indicators of a leader. This disciplined production constructs "coherence" and conceals "discontinuities" of leadership in various political spheres as well as desires, and sexualities. Butler continues:

> "Acts, gestures, enactments generally construed, are performative in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means."[50]

These "gestures" and "corporeal signs" of leadership authority and performance, according to Butler's performativity theory are fabricated and unstable. These leadership performances need to be constantly re-presented to create the illusion of legitimacy. The representations of these signs within media spectacle reinstate repetitively a vocabulary of leadership indicators thoroughly gendered historically and socially. These gendered indicators of visual and behavioral norms of leadership directly code the leader as embodying a certain hegemonic masculinity.

As there exists "an illusion of a gender core" created by performance, there are leadership characteristics which, through reconstitution within the spectacle, create an "illusion" of a coherent leader.[51] Repetitions of leaders such as US Senators Clinton and German chancellor Merkel, re-produce the leader guise through particular gestures, appearance cues, speech, and demeanor and body comportment. This self-presentation or "self-styling" of leaders themselves, draws from historical precedent, as "styles have a history [which] condition[s] and limit[s] the possibilities" of leadership performance.[52]

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[49] Butler (1990), p. 184-185

[50] Ibid., p. 185

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid., p. 190

Within the heightened media output of the current and the relevant, the spectacle is a "situation of duress under which gender [and leadership] performance always and variously occurs…[gendered leadership] is a performance with clearly punitive consequences (which) regularly conceals its genesis."[53] A leader's ability to embody and perform leadership traits convincingly conveys not only to believability of his/her authority with colleagues or constituents, but also in global flows of information which include constant news and mass media representations and re-presentations.

2.1.4 Business and Governmental Leadership: A Merger

The flexible, dynamic and creative archetype of the global capital corporation is typed hetero-normatively masculine and white. This contradiction in representation of diversity and the actual leadership schemas which are gendered and raced, actually necessitate sameness within self-promotion of leaders themselves or within the media representations they have no control over. My analysis is focused on the performance of political leadership within the spectacle. I cite some studies which are done in the business context. These two leadership schemas are linked, I argue, as politicians, governments, and state assets have become increasingly corporatized and commodified.[54] Corporatization of governments can refer to the direct influence of businesses and entrepreneurs upon government objectives and methods. Some argue that the globalization of communication policy change is primarily in the interests of transnational media and telecommunications businesses.[55] These shifts decrease "opportunities for national policy formation, specifically to meet the political and cultural needs of citizens.[56] Corporatization can also describe a shift

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[53] Butler (1990), p. 190

[54] Fairclough, Norman. (2000) *New Labour, New Language?*

[55] Mosco and Rideout in Corner, Schlesinger and Silverstone (1997), p. 175

[56] Nordenstreng and Schilller (1993) cited in Mosco and Rideout in Corner, Schlesinger and Silverstone (1997), p. 175

in the English lexicon of governing. In Fairclough's analysis of the "new" language of Britain's Labour Party's "Third Way" program, he explains:

> "There are 195 instances of 'business' in the New Labour corpus. A…quarter of all instances…occur in collocations which relate to partnership or cooperation between business and government."[57]

"Enterprise culture," an insistence on "Our Competitive Future," and developing "entrepreneurial skills" in the education system reveal the high value placed on the business and economic "harnessing of opportunities."[58] As various state services have had to compete with private networks, "corporatization or the emphasis on a corporate model of functioning by public service organizations" becomes prominent. The BBC's profit-oriented subsidiaries like BBC Research, BBC Resources and BBC Monitoring, according to Chadha and Kavoori, "provide commercial, creative, technical and production services to businesses and consumers as well as its push into the international marketplace through services such as BBC World."[59] Chancellor Merkel was elected on the platform of being pro-business and economic reforms that would make Germany more competitive in the globalizing world. There has been a growing impatience and outspoken criticism of her within the German business community.[60] The political capital of businesses in the United States and the interconnectedness of politicians who were former chief executive officers or have interests in various business operations make for a clear and cozy corporatization of the government and its interests (i.e. current U.S. vice president Cheney's standing in the Halliburton, not to mention the "rebuilding" of Iraq by companies with close ties to the president and vice president. For the last three decades, governments (particularly in developing countries)

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[57] Fairclough (2000), p. 30

[58] Ibid, p.34

[59] Chadha and Kavoori (2005), p. 89

[60] Deutsch Welle Staff. "Employers' Boss Blasts Merkel Reform Slowdown." *Deutsche Welle DW-World.de*. May 14, 2008.

have had to sell their nation's assets materially and figuratively. For example, to court multi-national manufacturers, countries in a region like post-State Socialist Central Eastern Europe compete with each other to provide tax incentives and attractive business conditions for large Western European companies.

The explosion in public relations management during this same time fed into the rapid pace and growth of media and the commoditization of leaders. In his analysis of television's influence on leaders and democracy, Kellner connects the presidential campaign of Ronald Reagan and the efforts of his "image managers" to essentially sell him to the public as a legitimate leader with the corporate support he received. The wealth which allowed him to "finance an expensive television election (Ferguson and Rogers, 1986) [made it possible for him] to depict his opponent [Jimmy Carter] as an ineffectual manager."[61] Calling this a "television presidency," Kellner also refers to Reagan's as a "simulated" presidency when he details the tactics Reagan aides and media managers alike intervened in order to cover over Reagan's lack of grace in spontaneous settings (via cue cards, teleprompters, and editing of public appearances).[62] These details of literally constructing Reagan as a leader support my assertion that leadership is an imperfect or impossible performance. Reagan's shortcomings necessitated mediation and a meticulous management of his public image. Reagan performed or simulated being a president capable of managing and communicating effectively. This public relations-style management is also indicative of the commodified leader and the corporate involvement in government today.

2.2 Women and Media Gender Constructs

Women leaders grapple with similar sets of stereotypes and assumptions about their sex supported by media representations and social context: the masculine as the model of

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[61] Kellner, *Television & the Crisis of Democracy.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Inc., 1990, p. 135

[62] Ibid., p.134-136

authoritative leadership and "authority" seen as unsexed and liberally available to ambitious individuals. That authority can be assumed or taken on highlights the performative aspect of leadership. However, public leaders embody an authority innate and natural. Often the "feminine" subject (within industrial, Western contexts) is set at odds with what an effective (male) leader is believed to be due to gender stereotypes. Acquisition of leadership often entails women using perceived and stereotyped "masculine" methods or behaviors to acquire positions of prestige within governments. As Rita Süssmuth, a "powerful" member of Chancellor Merkel's Christian Democratic Union states, "Emancipation also comes with a price: namely conforming to the masculine."[63] This sets up the woman leader (and I extend this to other minorities) to inevitably fail in her self-production as a leader.

Although I do not wish to perpetuate a dichotomy between the "feminine" and "masculine" traits of leaders, it is necessary to acknowledge the functioning of judgments of individuals' capabilities based on their sex group membership. These schematic emphases and silences exist in the mainstream media, the realms of government, and penetrate all spheres of society. Women and men navigate through their social milieu in which authority and leadership have been previously defined in terms of the hegemonic masculine. This is epitomized by such traits as assertiveness, independence, and competitiveness.

2.2.1 Media kraftvoll Craft and Kraftwerk: Clinton & Merkel

> "We are like babies first encountering a new object: a potential president who has breasts and hips and who was once pregnant and whose female skin has changed as it aged."[64]

As the writer suggests above, the current American experience of contemplating a potential female candidate for the White House has indeed been a first, an "original," and

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[63] Hawley (2005)

[64] Traister, Rebecca. "Campaigning While Female: After a close-up of her face appeared on the Drudge Report, Hillary Clinton was found guilty of—horrors!—aging." Salon.com, Dec. 19, 2007. http://www.salon.com/mwt/feature/2007/12/19/wrinkled_hillary/index.html

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"exceptional."[65] Women's leadership is not new for the American public, but judging by the media representations and hype circulating in mainstream news and niche media, there is a fascination and often a crass and sexist humor and critique driven by (American) contextual sexism, as with other high-profile women before her.[66] German leader Merkel took the office of Chancellor in 2005 with a very high approval rating. The precedent of her leadership, coming in as Germany's first woman leader, was a media spectacle of difference as a signal of alternative leadership which, in the German political climate of the time, made for optimistic representations of Merkel's leadership as a step forward. Merkel's difference was inspiring, but it is equally disadvantageous. Her role as a woman leader set her apart from the past, but this also set her at a higher standard to meet. Public opinion polls now show Merkel's popularity at a distinct low. Analysts have suggested that she suffered from high expectations of voters. While gender often goes unaddressed explicitly in regard to Clinton's and Merkel's political leadership experience, their being women as part of their political identity informs where, when, and how the media spotlight shines. They are part of the transactions within Irigaray's phallogocentric language, their bodies or character unable to be represented without resort to the masculinist leadership model and its linguistic representations. Clinton herself uses the heteronormative binary male-female in her campaign commercials and appearances. (i.e.: In early debates, she was the conspicuous sole woman. Her campaign uses her first name "Hillary" to foster closeness with the public and also to distance her from her husband's presidential legacy.)

2.2.2 Appearance

There is a tremendous focus on chief executives' appearance, and how they conform to expectations of a "feminine" woman leader. Merkel once said, "Anyone who really has

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[65] Ibid.

[66] Other women who came close to winning a vice presidency and a presidential bid were Geraldine Ferraro and Pat Schroeder respectively.

something to say doesn't need makeup." Merkel has been criticized for not wearing makeup, not dressing more fashionably, and being overweight.[67] Such commentary may have contributed to her decision in favor of a "makeover" and hiring a style consultant. Now, she appears with "plum coloured lips, accompanied by expertly applied eyeliner" and "expertly coiffed."[68] *Spiegel* writers noticed:

> "The media attention comes as part of a trend in focusing on Merkel's appearance. For example, unflattering photos of the chancellor wearing a peach-colored dress with sweat stains under her arms at the 2005 Bayreuth festival were widely circulated."[69]

In 2006, appearance snuck up in a different way as photos of Merkel showed the chancellor "changing into a bathing suit while on vacation in Italy, [with the] article headline 'Big in the Bumdestag.'"[70]

Senator Clinton's media personality is often simplistically fitted into a female "type:" deceived wife, victim of betrayal, ambitious cut-throat, or distant (frigid and "post-sexual"[71]) loner. As her performance of leadership inherently alters the American political landscape and shakes the previously firm foundation of white male presidential leadership, her authority as a leader is undercut by her female subjectivity. An important (and gendered) leadership asset, Clinton's voice has been characterized as "shrill," "grating" and like "a cackle."[72] In terms of the esteem accorded the "deep" voice, [73] Clinton's authority is simultaneously well-established and negatively branded. She is categorized under familiar

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[67] Ockrent, Christine. "Will things be different?; Women in power I." *The International Herald Tribune*. March 15, 2007. "'Angela Merkel arrived at the session exactly how I photographed her,' she says. 'I think that shows how honest she is. Is she supposed to go fishing in a trouser suit? As soon as Ms. Merkel allows people a glimpse of her private life, all anyone ever talks about is her clothes.'"

[68] Cowing, Emma. "Women take steps towards power all over the world." *The Scotsman*. November 21, 2006

[69] JTW. "Plunging Neckline: Merkel 'Surprised' by Attention to Low-Cut Dress." *Spiegel Online*, April 15, 2008. www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,547512,00.html

[70] Ibid.

[71] Wolff, Michael. "It's the Adultery, Stupid." *Vanity Fair*, June 2008

[72] Dowd, Maureen. "Clinton: The woman." *The International Herald Tribune*. February 14, 2008 Thursday

[73] Nelson (2007) The Boston Globe; Kronholz. "Talk is Cheap in Politics, But a Deep Voice Helps." *Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 3, 2007

tropes of the feminine, even while commentators admit her strengths through liberal individualist language, this language of representing leaders is steeped historically and culturally in the American masculine political schema.

News briefs of political rallies describe Clinton as cheerful and relaxed with her audience.[74] However, she also has emphasized her determination or leadership strength (or "bitch" side if we want to use the simplistic and irrelevant language of mass media networks) when Clinton "came out swinging" in her account of what other foreign leaders should expect from her presidency if anyone dared to attack the U.S.[75] Her toughness is noted over and over, with this characteristic, used in the political context, to either over-compensate for her gender difference or to drum up concern about her being unknowable to voters. As with German chancellor Merkel, Clinton's openness to show a personal and private side or lack of it contributes to the production of a steely and guarded female persona. Chancellor Merkel was initially placed in a schema of a serious, calculating, cold and private former eastern German physicist and a sort of teamwork mother in the field of diplomacy. According to some media writers, she brought to the German government a spirit of "inclusion and mutual hard work."[76] Upon assuming office, her message to European Union leaders apparently took on the authoritative nanny guise as she was characterized as saying, "Stop squabbling [like little boys?] and work together!" For an alleged "diplomatic novice," her first "outings" among fellow chief executives combined "firmness with tact" as she played the "part of a bridge-builder between rival camps in the row over the future EU budget."[77] The above use of such formal, aristocratic-tinged words like "outing" to refer to meetings of diplomatic state

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[74] "Clinton inspires, shares laughter with Audience" Wausau Daily Herald | February 19, 2008 http://www.wausaudailyherald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080219/WDH0101/802190496/1981

[75] Hughes, John. "Imagining a world with more female heads of state." *Christian Science Monitor*. May 2, 2007.

[76] Horsley, William. "Merkel signals German Rethink." *BBC News*, Nov. 25, 2005. From: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4468560.stm

[77] Ibid.

relevancy alters the tone of the article to reinstate her femininity. The linguistic cues use a phallogocentric language that exacerbates difference and types Merkel, despite her experience and political success, as naïve. Merkel "sweetens" the tone of diplomacy…"if she can keep it up."[78] Merkel showed "consensus-building," a "sense of balance," and a belief in strength through friendships.[79] "Feminine" leadership styles are en vogue among business and leadership literature on management and organizations, with rampant speculations about what women can bring to leadership positions that will be better than the status quo. Dassu and Guerot draw upon "two general rules that seem to apply to Ms. Merkel's 'female' foreign policy: firm but sober on principles, tough but patient on implementation."[80] This is described as making "significant progress from the glaring inconsistencies that characterize most of her (male) colleagues."

2.2.3 Sexuality

Among many representations that are directed at achieving laughs, but pull from the stereotypical woman leader schemas, is merchandise to be ordered online. Clinton is simultaneously sexualized, objectified, and masculinized, with penis-envy or phallus-maintaining references. Feigned shock at Merkel's competitive actions and political choices paints her as a back-stabber, a sort of vengeful hysteric, who defected from her political "mentor" former Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who called her "Das Mädchen"[81] (why are we not told of mentors of male leaders?)[82] A caricature of Clinton "standing at a urinal under the illuminating observation, "she's not what she seems" and 'that old KFC Hillary Meal Deal

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[78] Horsley (2005)

[79] Dassu, Marta and Ulrike Guerot. "The female touch of Rice and Merkel has real clout." *Financial Times (London, England)*, March 1, 2006

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Ockrent (2007)

chestnut: 'Two fat thighs, two small breasts and a bunch of left wings.'"[83] Freudian

references do not end there. In other depictions, Clinton sits:

> "…astride the White House. The claws! The fangs! The spiked dog collar, red heels and spread legs about to envelop the big strong American flag!' Then there's the junior high school kind of thought that says the best way to get to a girl is to call her ugly. From this quarter, we get "Even Bill Doesn't Want Me," "Stop Mad Cow," the succinct "Stop the Beast.'"[84]

These foci and characterizations poke fun at her in often belligerently sexist/sexual tones.

They work to question and undermine her credibility in a way that Obama "looking good in

swimming suit" does not necessarily do. Not only Clinton's woman-ness is problematic, but

also the ambitious woman stereotype in which she is placed. She is a threat to

heternormative political functions with her hysteric and yet smart and rational

characterizations, depending on the political bent of the media source.

Popular internet productions like YouTube's "Obama Girl" who has "got a crush" on

the candidate buy into his sexual ability and appeal to a rock star persona complete with

groupies. These media productions work for reinstating Obama's masculinity and a virility

(supposedly attracting women). Clinton is desexualized as an object of desire, and she

becomes more of a sexual predator with deviant sexuality (she has a penis; she is a sado-

masochist). Furthermore, these representations often have no references to her credibility or

political career, and they simply trivialize her as a woman (a woman leader). A recent article

in the high-profile Vanity Fair, at the climax of the democratic race, is a smug

pronouncement of the assumptions of Clinton's brand of femininity:

> "so what exactly is the thing with Hillary and sex, with the consensus being that she simply must not have it (at least not with her husband; there are, on the other hand, the various conspiracy scenarios of whom else she might have had it with). It's partly around this consensus view of her not having sex that people support her or resist her. She's the special-interest candidate of older women—the post-

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[83] Traister (2008) citing website www.cafepress.com, conservativebuys.com, and www.pillaryhillary.com, which features the slogan: "Re-defeat Communism" with Clinton's face crossed out in red.

[84] Ibid.

sexual set. She's resisted by others…who see her as either frigid or sexually shunned—they turn from her inhibitions and her pain."[85]

The author claims that Americans are voting by their preferred sexuality of candidates. This does not come as a huge surprise, perhaps, but he leaves this evaluation unfinished.[86] Because of the male leadership hegemony, men have a conventionalized heterosexist model of preferred sexuality that is not stigmatized as deviant. Women's sexual lives, in their fewer numbers as leaders, are exoticized and radicalized. While Clinton has her husband's sexual legacy as president to contend with (remaining an American cultural fixation), the other potential nominees, Obama and Senator John McCain, have attractive wives who underscore their virile masculinities. Obama's sexuality is "othered" as black and yet harmless because his active and vivacious wife is seen as "whipping him into shape."[87]

A "common"-ness with the majority should be established by these minority leaders throughout spectacle if they want to gain public support. According to Debord, "stars of decision…must possess the full range of accepted human qualities; all official differences between them are thus canceled out by the official similarity which is an inescapable implication of their supposed excellence in every sphere."[88] Debord uses the examples of Kennedy and Khrushchev, but his point illustrates well the perpetuation of the 'masculine' leadership model and its illusions. These "admirable people who personify the system are indeed well known for not being what they seem to be…-- and everyone knows it."[89] Due to the capitalist obsession with efficiency, the spectacle's "consummable pseudo-cyclical

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[85] Wolff (2008)

[86] Ibid: Among other ambiguous statements, the author further claims he is not being sexist, but *sexualist* (which is not clearly explained).

[87] Wolff (2008)

[88] Debord (1995), p. 39

[89] Debord (1995), p. 40

time…the time appropriate to the consumption of images,"[90] I assert, is one cause for the reduction of women leaders (as all leaders) into personalities awash in stereotypes which appeal to what is supposedly always already assumed or believed by audiences. These gender constructions reference what is believed relevant to audiences and readers. Furthermore, "media stars are the spectacular representations of living human beings, distilling the essence of the spectacle's banality into images of possible roles."[91] Hence, the mass media's representations of 'personalities' such as Clinton's or Merkel's simultaneously claim to depict them objectively as news like any other, and yet they reproduce assumptions about 'female' leadership. This is done by relying on previously drawn stereotypes and repeated stereotypes, deferring to myths of gender to characterize female and "Other" types of leadership.

Emphasizing her gender in the conservative Christian Democratic Union, her story has been described as a miracle: "Merkel has so far succeeded, against all odds…"[92] This same article concludes that "a woman can prove she is *just like a man* if and when she wants to succeed." Clearly accepting the gender dichotomy, the journalist clearly holds men as the leadership norm to which women should compare themselves thus undermining any alternatives to leadership, authority, and trust-building. Even journalists who are writing seemingly objective or sympathetic accounts of these leaders trip up on gender-biased assumptions of successful women in the way they write. For example, Merkel is characterized as "married…but [having] no children."[93]

The chancellor said back in the early months of her candidacy that "never in my political career has my gender played as big a role as it has in the last few months," and, "in

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[90] Ibid, p. 112

[91] Ibid, p. 38

[92] Dassu & Guerot (2006) *Financial Times London*

[93] Ockrent, Christine. "Will things be different?; Women in power I." *The International Herald Tribune*. March 15, 2007.

return, I have been much more open about my woman-ness than I am used too [sic]. And I'm not just talking about my make-up."[94] To what exactly is Merkel referring? Until that point of national and international scrutiny as the potential woman German chancellor, had her gender been ignored? Warnings of her lack of "woman-ness" traits spewed from the opposition in the election of 2005. During the SPD and CDU standoff, Schröder's wife Doris Schröder-Kopf declared that because Merkel is childless, "she is unable to understand the problems faced by working mothers." Renate Künast, a Green Party cabinet member, cautioned that "just because she's a woman doesn't mean she'll act like one."[95] Indeed, one woman CDU member of the Bundestag complained in the leading feminist magazine Emma that "the word 'woman' doesn't make an appearance at all in the (CDU) platform."[96]

While there was much discussion in 2002 about whether the former chancellor Schröder's dyed his hair or not, an example used in hasty comparison when the mention of sexism in the press arises, Merkel's "radical make-over" comprises not only hair but make-up, jewelry, color palette of clothing, and tailoring. Recent photos of her cleavage "provided fodder for headlines around the world."[97] As this *Spiegel* journalist has observed, Merkel's cleavage is in the photos, not her dress. Her breasts are in center stage.

> "A British tabloid ran the title, 'Merkel's Weapons of Mass Distraction.' The popular, Manhattan-based media gossip Web site Gawker, had a page entitled 'German Chancellor Angela Merkel not Afraid to Show Her Breastesses' on which it welcomed commentators to make light of the German leader's outfit with quips ranging from the flippant ('Deutschland boober alles') to the political ('Imagine. A female head of state okay with being a woman.')."[98]

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[94] Hawley, Charles. "Angela Merkel Realizes She's a Woman." *Spiegel Online*, Sept. 7, 2005

[95] Ibid.

[96] Ibid.

[97] JTW. "Plunging Neckline: Merkel 'Surprised' by Attention to Low-Cut Dress." Der Spiegel Online, April 15, 2008. www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,547512,00.html

[98] Ibid.

Humor and satire come with politics. However, the satire of women leaders specifically repeatedly relies on their gender for a punch line, depicting them with varying degrees of some latent or implied violence (committed by the women leaders) or symbolizing anger against them. Breasts as "weapons" and Clinton straddling the White House turn anatomy into violence. In politics, where women continue to be in the minority as leaders, women leaders are outsiders seeking to get inside the "boys' club." Within media representations of women leaders, subtleties spill into and dot a story, and compete to spice up coverage in the profit-motivated industry. Linguistic play is often nowhere so obvious than in the aspects chosen about women leaders and the words used. Stories are recycled between sites and languages. For example, the tension created by the supposedly incongruous opposition of Merkel being a "lady" or "princess" in an evening dress and her Eastern German physicist past make for interesting news (at least the producers think so). The examples of Merkel and Clinton both reference a female sexuality, albeit in a more subtle way or with direct sexual depiction, respectively. Constant speculation surrounds Clinton's sex life. In 2007 in an interview with *The Advocate*, she felt the need to state publicly that was not a lesbian. That Merkel shows her cleavage and suddenly becomes "a woman" is telling about what expectations are still placed on women politicians, despite their positions as leaders. The divide in sexual practice evokes a divide in leadership capability. In other words, Clinton's harsh characterization and political persona must indicate a deviant or abnormal sexuality. Media assume Merkel's dressing is to appeal "feminine" and aware of her femininity and the need to show it. These are all narratives of a patriarchal, heterosexist, and male-centered political and entertainment culture.

2.3 Conclusion

Increased media locations and exchange, as well as the simultaneous reshuffling and conglomeratization of media networks, furthers Debord's analysis of the spectacle into the

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twenty-first century. The local and global scale of media making and power relations

between sites of production/reception compete for audiences, profits, and are instrumental in

shaping public opinion through repetition, exposure, and monopolization. In the media,

Louw writes:

> "Meaning production has become professionalized. Such media-ized meaning-making is
> necessarily associated with sets of relationships…that have been turned into institutionalized
> behaviours and work practices."[99]

The practice of stereotyping and writing for the culture of entertainment permeate media

representations of leaders in general and women leaders in particular. Due to the particulars

and historical legacies of leadership, "signs," gestures, and practices of leadership and

leading are a vocabulary for leadership performance. My purpose here was to show how

representations of Merkel and Clinton reinstate gender difference within a context and media

spectacle that both denies the difference and consequent inequality, and relies on difference

to formulate and work upon gender assumptions and stereotypes to entertain audiences and

perpetuate heterosexist and masculine normative leadership. These mechanisms are all

repeated and recycled in order to reinstate norms of gender difference. Furthermore, the

preponderance of liberal social values and Enlightenment ideals that were incorporated into a

globalizing economic agenda are selectively used and excluded within the media spectacle of

leadership constitution. The tensions created by the contradictory notions of liberal equal

access to resources and gendered exclusion remain unaddressed within media

representations.

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[99] Louw (2001), p. 1

Chapter 3: Self-Production and Audience

3.1 Media & Leadership Change

3.1.1 Constellations: Leadership, Spectacle & Democracy

In late-capitalist market globalization, discourses of leadership travel fast across contexts, interacting and relational, with some discourses being prioritized over others through the spectacle's repetition and exposure. Because of a post-structuralist and post-modern skepticism of "authority," a leader's credibility is far from guaranteed. These factors (globalization, democracy, and spectacle) make up a constellation imperative to understanding the leadership role in its twenty-first century construction. As I have mentioned previously, since the 1970's, as media consolidation excelled, (late-capitalist) liberal individualism has figured keenly into the stereotypical traits of leaders. Leadership literature is riddled with illustrations of the individual entrepreneurial (and male) actor striving forward with either a "natural" talent for affecting change and gaining others' consent or a learned or acquired flare for communication, influence, and winning over constituents. This discourse relies on the liberal conceptualization of the self-focused and self-contained individual who is considered neither one element of a broader community nor necessarily reliant upon relationships for support and help. Within the spectacle, the politician is in fact divorced from a family or "private" relationships. Financial and emotional independence is valued and makes a claim to success and rewarding life. Feminist critiques have condemned this "psychological egoism" which treats the ideas of "cooperation and community" as if they are irrelevant or impossible.[100] Within this liberal discourse, democratic processes are considered essential, and the urge to globalize democracy is a prime

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[100] Nussbaum, Martha. "The Feminist Critique of Liberalism." *Women's Voices, Women's Rights: Oxford Amnesty Lectures.* Oxford: Westview Press, 1996. p. 59

part of the neoliberal capitalist explosion since the 1990's. Finally, the media spectacle (made possible through global business networks) supports these assumptions by emphasizing events, narratives, and life styles that support the liberal ideals and (highly materialistic) desires.

3.1.2 Anglo-Globalism & Alterations

While a nuanced analysis of globalization is not possible here, I will focus on the proliferation of media, *democracy* and mediations of democracy[101] brought about by changes in information exchange and diffusion and the influence of neoliberal market forces within these media and governmental realms.

> "For many critics of globalization this development [of expansion of media formats first developed in the West (usually in the USA)] has once more resurrected concerns regarding Western cultural imposition (via replication), of American media formats that structure local audience and subject them to the commercially driven, consumer-oriented discourse that such programming usually entails."[102]

The term "Anglo-globalism" encapsulates an increased infiltration of English language media to transnational sites of supposed exchange.[103] These sites, while class-, race-, and gender-dependent regarding accessibility and users, usually exist where entrepreneurial face of capitalism is most apparent (specific classed spaces like airports, hotels, shopping centers, and holiday spots). Strategic placement of this media and advertising (and advertising media, as often reports and information function within the spectacle as advertising and *selling* someone or something) acts in accord with multi-national business and entertainment media expansion. These processes remain gendered in how women are characterized

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[101] Curran (2005)

[102] Chadha and Kavoori *Globalization and National Media Systems* in Curran and Gurevitch (2005) *Mass Media and Society*, p. 97

[103] Louw (2001), p. 9

(passive consumers[104] or beneficiaries of their—or their partner's—corporate success) or where they simply do not appear. Airports across the globe feature famous male athletes or high-ranking businessmen, quoting their advice for attaining success.[105] These examples throughout media spectacle reinforce gendered stereotypes which work to provide evidence of female identities to which women leaders are not conforming. Additionally, the repeated association of women with passive consumption can undercut women's authority.

The shift toward market-oriented policies of media networks furthers the trend in presentation of ideas and leaders within the commodified spectacular apparatus. These trends are comprised of several concepts that, while they have been gendered in terms of poverty and rights, have not been addressed as often in the media in terms of leadership. Commercialization, one of these concepts, sees the state replacing regulatory measures usually "based on public interest, public service and related standards, such as universality, with market standards that establish *market regulation*." This shifts the focus of media and other services to a "greater emphasis in broadcasting on audience size, advertising revenue, producing programming that anticipates an international market and linkages to other revenue generating media."[106] Not only does this limit a local or context-specific media involvement, but it also chokes complex representations of any media event or media "star"

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[104] To be clear, I am not insisting on a passive recipient audience. I agree with Debord and Kellner in that this is the model or ideal of the spectator within the neoliberal capitalist society. For example, "globalization is not to be seen as a one-way flow of influence from the west to the 'rest', rather, globalization is a multi-directional and multi-dimensional set of processes."[104] This does not exclude the espousal of the liberal set of social and economic values (contained within current global power relations) in mass media and the corporatization ushering it forward.

[105] Examples include Tiger Woods for Accenture, whose website explains, "This unique [ad] position and capability is summarized in our theme line: 'We know what it takes to be a Tiger.'" http://www.accenture.com/Global/About_Accenture/Company_Overview/Advertising/default.htm. Ad campaigns by Citigroup feature gender-specific statements like, "May the pinstriped suit you love have a number on the back" or "For a guaranteed return on investments, try buying flowers" at http://www.citigroup.com/citigroup/showcase/liverichly.htm. Finally, HSBC's, "the world's local bank," recent ad campaign of one-word images with individual people or things to illustrate the concepts, "leader" being a young man and "entertaining" being the painted face of a women. See http://www.yourpointofview.com/hsbcads_print.aspx

[106] Corner, Schlesinger and Silverstone (1997), p. 168

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or leader. This has led to simplification and decontextualization of happenings and people, and this buttresses sexist and gender-insensitive depictions of women leaders. Liberalization expands field of competitors through state intervention (deregulation) and aims "specifically to increase market competition" by introducing private competitors into broadcasting and communications.[107] The selling off of state enterprises in privatization and internationalization processes of media intertwined in the methods of transnational business and governmental organizations throughout the 1980's and 1990's. Private enterprises tend to change state or public networks and groups from localized and provincially-focused agencies to monopolies targeting vast regional or international media demands. Finally, internationalization "shifts communication responses from national policy applications to ones where bilateral, trilateral and multinational trade agreements require structural policy changes."[108] In this synopsis, the social[109] appears to play no role or have little relevance to these mechanisms as they are presented in mass media. This mutes or rules out different approaches toward media representation of events and leaders, not to mention gendered aspects of these. The spectacle and its making perpetuate the heteronormative and uncritical status quo of male leadership through images of performances edited and stripped problematic concerns like social details, life experiences, and mechanisms within liberal democracy in some countries that still prevent equal opportunity.

3.1.3 Heteronormativity & Homogenization

"Media entertainment does not only contribute to self-government through *normative* regulation. It also influences the political process in numerous indirect ways. Media entertainment influences understandings of the world, and moral and social values, which affect political life."[110]

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[107] Ibid., p. 171. Further discussion of the infiltration of European and international markets is encapsulated in an analysis of the CapCities/ABC cable system and network expansion.

[108] Ibid., p. 174

[109] When I use the *social*, I refer to the realms of relationships, public or private interactions, and, basically, areas of experience that are not directly connected with economic transactions.

[110] Curran (2005), p. 136

Just as women leaders juggle supposedly gender-contradicting roles for themselves, a similar balance between the new or iconoclastic and the familiar or normative must be attempted by the media to both excite and entertain with images and information. The media "must attempt to be inoffensive" and present "only problems that don't pose any problem."[111] In Bourdieu's context of the *Habitus*, he cites bourgeois values and depicts the adherence to a status quo of normative consumption behaviors, manners, and lifestyle choices. I argue that the spectacle increases the acceptance of or lack of resistance to such constructed choices. Consolidation has affected power hierarchies within information industries, and contributed to a homogenization of expectation for entertainment spectacle. An audience is exposed to only parts and chosen segments of news from around the world on networks purporting to be "global" and "world"-wide. The focus of the news media remains on diplomatic and economic events. The choice of news and leader representation of "global" news prevents alternative readings by permeating the spectacle with normative role models and ways of presentation, characterization (of individuals, such as terrorists, as well as nation-states, such as "rogue" nations). According to Lukes, "having power…is also the ability to stop conflicts from emerging by preventing oppositional agendas from even being raised."[112] By passing over certain world events and emphasizing others, large media corporations hinder discussions or alternatives from being aired. The media industry is also the most powerful and ubiquitous player in uncovering its own mistakes and manipulations.

The industry perpetuates gender norms because of the need for simplicity and time constraints. The pleasure of unmasking the impossible leadership performance by media for the audience is shown again and again by references to gender roles and heteronormative

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[111] Bourdieu in Durham & Kellner (2006), p. 328

[112] Louw (2001), p. 5

assumptions. This apparatus "answers precisely to the needs of the spectacle's internal dynamics," which are the needs of a profit-oriented industry vying for popularity and high ratings among consumers.[113] This perpetuated normativity in the spectacle's "internal dynamics" works to amplify the exception, the non-normative, and, in other words, the woman leader. Given the effects of free market and neoliberal capitalism, this ideal of "equality" of opportunity is optimistic at best. The spectacle apparatus (the conglomerations of news and the businesses that invest in such outlets) perpetuate the gender stereotypes so as to appeal to the (believed) public's acknowledgement of difference (between genders, races, etc.) There is a lack of incentive to challenge stereotypes about gender, and there is plenty of incentive to use gender difference in media for entertainment and polarizing purposes. Whether there is a lack of genuine interest in challenging these or a perceived equality (hence the popularity of the term post-feminism in Anglophone media about Senator Clinton), there is little thoughtful journalism concerning the inequity of the depictions of women leaders using appeals to their appearance, their 'feminine' traits (voice, body characteristics, marital or parental status, and their motivations), and harping upon their transgressions. The entwining of State priorities and myths with mass media's spectacle, reliant upon economic and governmental systems using gender stereotypes and divisions of labor, work to reinstate a seemingly 'unnatural'-ness of female leadership.

3.2 Self-Production: Analysis of the Political Commodity

3.2.1 Public Relations and Performance

"A leader or an interest that can make itself master of current symbols is the master of the current situation."[114]

The above quote, from early twentieth century literature on public relations, simplifies to a staggering degree the mechanisms involved in mastering symbols that are

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[113] Debord (1995), p. 19-20

[114] Walter Lippmann (1922), *Public Opinion*, quoted in Ewen (1996), p. xiii

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deemed salient in present social dynamics. The symbols themselves come about through processes of representation that are, in the twenty-first century, thoroughly entwined with entertainment and market concerns. The leader him/herself turns into a symbol, an embodiment of anxieties, (national) strengths, social (hetero-normative) values, and a predominately masculine role to perform. Women leaders, in their impossible performances, are signs of and witnesses to an evolving and changing leadership typography. Specifically, the media genres they access, use, and are exposed to and within are likewise accessing, utilizing and exposing women leaders. The issue of women in leadership positions is highlighted in recent years due to high-profile positions being filled by women; their exceptional ascensions being highlighted with varying degrees of exoticization and miraculousness.[115] Media technologies present the consumers/public with fragmented characters of politicians, and, more specifically, emphasize different motivations, reasons, and outcomes of women's efforts to achieve successful leadership roles.

3.2.2 Commodification of Self through Performance

> "O Lord and God. You are the original image maker. You created us in Your image and likeness, a 'little less than the angels.' May we have the courage to take You as a model."[116]

An American church minister is speaking at a public relations seminar back in 1964 in the quote above. He is, in effect, blessing the seminar and its goals, and performing the role as a conduit between the PR industry and an ethereal concept of God. Creating images becomes godly, and the pursuit of constructing them above criticism. God's authority and masculine likeness are rendered universal characteristics of those who are "a little less than

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[115] Unfortunately this paper will only focus on the Anglo-American and "Western" European context. Other leaders are Jamaican Prime Minister Portia Simpson-Miller, Argentinean President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, President Bachelet of Chile, Liberian president Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, and South Korean Prime Minister Han Myung-sook and heads of state of Finland, Bangladesh, Ireland, Indonesia, Canada, Latvia, New Zealand, Philippines, and Sri Lanka

[116] Rev. Ulmer Kuhn, "Prayer for Public Relations" at Tri-State PR Seminar, Public Relations Society of America, 1964, quoted in Ewen (1996) p. xv.

angels." In the twenty-first century, such allusions endure despite liberal discourse on equality of opportunity for women in the professions. The concept of authority, as I discussed earlier, while changing, still remains coded in masculine imagery and traditionally male pursuits of government, military, and leadership. Patterns of performed masculine authority and success resonate within the spectacle and figure largely in current advertising, as I will discuss later. In this mass communication age, "dramaturgy has become more central and the pattern it assumes more banal."[117] For example, the same settings, clothing, and gestures, performed by male leaders, are relied upon again and again to orient the viewer in watching whatever political spectacle follows. While this setting is predictable, the leader must be an "innovator," be responsible, and must possess "qualities that followers lack."[118] These qualities, while being challenged in a new era of "equal opportunity" leadership, remain primarily masculinized, rendering the woman leader's appearance as a contradiction. The woman leader can contrast and distance her with previous leaders more easily in her gender difference. She uses what Goffman refers to as a "front," familiar to all politicians and public figures, but keenly studied and constructed by the public relations and image managers. As discussed in the last chapter, Merkel and Clinton use indicators of authority and leadership in their self-presentation. Within the "front" are "the standard parts" which are scenic such as "appearance," "manner," and "routines"[119] Different routines can be accumulated within the self-presentation behind the same front and work to bolster the leadership performance. Self-commodification and image construction for women leaders consists of an ongoing separation between their gendered subjectivity and their role. This is impossible to separate, but it is possible to leave out in media narratives and spectacle events, remaining (to liberalism's annoyance) an unspeakable fact.

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[117] Edelman (1988), p. 40

[118] Ibid.

[119] Goffman, Erving. *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*. London: Penguin Books, 1959, pp. 32-4

Goffman is relevant here because the concept of "front" is useful in tackling the inferred stability of such a concept. In the schizophrenic media-tized spectacle of global images, individuals are separated linguistically and visually from their actions through selective information sharing and airing (the example of this being my previous discussion of Reagan's presidential persona). Goffman further notes that "a given social front tends to become institutionalized in terms of the abstract *stereotyped expectations* to which it gives rise, and tends to take on a meaning and stability apart from the specific tasks which happen at the time to be *performed* in its name."[120] Expectations, related to the normativity circulated in the spectacle which I discussed above, are instrumental in decision-making by networks regarding what to air. The social front of leadership, relational in its crafting, implies a coherency and stability that is impossible. The face or front is reproduced over and over, relying on sets of expectations already in place among spectators. Leadership is often romanticized and divorced from the specific tasks that are performed in its name; an occurrence that is orchestrated by media representations. This separation of the woman leader's front and the performance is problematic and, in the end, impossible. It is exactly the logic used in liberal assertions about the irrelevance of gender in leadership. In other words, in liberal "post-feminist" terms, women become leaders because of hard work or fail because of their inability, personality, or other internal flaw. The separation of task from person is illusory.

3.2.3 Performance Unmasked: Merkel's Summit & Other Impossibilities

Chancellor Merkel's hosting of the G8 summit is a task she must perform as a (woman) leader, and she stands out among the line-up of world leaders, despite her drag of a suit. In addition to her attempted assimilation, she was harassed by the US president in the form of a shoulder massage. President Bush's action strongly emphasizes her difference, an

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[120] Goffman (1959), p. 37

aspect of the harassment which was largely ignored in the press. Nick-named "massage-gate" or "Gropergate," the action was debated about whether it was appropriate in the "workplace" or if "massage" was on the list of actions considered by the UN to be sexual harassment. However, on the American Fox News, a political analyst complained, "Aren't these the same women [outraged feminists] who have been angry about cowboy diplomacy? Do they want a kinder, more sensitive Bush -- or a cowboy? Once again, there's no pleasing these women." [121] Aside from the disturbing implied affinity between sensitivity and inappropriate behavior, like many sexual harassment cases before, the blame is diverted from the harasser. The legal interpretation of the action is prioritized, and gender does not figure into any analysis. The legal side of such an act and proving it as harassment or not is prioritized over any intelligent debate about what norms make it thinkable for the US president to massage the German Chancellor's shoulders.

The woman politician's self-presentation in media spectacle is part of an active dialogue between public opinion and the object of the media coverage/spectacle. Media tendencies and tactics of representation rely heavily on stereotypes. The transgressions by women leaders reveal performance of gender and leadership. Both Clinton and Merkel raised the issue of women's cleavage in public and political space with varying results. While both have been depicted as mannish in their personalities (Clinton is aggressive; Merkel is cold), media reports selectively reinstate norms or ignores certain categories of women (for example, lesbians). Some transgressions become normalized through linguistic choices (Merkel is unfashionable and frumpy). Merkel's recent visit to the Oslo theater opening in a low-cut evening dress had her designer, Anna von Griesham, explaining that the

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[121] Freiburg, Friederike and Daryl Lindsey. "Rubbing the Chancellor's Neck and Getting an Earful." *Spiegel Online*, July 27, 2006. http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,428852,00.html

Chancellor's style was "'power suit by day, princess by night.'"[122] Clinton's almost

imperceptible cleavage was thoroughly reprimanded:

> "To display cleavage in a setting that does not involve cocktails and hors d'oeuvres is a provocation. It requires that a woman be utterly at ease in her skin, coolly confident about her appearance, unflinching about her sense of style. Any hint of ambivalence makes everyone uncomfortable. And in matters of style, Clinton is as noncommittal as ever."[123]

Despite the fact that her cleavage was "so discreet as to be barely detectable" shows that

blatant sexualization of women in politics continues and the media's carries on its lively

quest for entertaining portrayals.

Despite the continual and never-ending necessity of representation and spectacle-

making, spectacle provides few spaces for explanation or nuance. "Advertisements and

commercials need to convey meaning within *limited space and time* and will therefore

exploit symbols that are relevant and salient (perceived and convenient) to society as a

whole."[124] The same can be said for news and other media formats for conveying

information, since they are profit-dependent as well. Gender as a social construction and one

of "the most deeply felt elements of subjectivity" is utilized as shorthand for mass media

representation.[125] "Culture today is infecting everything with sameness" and refers to

stereotypes of leaders. Competitions give rise to candidates' concern with appeal and a

common denominator. Film, radio, and magazines form a system…even the *aesthetic*

manifestations of political opposites proclaim the same inflexible rhythm."[126] A rhythm of

appearances, ceremonies, and representations (as in Goffman's front) calls to consumers, and

vice versa. "Media stars are the spectacular representations of living human beings, distilling

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[122] JTW, "Plunging Neckline: Merkel 'Surprised' by Attention to Low-Cut Dress." *Spiegel Onlinel*, April 15, 2008. www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,547512,00.html

[123] Givhan, Robin, "Hillary Clinton's Tentative Dip Into New Neckline Territory." *Washington Post Online* , July 20, 2007. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/ 07/19/AR2007071902668.html

[124] van Zoonen (1994), p. 67, my italics

[125] Ibid.

[126] Horkheimer & Adorno in Durham & Kellner (2006), p. 41, my italics

the essence of the spectacle's banality into images of possible roles."[127] Hence, the

representations of "personalities" such as Clinton's or Merkel's simultaneously claim to

depict them and reproduce assumptions about *female* leadership by reinstating and

reaffirming necessary or perceived inherent gender-specific qualities of women, such as the

nurturing mother Merkel in EU diplomacy.

     Spectacular logic of different commodities brings into line certain entailments

hinging on which ever commodity is the spectacle's focus. Senator Clinton and Chancellor

Merkel, along with their savvy image managers, spokespersons, and PR representatives,

censor, edit, and condition themselves within public spectacle. They recognize their

commodification. Referring to the quote from the beginning of this chapter, leaders are very

conscious of their own image, and symbolism, and how this affects their popularity.

Merkel's handlers went on an offensive of trying to demystify her by distributing images of

the chancellor fishing with her husband, for example. The commodity of leadership "signs"

and styles, circulating simultaneously with its insecurity, and performativity is a constant

(and hackneyed) spectacular failure. "'Leadership' combines wide ambiguity and strong

affect," and has the capacity to captivate with its performance.[128] Because of the priority

given to them, their words, and their images, leaders easily become "objectifications of

whatever worries or pleases observers of the political scene because it is easy to identify with

them, support or oppose them, love or hate them."[129] They are symbolic of emotions,

abstractions, and goals which are commodified. The transgressions of the leader role

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[127] Debord (1995), p. 38

[128] Edelman (1988), p. 37

[129] Ibid., p. 39

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stereotypes by women, while massively diffused worldwide, remain unspoken and unspecified.[130]

Since the media is dependent upon profit and popularity for sustaining itself, its production caters to spectacular expectation. Leaders use this forum of the spectacle to craft their own image and persona to appeal to, please, and appease the audience. Among its manifestations of "news or propaganda, advertising or the actual consumption of entertainment—the spectacle epitomizes the prevailing model of social life" and perpetuates it successfully through the media conglomerates and their global reach.[131] The leader's management and production of him/herself within the media spectacle has become an art form. Since the increase in media cites and exchanges, public relations firms and techniques for leader representation have grown increasingly sophisticated.

The political sphere creates the need for leaders to relate to citizens/consumers of images, and the motivation of leader to be discernable to and understood by voters is a priority. The political (of public) "sphere" historically has operated as separate from a conceived personal (or private) sphere. Women leaders symbolically bring into political and governmental relations their gendered roles grounded in the hetero-normative traditional constructions of family, work, and individual's relation to institutions of authority. Viewers, voters, and international audiences are served by the media, but are they given the information and tools to choose leaders and participate as citizens of democracy? The answer is no.

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[130] Gender itself, particularly in the pre-election process in the United States 2008 presidential nomination bid, is discussed, sometimes at length, but mostly in sections of media catering to or targeting a female audience or focusing on entertainment and social issues.

[131] Edelman (1988), p. 37

3.3 Choice, Democracy?, and Audience

In a discussion of women's leadership representation within media and its relationship to liberal social values and neo-liberal market forces, some remarks on democracy and audience/the public become integral. I refer to mainstream as media designed strategically to reach a large regional, national and global audience, and it consists of mass produced products. As I have mentioned previously, the mainstream mass media has consolidated significantly after over two decades of deregulation policy (in the US and European contexts)[132] under the ownership of multi-national companies and individual entrepreneurs who diversify their influence through buying up smaller media and placing them under the auspices of a large corporation. As I have pointed out previously, corporatization of governments has affected the scope of leadership traits, seemingly making them more accessible/ performable for women candidates as part of the liberal social ideal. However, I have also pointed out how the liberal and neo-liberal discourses have over-shadowed (in media's vague or impressionistic inferences) gendered (re-)presentations of leadership. As part of the liberal and neo-liberal discourse, democracy enters into the subject of media and leadership. It is necessary for me to tie into this discussion an analysis of relations between the spectacle and the function of it, albeit splintered and ever-changing. Its function is marked by increased entertainment focus and less public and social affairs coverage. It relies on stereotypes and simplified characterizations of all leaders, and emphasizes the gender and difference in women leaders, as my examples from the previous chapter have shown.

3.3.1 (Gendered) Democracy & (Leader) Consumption

As conglomeration of new media during the last three decades gave rise to proliferation of media cites and producers, the opportunity for more democratized or

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[132] For a more in-depth analysis of the EU media policies and developments see Burgelman in Corner, Schlesinger, and Silverstone (1997) *International Media Research: A Critical Survey*

egalitarian process of information sharing and crafting passed by. Networks consolidated their ownership with the help of state deregulation of the market.[133] Competitive market pressure to "maximize sales resulted in public affairs coverage giving way to more universally popular human-interest content…by the late 1970's, public affairs accounted for less than 20 per cent of the editorial content of the national [British] popular press."[134] Ideally, a "free media brief the electorate, and assist voters to make an informed choice…[and]…they provide a channel of communication between government and governed…and a forum for debate."[135] De-localizing media coverage minimizes the pubic space of debate by focusing on news and events from outside a spectator's experience, and implies prioritization of the global (often, more general) over the local (more specific and often more relevant for viewers). I quote Kellner at length here because his understanding of Debord highlights the process of alienation in democracies where these free market forces and deregulation have impacted citizens, who are turned increasingly into simple consumers:

> "The concept of the spectacle therefore involves a distinction between *passivity* and activity and *consumption* and production, condemning lifeless consumption of spectacle as an alienation from human potentiality for creativity and imagination."[136]

Media is no longer simply "the media," but has influence over other bureaucratic mechanisms within democracy. The "previously non-colonized sectors of social life" contains gendered relations in supposedly non-consumptive realms like leadership or familial relations. However, as I have mentioned previously, leaders and their campaigning efforts or appeals for favor among citizens is a process of self-commodification.

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[133] "Television and the media not only have failed in recent years to carry out the democratic functions of providing the information necessary to produce an informed citizenry but also have promoted the growth of excessive corporate and state power." (Kellner 1990, xiii)

[134] Curran (2005), p. 130

[135] Curran (2005), p. 129

[136] Kellner *Media Culture and the Triumph of the Spectacle* online document at http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/papers/medculturespectacle.html (my italics)

Direct leader choice is integral to democracy. The presence of women leaders signifies a choice previously impossible. Women's performances are now public and in the spectacle, but they are undermined by the continuing masculinized leader type, and use that type as their own model for leading. If the media is still held as an informer, and this is seen uncritically, gender barriers will continue to prevent a change in role and stereotype of the leader and hinder diversity. The leader must continue to work and perform with such an apparatus, a limited framework for reaching voters and spectators. In turn, the apparatus needs the women leader, the "other," for entertainment purposes, as I mentioned above with cleavage and harassment issues circulating widely. In the culture of the spectacle, commercial enterprises have to be entertaining to prosper and, in an "'entertainment economy,' business and fun fuse, so that the E-factor is becoming major aspect of business."[137] The spectacle needs the contrast, the stereotypes and simplifications, to fashion a more sensational reading of events and leadership posts. The market, it can be argued, undercuts open and intelligent debate. The market-oriented media generates pictures that are "*simplified*, personalized, decontextualized, with an emphasis on action rather than process, visualization rather than abstraction, *stereotypicality* rather than human complexity (Gitlin, 1990; Hallin, 1994; Inglis, 1990; Iyengar, 1991; Liebes, 1998)."[138]

As an industry reliant primarily on profits from advertising, mass media commodifies instantly and "commodities are now all that there is…alienated consumption is added to alienated production as an inescapable duty of the masses."[139] A duty of democracy is the consumption of party platforms and executive candidates' advertisements and the necessity

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[137] Kellner continues: "Via the 'entertainmentization' of the economy, television, film, theme parks, video games, casinos, and so forth become major sectors of the national economy. In the U.S., the entertainment industry is now a $480 billion industry, and consumers spend more on having fun than on clothes or health care (Wolf 1999: 4)."

[138] Curran (2005), p. 130 my italics

[139] Debord (1995), p. 29

of choosing an alliance. And, as Debord reminds us, "the spectacle has its roots in the fertile field of the economy, and it is the produce of that field which must in the end come to dominate the spectacular market."[140] A political economy of consumption of and democratic voting on leadership is a decidedly different role arena for women, who are more often in the public spectacle as young bodies, in advertisements, sexualized images, or movie stars.

For the observers/audience, the presence of women leaders not only calls into question a coherent and presumed leadership model, but also allows for an evaluation of choice in democracy. In other words, in the American context of the 2008 election, diversity of choices (racially and sex-wise) spotlights the previous lack of such minority choices. Media policy in North America is in fact hindering democratic mechanisms, particularly in class terms.[141] Opponents of commercialization "contend that it is a means of transforming the space of communication flow which, in a world of limited resources, inevitably means supporting one class of users over others and relying on 'trickle down' economics to overcome class divisions."[142] Furthermore:

> "Elite domination of the media and marginalization of dissidents that results from the operation of (news) filters (like ownership, profit orientation, advertising as primary income source, etc.) occurs so naturally that media news people…convince themselves that they choose and interpret the news 'objectively' and on the basis of professional news values."[143]

The filters mentioned above highlight the massive role economic concerns have taken in media spectacle. In communications, access to and use of the media systems is not equal, and "these positions impact on the access individuals have to media production and

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[140] Debord (1995), p. 37-8

[141] Kellner (1990), Corner, *et al*. (1997), Auletta (1991), Aufderheide (1992) and Coustel (1993)

[142] Castells (1989) sited in Corner, *et al*, p. 169. This chapter goes on to describe how US broadcasting underwent extensive deregulation in the 1980's with "the removal of most major structural constraints on broadcasting ownership, licences and business practices" such as "relaxed anti-trust legislation governing multimedia ownership" among other changes.

[143] Herman & Chomsky in Durham & Kellner (2006), p. 257-258

circulation systems."[144] The deregulatory practices and the aforementioned processes, privatization, liberalization, and so on, have not only de-localized media coverage, but they entail profit-oriented networks to supply less democratically educational information.

3.3.2 Opinion Representation & the Media Watchdog

And informed citizenry makes more informed leadership choices. With an appeal to simplification and stereotypes, potential women leaders do not benefit from supposed liberal and equal opportunity. In traditional liberal theory, media must be a "watchdog" and "act as a check on the state. The media should monitor the full range of state activity, and fearlessly expose abuses of official authority."[145] This "fearless" exposing is focused mainly in the economic and political realm, but rarely in social realm of gender, race, and other indicators of difference that have contributed to inequity. This argument is archaic in that it "stems from the traditional idea that government is the 'seat' of power" and "this fails to take account of shareholder and other forms of authority."[146] Other forms of authority are the media itself, in its increasingly corporatized variety. However, the media should still be viewed "as an agency of information and debate that facilitates the functioning of democracy."[147]

In their study of television and newspaper coverage in the United States and the United Kingdom, Lewis, *et al* (2005) found that:

> "The great majority of references to *public opinion in general* were completely unfounded. The great majority of reference to citizens or public opinion—97% overall— *do not involve polls or surveys of any kind.* On US television, we found that less than 4% of references to public opinion involve opinion polls, while in Britain it is less than 2%."[148]

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[144] (Louw 2001, 3)

[145] Curran *Mediations of Democracy* in Curran and Gurevitch (2005) *Mass Media and Society*, p. 121-123

[146] (Curran 2005, 124)

[147] (Ibid, 129)

[148] Lewis, Inthorn and Wahl-Jorgensen 2005, p. 20, according to their survey of television and newspapers in the US and the UK.

The public is represented without evidence, as if the public could be represented at all. Any representation purporting to be cohesive would be incorrect. The spectacle creates opinion through inference and reproduces norms and assumptions by prejudging public opinion. This same normative reproduction of "the public opinion" constitutes the spectacular successful performance of leadership in the leader's choice of front and style to appeal to the citizens. Women's performances of leadership, while becoming more common, are still unique and provide juicy bits to grand narratives of political struggle. Opinion polls are used often "*not as a way of increasing the democratic accountability of politicians, but as a way of providing a narrative context* for political coverage (Brooks, Lewis and Wahl-Jorgensen, 2004)."[149] They tell us who is ahead, who is behind, and allow endless speculation about what candidates need to do to win elections."[150] The spectacular apparatus of media multi-nationals has the monopoly on widespread dispersal of *speculation*. These speculations and the stereotyped expectations mentioned in relation to Goffman form the patterns of media coverage of women leaders. The media claims of representing audience needs and desires shows in the lack of actually addressing audience in a sustained and intelligent manner. As Lewis, *et al* found in their research, media networks' acknowledgement of the public through opinion polling simply functioned to reinforce the narrative of coverage of spectacular events.

3.3.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, my goal was to clarify the dimensions of the spectacle, their metamorphosis, and the resulting types of coverage of women politicians. I elaborated upon the liberal social model by critiquing the assumption of democracy as being representative and the media's role in the functioning of democracy. The self-performance of women

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[149] (Lewis, Inthorn and Wahl-Jorgensen 2005, 53, my italics)

[150] Ibid

leaders within such a context entails a contemporaneous denial of their gender difference and an acknowledgement of it. The problem of difference could be minimized if spectacular representations were more nuanced and less focused on the stereotypical depiction or fitting context women have previously been limited to in the media. The "entertainment-ization" of media spread into governmental, corporate, and life contexts, creating expectations or simply assuming these expectations for "fun" exist. The Enlightenment-influenced ideoscapes of Appadurai exist within the governmental traditions, and may seem inseparable from them. These same "traditions" of rights, freedom, sovereignty, and representation perpetuate a un-gendered rhetoric of equality having been achieved and are circulated widely within industrialized democracies. This works to negatively radicalize alternative opinions and experiences that do not conform to these traditions. Therefore, diversity within the form of liberalism we have today in a "global" marketplace is not greeted with open arms or balanced coverage. With these conditions in mind, women leaders have a tough job in countering a "tradition" associated with the governmental and social systems that should ideally be enjoyed by all. This "all," unfortunately, does not include everyone.

Conclusion

"If every Chinese has to study Mao, and in effect *be* Mao, this is because there is *nothing else to be*."[151]

If the tendency of mirroring and imitating the spectacle's leaders is so pervasive, I use Debord's statement above as an example of the power of leadership representation and the power media has to leave out what is not deemed attractive to audiences through non-existent opinion gathering. Currently, a hot debate about the relevancy of gender in leadership choice is going on within American politics and leadership potential of women. Given the dimensions of global media spectacle, resistance to simplification appears futile. What I set out to do with this work primarily is to re-evaluate and undermine what seems to me to be a hegemonic international discourse grounded in Enlightenment ideals in modern liberal ideology which is blindly applied to large populations through subtle integrative measures (as in the European Union) or direct threats and force (IMF loans and Iraq respectively). Enlightenment legacies have always been problematic for feminist scholars, and I meant to contribute another critique of this in relation to leadership and spectacle. Additionally, I add more to a dimension of globalization that is less visible than discourses on poverty, women's organizing, and policy formation. The sphere of leadership, its symbols, its mechanisms for legitimacy or practicing of authority, are all intersecting at crux of the governmental, media, and market components of current power relations.

As Senator Clinton ends her bid for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination, one historic precedent ends while another continues in the campaigning of Senator Obama. My goal was to make clear that leader constitution is inseparable from the constitution of gender roles and stereotypes and that its performance for women leaders, due to current re-presentation and glossing over with liberal and idealistic rhetoric, remains intensely

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[151] Debord (1994), p. 42

problematic and, at this point, impossible. The woman leader, with the dominant leadership role model sustaining its masculine characteristics, is in a losing battle with her own self-conceptualization and self-presentation.

When I began this project, I had not planned or conceived of having any recommendations or ideas for combating sexism and gender stereotypes within media spectacle. Throughout the research process, I discovered in my reading many criticisms and suggestions. Two of the most pertinent rely upon education and updating the conceptualization of the nation-state and its relationship with the media as a "watchdog." The first idea would be to focus on media literacy in education. This could entail critical thinking skills not just applied within learning process itself, but applied in the world around the spectator/consumer. I agree with Debord and the Situationists in their critique of capitalistic society breeding passive consumption and, in the case of the American and German contexts, disinterest and apathy toward political processes. The last eight years of changes within American politics, diplomacy, and internal organization, and many unprecedented changes by the Bush administration, produced for some citizens a feeling of powerlessness within a "democracy," with opposition viewpoints ignored.[152] While I do not argue that audiences are entirely passive, I have described apathy when I focused on the power of media spectacle. The second recommendation would be an "intellectual adjustment" to the changing world of today. By "abandoning seventeenth-century fears of the leviathan state…and recognizing the democratic state," we "can extend the sphere of information and public debate in the interests of sustaining a healthy democracy."[153] We can reformulate the duties of media and the necessary re-evaluation of power relations in a mass media and the globalizing corporate environment. The state, in its non-leviathan form should

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[152] For example, in the months leading up to the Iraq invasion, it is well documented that few opposition questions were asked by the mass media about reasons, justifications, and implications for the invasion.

[153] Curran (2005), p. 131

keep private corporations in check to safeguard access to media and public debate. When more nuanced, thoughtful, and gendered reconceptualizations of the nation-state occur, the media should not hold onto an archaic notion of the state being the only powerful entity to critique. I assert that more liberal inclusion of women and other minorities will take place when these conservative and reiterated concepts become public debate.

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