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“TALKING IT OVER” WITH HILLARY:  
DOMESTIC AND GLOBAL ADVOCACY, 1995-2000

by

Melody Joy Lehn

A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Major: Communication

The University of Memphis

August 2013

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## ABSTRACT

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In July of 1995, first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton's first "Talking It Over" column premiered in newspapers across the country and the globe. Creators Syndicate in Los Angeles, which produced and circulated this weekly syndicated column, has archived two hundred and ninety-one columns on their website. Dropped and suspended by many publications throughout its duration, "Talking It Over" was a controversial journalistic endeavor for its author, who was simultaneously accused of writing in a fashion that was "too political" and "not political enough." Consequently, the existing scholarly appraisals of "Talking It Over" depict this column as being either incidental or a rhetorical failure in Hillary Rodham Clinton's first ladyship.

Departing from this view, I seek to address in this dissertation the question of how Hillary Rodham Clinton used her newspaper column as a rhetorical resource for political advocacy from 1995 to 2000. To answer this question, I suggest that "Talking It Over" can be read fruitfully as an autobiographical text which made use of three complimentary rhetorical strategies: personal stories, narratives, and descriptions. Though "Talking It Over" is not an autobiography, I argue that it functions as an autobiographical text due to the various features and strategies employed in the column. I conclude that writing a weekly opinion column is both a record of political advocacy and a form of political advocacy in itself.

## PREFACE

In December 2006, not long after I had first joined Facebook, a college friend created a new group called “South Carolina for Clinton 2008” and asked me to join his effort. Almost offended, I responded that nobody would ever believe that I could support Hillary Clinton if she ran for president and that he should look elsewhere for group members. My friend suggested that I join anyway, not only to learn a little more about Hillary, but also to “see what folks would do” if they thought I was actually supporting this person – this *woman* – as a potential presidential candidate. I resisted. He nudged, saying that this was an opportunity for a social experiment that was, quite simply, too good to pass up. I finally relented and almost immediately received an angrily-composed message from an acquaintance who ran in similar social circles, but who I had never actually met or conversed with.

“Is this a joke?” began the message. “What are you doing supporting Hillary?” Mentions of my church appeared throughout the ensuing exchange of messages, suggesting – indeed, stating quite explicitly in places – that if I was “serious,” I would be best served worshiping elsewhere. Colorful descriptions and phrases peppered this exchange, including how my membership in this group exposed my “naiveté,” “immaturity,” and “ignorance.” When I asked for clarification about why this acquaintance felt comfortable messaging me in such an antagonistic way, the response I received was this: “It goes beyond church constitutions and party lines when you support a candidate like Hillary. She’s evil incarnate.” Unsatisfied, I pressed for further information: “How exactly is Hillary evil?” The response: “Are you kidding? Not even worth arguing about.” In the end, I stayed in the Facebook group.



This spirited exchange inspired a trip to the local library, where I immediately checked out Hillary Clinton's memoirs *Living History*. My motive was not, as the organizer of Clinton's 2008 Facebook group had hoped, to learn more about Hillary. My motive was, instead, purely an effort to self-educate should I suddenly find myself face-to-face with my sparring partner or anyone else who might feel inclined to engage in an argument about a subject that was, incidentally, "not even worth arguing about." Worth it or not, should the time come, I wanted to win that argument. So, naturally, I armed myself with evidence. But something unexpected happened as I gathered my evidence. Over the next several days of reading, I found myself drawn in to the story I found within *Living History*'s pages. In the back of my mind, I thought, "yes, but, *of course* someone like Hillary Clinton is going to put her best foot forward and spin a flattering portrait of her life." Yet, as I learned more about Hillary's real, concrete achievements over her lifetime, I found myself struggling to dismiss her so easily.

That struggle reflects not just my own personal and professional reasons for writing about Hillary *Rodham* Clinton's life and career, but also the broader questions at stake in this dissertation and in public discourse about political women. As a close reading of a series of newspaper columns titled "Talking It Over" written by Hillary Rodham Clinton during her first lady years, this dissertation seeks to make transparent some of the questions, issues, and assumptions underlying our scholarly conversations and the public discourse about first ladies, politics, and rhetoric. Along these lines, a few explanations become important to establish early.

First, I am concerned with accounting for first ladies not just as presidential spouses, but as public advocates. By advocacy, I mean the rhetorical strategies

encompassing a rhetor's public support for a political causes, projects, initiatives, legislation, and/or policy. Broadly speaking, this dissertation traces what proves to be an observable trajectory of advocacy from first ladies. Throughout history (and often out of the public spotlight), first ladies have wielded political power in meaningful ways, created pet projects which have significantly affected American political culture, and significantly shaped and influenced public policy. Skeptics and scholars alike have frequently tended to dismiss this view of first ladies, arguing that first ladies, and their rhetoric, should not – and, indeed, *cannot* – be separated from that of the president and, therefore, cannot be studied in terms of advocacy. This view, I contend, presents us with a false dilemma that places first ladies not as rhetorical actors, but as rhetorical (re)actors who have little talent or opportunity for seriously participating in American politics. I challenge that view and argue that studying first ladies as advocates is one way to raise, and counter, this dilemma.

At the same time, this more general observation about how first ladies and their rhetoric can be characterized as inconsequential or contingent on presidential rhetoric can certainly be localized to the case of Hillary Rodham Clinton. As my examination of the trends within the scholarly literature about her shows, the rhetorical picture of Hillary's advocacy as first lady has generally portrayed this advocacy as mere image-making, a strategic response to negative media coverage, or posturing for her own political ambitions. While important insights have been gleaned from studying her first lady rhetoric as it relates to her image-work, navigation of negative media coverage, and campaign rhetoric, I find it ultimately discouraging to see very little inquiry into the *substance* of Hillary's rhetoric as it relates to civic and political advocacy.

In keeping with the definition of advocacy I have proposed, more than one biographer has noted that Hillary Rodham Clinton enjoyed a long and important pre-White House history of advocacy that manifested itself in diverse ways over the years, but always consistently in her speaking and her writing. As one biographer put it, “protest, in her book, called for a cerebral approach through writings and speeches” (Radcliffe 150). Making evident this cerebral approach, this dissertation challenges the depiction of her advocacy as a mere prelude to backlash, seeking instead to orient readers to a view of Hillary Rodham Clinton as a rhetor who engaged in significant advocacy as a first lady. Not a secondary political partner, but as a primary political actor. Not just constantly watching and being watched, but as an agent herself.

In this vein, three closely related objectives inform how this dissertation will unfold. First, I seek to address the inadequate ways that Hillary’s rhetoric in general and her “Talking It Over” columns in particular have been assessed. Second, I am attentive to the need for scholars of rhetoric and political communication to continue to find ways to account for the unusual and novel ways that women gain rhetorical entry into the political process. Finally, I recognize the need for establishing new insights into how we might go about studying women’s political advocacy.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### THE FIRST LADY AS COLUMNIST

Not long after her husband's election to the US presidency, first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton was invited to write a syndicated column for Creators Syndicate in Los Angeles. This dissertation will use the column, called "Talking It Over," as a lens to identify and better understand the rhetorical role that first ladies can play in American political culture and beyond. My central claim is that this column functioned as a resource for Hillary Rodham Clinton to assume the role of political advocate for a wide range of issues over the five-and-a-half years that she was a columnist.

Anticipating the consuming nature of her work on national health care reform, among other things, Hillary Rodham Clinton initially declined the offer to write a weekly column (Purdum). As the story goes, after the failure of health care reform, "Hillary" (which she prefers to "Hillary Clinton" or the bulkier "Hillary Rodham Clinton") revisited the idea of writing a column in the fashion of her much-admired predecessor, Eleanor Roosevelt. In June 1995, she accepted the original offer from Creators Syndicate's president and founder Rick Newcombe on the condition that she would receive no payment; instead, the syndicate would donate any of the column's proceeds to various children's charities (Cornwell).

On July 23, 1995, the first "Talking It Over" column appeared in over 100 newspapers and magazines worldwide, including the *Boston Globe*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Daily News*, the *San Francisco Examiner*, the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, and the *Kansas City Star* (Purdum; Durocher; Kurtz). Despite such a wide range of sources, the readership for this column was limited because the majority of the more

widely-read publications did not agree to run “Talking It Over.” As Howard Kurtz explained at the time, “most major papers, including *The Washington Post*, have rejected the column as either too light or too much of a political platform” (Kurtz). His observation would be a recurring theme throughout the duration of “Talking It Over.”

The first lady took some time to prepare for her journalistic endeavor. Even before she agreed to write “Talking It Over,” Hillary read through many of Eleanor Roosevelt’s “My Day” columns in an effort to better understand not only the first lady position itself, but also how one might go about putting thoughts about this position to paper (Clinton, “Remarks to Creators Syndicate”). In a similar vein, Hillary consulted with historian Doris Kearns Goodwin, acclaimed biographer of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, about how best to use her column to “stake out her view on issues” the way that Roosevelt previously had (Purdum). “It has to be somewhat soothing to know that, little by little if you believe you’re many-sided, complex, warmer than people know, then you can at least show some of that,” Goodwin mused about Hillary’s foray into the world of journalism (Purdum).

Inspired by and versed in Roosevelt’s previous example, Hillary worked closely with her speechwriter, Alison “Lissa” Muscatine, to draft her column each week. Sometimes, Muscatine drafted “750 words from Hillary’s recent speeches,” with the first lady making the final revisions to the column herself (Smith 229). Todd Purdum of *The New York Times* reported that, at other times, “Mrs. Clinton works up ideas herself...then drafts the column with help from [Muscatine]” (Purdum). Muscatine did make clear, however, that she did not function as a “ghost-writer” of “Talking It Over”; rather, she and Hillary collaborated on the column (Durocher). Once a column was drafted in AP



style, it was filed to Creators Syndicate – generally via fax or e-mail – from the first lady’s location at the time. In a speech to journalists at Creators Syndicate in 1997, Hillary recalled the diverse locales she often submitted from: “I’ve had to calculate time in Los Angeles from places like – and Mongolia, for example, or Aleutia and Tanzania. And then I’ve had to file from Air Force One on occasion,” she explained (Clinton, “Remarks to Creators Syndicate”).

Creators Syndicate has archived two-hundred and ninety-one “Talking It Over” columns on their website. The columns span from July 23, 1995 through December 27, 2000. Only one column – August 26, 1995 – is actually missing from their archives, while the November 26, 1996 column appears twice (mistakenly replacing the December 25, 1996 column). Hillary is credited as the author of all but one column. On May 7, 1996, President Bill Clinton guest authored a special Mother’s Day column, dedicating his contribution to his mother Virginia Kelley. Other than these exceptions, the corpus of texts represented in this archive is complete, unedited, and representative of the circulated work of Hillary and her speechwriter over the course of five-and-a-half years.

Through the duration of its publication, “Talking It Over” generated a mixture of controversy and disinterest. Several publications refused to publish it from the start, while others dropped or suspended the column after already publishing it on a weekly basis. The story of how and why this was the case is an important part of “Talking It Over’s” interesting, albeit largely unknown history. The following pages of this chapter will tell that history. First, I explain the multifaceted purposes that “Talking It Over” served. These purposes are drawn from various sources where Hillary articulated her reasons for writing, including a speech she delivered to an audience of journalists in 1997, her

memoirs *Living History*, and the column itself. Next, I provide an overview of the different ways that the public and journalists responded to the column. After accounting for the circulation and reception of “Talking It Over,” I conclude by explaining my rhetorical approach and previewing the chapters of this dissertation.

### *The Purpose(s) of “Talking It Over”*

Skeptics have frequently dismissed “Talking It Over” as having a singular purpose: reshaping and softening Hillary’s public persona following her failures with health care reform. “As everybody knows, Hillary is now strenuously morphing herself away from the leftist-feminist-careerist image earlier projected and is acquiring a homebody persona more suitable for the conservative mid-1990s,” wrote one journalist of Clinton’s efforts (Seligman). “Continuing to follow in Eleanor’s footsteps, Hillary decided to write a book and to launch a weekly newspaper column, presenting a warmer, more personal side of the woman perceived at best as a policy wonk, if not as the ‘yuppie wife from Hell’ or the ‘Wicked Witch of the West Wing,’” wrote Clinton biographer Gail Sheehy (268). Perhaps Clinton’s harshest critic was *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd, who wrote at the time that “Hillary’s ‘bright copy about being a helpmeet’ was a charade” (Smith 229). “One of the smartest, strongest, most complicated women in Washington history is retreating behind a white-glove femininity,” lamented Dowd about the first lady’s new column (Smith 229).

Still another journalist asserted that Hillary’s purpose in writing was to disingenuously “spin” various aspects of the Clinton administration. Contrasting her column with Eleanor Roosevelt’s, Daniel Seligman of *Fortune Magazine* wrote that

“Talking It Over” was “determinedly noncontroversial” (Seligman). Elaborating, Seligman argued that in her column, Hillary

even manages to put a sentimental, syrupy spin on one of the ghastliest moments of the Clinton presidency – the February 1994 Prayer Breakfast in Washington, at which Mother Teresa made an impassioned speech against abortion, causing the crowd to rise in thunderous applause while Bill reached uneasily for a glass of water and Hillary sat there stone-faced and obviously enraged. Alas the human dimension gets lost when she recounts the episode in a column that forgets to mention the author’s pro-choice position. (Seligman)

This sampling suggests the media was generally skeptical, critical, and even dismissive of “Talking It Over” due to the conclusion that these two functions of the column – reshaping and softening Hillary’s public persona and affording her the chance to “spin” unseemly political moments – were neither proper nor praiseworthy. Yet, there is a gap between what the media’s characterization of the column’s purpose, Hillary’s characterization of the column’s purpose, and, most importantly, what the column actually *does*. There are several more substantial reasons that Hillary had in writing a weekly column, and these reasons are dispersed throughout the initial “Talking It Over” column, a speech she delivered to an audience of journalists at Creators Syndicate in 1997, and her published memoirs *Living History*.

Much of Hillary’s July 23, 1995 column was concerned with explaining the various reasons why she was writing in the first place. First, she says that her column will be issue-centered: “My hope is that this weekly column will talk about the most immediate issues on people’s minds – the funny, the sad, the inspiring and the momentous” (Clinton, July 23, 1995). Second, she will use her position as first lady to “give people a view of events they might not otherwise have a chance to see” (Clinton, July 23, 1995). In other words, she will highlight and interpret events, past and present, as

a way to write history. Third, and explicitly following the example of Roosevelt's "My Day" column, she hopes to use her voice to "prompt all of us to think more about the human dimension of our lives" (Clinton, July 23, 1995). That is to say, she hopes that the points she raises in her column "will help bridge the gaps in our society so that we can reach beyond stereotypes and caricatures – and respect one another for the unique contributions each of us makes to our country" (Clinton, July 23, 1995). Fourth, she hopes to use her column as a means to share information with the public. She writes: "My wish too is that it will provide information about problems facing us that people can use to help decide what they think should be done" (Clinton, July 23, 1995). Finally, and echoing the column's title, she explains the column's purpose of drawing citizens into the political process: "this column will give me the chance to talk things over in the hope that some of you will join the conversation" (Clinton, July 23, 1995).

Hillary reinforced these purposes to an audience of journalists at Creators Syndicate in September 1997. In this speech, she provides four reasons for writing "Talking It Over." First, she wishes to make the first lady position transparent to the public by sharing her experiences. "And I wanted to do it for a couple of reasons – to share with people some of the experiences that I had been privileged to have, from the very mundane of being able to drive a car, to meeting people like Nelson Mandela, for example," she explains ("Remarks to Creator's Syndicate"). Second, she reiterates her desire to develop and promote arguments about the issues that affect Americans. She says:

I really do care passionately about the issues that affect Americans because I do think they matter, and I wanted an opportunity to talk about some of those issues and, frankly, to advance arguments about issues that I thought would make a difference in the lives of the people and our country. I have traveled around the

world and in our country, I've both met people who have symbolized a lot of what I see going on in the country and I've learned more about the issues that I care about. ("Remarks to Creator's Syndicate")

Third, she hopes to use her column to both recall and record momentous events in history: "And I've been fortunate to witness a lot of historic moments. And there have been, in addition to those highlights of our time here, some very sad moments that have been tragic in their impact on the world" ("Remarks to Creator's Syndicate").

Hillary offers a fourth reason which, in many ways, departs from her other purposes in writing and sheds light on the larger implications of her project.

Whether it is meeting Nelson Mandela or one of my childhood heroes, Ernie Banks, I always come away from these experiences enriched by it and wishing that I could take every American with me. That's especially true as I travel around the world. I've often commented if I couldn't take every American with me, I wish I could take every American teenager with me, so that they could see what our country was like from a distance, they could see what other people go through to try and maintain democracy and they wouldn't necessarily take for granted, as I think many Americans do, the blessings that we have here, and understand more about what we have to offer here in the United States. ("Remarks to Creator's Syndicate")

In short, the first lady has undertaken a project of a democratic nature. Her goal, in part, is to provide Americans with a view of America from abroad, so as to promote an appreciation for democracy. As well, and as this dissertation will show, she characterizes the political, social, and economic progress of other nations as it relates to a democratic government in the United States.

In her memoirs *Living History*, published in 2003 by the then-New York senator, Hillary is even more candid about "Talking It Over," accounting for the political dimensions involved in a first lady writing a syndicated opinion column. She admits that "Talking It Over" was intended to help her modify her position in the Clinton Administration following her failed efforts with Health Care Reform.

My first columns covered topics ranging from the seventy-fifth anniversary of women's suffrage to a celebration of family vacations. The exercise of putting my ideas on paper gave me a clearer sense of how to recast my role *as an advocate* [emphasis added] within the Administration as I began to focus on discrete domestic projects that were more achievable than massive undertakings such as health care reform. On my agenda now were children's health issues, breast cancer prevention, and protecting funding for public television, legal services and the arts." (292)

While Hillary's first columns did stake a claim in these areas as she says, her later columns ventured well beyond the realm of discrete domestic projects and broadened to include political issues in countries as diverse as Ireland, Germany, Albania, Nicaragua and more.

Second, Hillary openly, though discreetly used her column to counter negative media coverage. As she puts it, her column provided a forum for responding to the "reactionary pundits and TV and radio personalities" who dominated the media and public discourse by instead creating her own deliberate rhetorical presence in the media (*Living History* 291). "I decided to convey my thoughts and opinions directly to the public by writing them myself," rather than rely on the press to do so, she explains (*Living History* 291-92). At the same time, the first lady's adviser Mandy Grunwald clarified why this might be important. By this point in the Clinton administration, Grunwald noted how the first lady "gave up on reporters because she 'wanted them to focus on substance and they wrote only psychobabble pieces about her'" (Beasley 217). Thus, "Talking It Over" can and should be read as an effort to reroute media coverage to emphasize political issues rather than the way reporters depicted Clinton's character.

By her own admission, then, Hillary's purposes in writing "Talking It Over" align closely with the media's charge that she was attempting to soften her persona. She concedes that her reasons for writing were deeply connected to a need to recast her public

image. Yet, what largely goes unspoken in the media coverage of the column is that Hillary was purposefully recasting her public image *into that of public advocate*. The prospect for her to recast her image, while still engaging in significant political advocacy, is not a possibility generally articulated or accepted in the media coverage of “Talking It Over.” A more careful study of her discourse about the column reveals that the column served multiple functions directed toward the goal of portraying Hillary as a political advocate. Before outlining these functions, however, I will briefly account for the responses of readers of the column.

#### *Reader Responses to “Talking It Over”*

Though limited and mixed, the record of the public’s response is important to include in the history of “Talking It Over’s” original circulation. Philip Gailey of the *St. Petersburg Times* reported that before the column premiered, his office fielded several concerned inquiries from readers who “called to post a legitimate question: Should the Times and other newspapers provide Hillary Clinton with a platform from which she can try to repair her husband’s presidency and promote his re-election?” (Gailey). Many readers thought the answer to this question should be no. Gailey also wrote that he “began hearing from the Hillary-haters as soon as it was announced she would be writing a column. They threatened to cancel their subscriptions the day Hillary Clinton’s byline appeared in the Times” (Gailey). Clearly, some readers were concerned that Hillary’s column might give her husband a political advantage in the coming election, while still others had a preexisting loathing for the column’s author.

Jeff Ovall thought somewhat differently in his letter to the editor published in *The Washington Post* on November 15, 1998. His text ran under the heading “Surprised

reader agrees with Hillary Clinton's column." Ovall began by saying that the first lady's "political and social views are so contrary to mine that reading her column with a straight face is difficult" (Ovall). Nevertheless, Hillary's column three days earlier about the need for the victims of Hurricane Mitch to receive aid and relief was one in which Ovall discovered agreement between himself and the first lady. Yet, Ovall's praise was mingled with criticism. While he agreed with her that "we in the United States must rise to the occasion to help this suffering region of the world," he criticized Hillary's emphasis on federal aid to the hurricane victims (Ovall). He noted that the first lady should have included Christian-based organizations in her list, and supplied in his editorial the contact information for a ministry.

Though anecdotal, these two responses capture well the overarching narrative about "Talking It Over's" purpose, scope, and reception. Some readers refused at the onset to give the column a chance because they disliked the first lady. Other readers were less concerned with the author herself and more concerned that it might be unfair, or even unethical, to provide Hillary with a column to use as a forum for promoting her husband. Still other readers, it seems, cautiously found themselves agreeing with Hillary in spite of their preexisting reservations about her. At the same time, these reservations were so prevalent and powerful that they still warranted a mention, however brief, alongside any praise or consensus. As the following section shows, the response of journalists was equally complex and varied.

#### *Media Responses to "Talking It Over"*

A wide range of newspapers and magazines carried "Talking It Over," and the responses the column evoked from other journalists are similarly diverse. The week the



column premiered, Phillip Gailey of the *St. Petersburg Times* was supportive of Hillary's venture into the world of journalism, predicting after the first column that

anything Hillary Clinton says or writes, of course, has political overtones because she's the wife of the president. She's also a political activist with her own ideas and issues. Maybe she'll try to score some political points for her husband and try to soften her public image to get through the next election. (Gailey)

The similar themes of the column working as a political advantage during an election year and the possibility that it could also work to soften Hillary's public image are present here. Yet, Gailey makes an important and uncommon addition to the conversation when he characterizes Hillary as an "activist" who comes to the table with a distinct set of ideas about politics. The column, in his view, is a likely (and appropriate) place for her to express these ideas about the issues.

Nonetheless, many editors actually felt that the column lacked political substance. Thomas Bray, editor of the Editorial Page for the *Detroit News*, suspended "Talking It Over" during the 1996 presidential election season. As he explained, "We've felt that many of the columns seem too content-free. This being an editorial page, we're more interested in what she has to say about issues" (Durocher). Columnist Joanne Jacobs of the *San Jose Mercury News* echoed Bray's sentiments: "A columnist's agenda should be to inform the public...or stir vigorous debate on critical issues, or to raise hell" (Durocher). Clinton's column, Jacobs contended, failed in all regards. "The column's an image rehabilitation project for her," claimed Jacobs. Wesley Pruden, Editor-in-Chief of the *Washington Times*, ran the column despite some reservations and, unsurprisingly, had this to say about "Talking It Over":

It's a little soft. The sample column I read, she was writing about the dress she wore for a reception for the Queen of Thailand. I wish she'd be more political. I

wish she'd talk about shredding documents at the Rose Law Firm and those coffees at the White House. (Kurtz)

And, to be sure, coverage of "Talking It Over" as lacking in political substance was not limited to American journalists. "Mammograms, motherhood and breast-feeding are all firmly on the agenda. So is the 'feeding schedule' of Socks, America's First Cat," concluded John Carlin of London's *The Independent* in his write-up of how Hillary "keeps her thoughts homey" in her column (Carlin).

Still others took issue with the column because it was *too* political. Sandra Mims Rowe, an Oregon editor, said "she hoped for an insider's view of White House life," yet as the 1996 presidential election continued on, Clinton's column seemed "increasingly political" (Durocher). So, Rowe stopped running "Talking It Over" in her newspaper. "Hillary Clinton's a serious woman. None of us should have expected her to do a backstairs-at-the-White-House column," she concluded. James Warren, of the *Chicago Tribune*, concurred: "My desire would be to juice it up more. I'd be interested in selling something people might really want to read" (Durocher). The *Seattle Times*, in fact, dropped the column in January of 1996. Its Editorial Page Editor, Mindy Cameron, said the following: "We were curious to see what the First Lady had to say to readers. Not much, it turns out" (Durocher).

Despite such mixed responses, however, with the column being either dropped or suspended by several newspapers, Hillary carried on with her efforts. When once asked if she had "agonized" over the various letters of cancellation her column had received, she answered honestly in retrospect.

Oh, I just assumed it was political. [Creators Syndicate president] Rick [Newcombe] has spared me from the really painful details. But, of course – and I do – I mean, some people were very honest; during the '96 election campaign,

they wouldn't carry the column. They said, we can't do it because we don't want to look like we are favoring the Clintons in any way. And I understand that completely. (Clinton "Remarks to Creators Syndicate")

In this answer, no trace can be found of the contradictory trap of being either "too political" or "not political enough" that Hillary and her column were charged with. Instead, she framed the conversation about her column's cancellation as a matter of an unfair political advantage regarding publicity during a presidential campaign.

The concern that the president and first lady were receiving an unfair advantage through Hillary's column was valid and might help to explain, at least in part, why the media responses to "Talking It Over" were generally so negative. Perhaps some journalists and editors agreed with readers who thought the first lady was receiving favorable treatment on the cusp of a campaign year and that this was symptomatic of corruption, a liberal media, or the like. Or, perhaps some journalists and editors felt that the first lady's qualifications to write about political issues were problematic. Too, it is possible that the idea of a public figure generating their own media coverage might somehow detract from, even contradict, the media's own coverage of that public figure and pose a problem. And, it certainly seems that the idea that the first lady might write a weekly column to "soften" her public persona was a move to be looked at suspiciously. It is difficult to say if any or all of these possibilities was actually the case, but regardless, a close examination of the scholarly assessments of "Talking It Over" suggests that this column deserves a second look.

### **Why Study "Talking It Over"?**

As a series of texts, "Talking It Over" has been widely overlooked, even dismissed, by rhetorical critics. At least three reasons not only explain why this

newspaper column is a worthy artifact for study and analysis, but also why this project is a necessary addition to the conversation about Hillary Rodham Clinton's first ladyship and about the rhetorical performances of political women who engage in advocacy. These reasons are:

- the inadequate ways the column has thus far been assessed;
- the need for scholars of women's public address to continue to expand our critical lens to include unusual or novel rhetorical forms, and;
- the need to create a way to study the advocacy of first ladies.

*Previous Scholarly Readings of "Talking It Over"*

Much like its reception throughout its circulation, "Talking It Over" has been largely dismissed by the few historians and communication scholars who have studied it. These dismissals, I contend, are the product of reading the column as a rhetorical enterprise separate from and unrelated to any of Clinton's political advocacy as first lady. For instance, Maurine Beasley describes the column as "chatty," saying it "never hit a consistent tone or attained the popularity of [Eleanor Roosevelt's] 'My Day' column" (217). This description depicts the column as a rhetorical failure within Hillary's larger first lady performance, emphasizing the reception of the column rather than its inner-workings. Conversely, Myra G. Gutin takes up the view that the column was merely Hillary's attempt to retract her entrance into public policy and to recast her image along more traditional lines:

For a time Hillary Clinton took a step back and embraced a more traditional first-lady stance. She addressed conferences on women's issues and toured Asia with her daughter, Chelsea. She began to write a weekly syndicated newspaper column, "Talking It Over," that was similar to Eleanor Roosevelt's celebrated column, "My Day." ("Hillary's Choices" 280)

Problematically, Gutin does not explain exactly *how* the column accomplishes, or does not accomplish, the objective of embracing a more traditional first-lady stance, nor does she acknowledge that it is, in fact, *not* traditional for a first lady to write a daily or weekly newspaper column which speaks directly to the public about the political subjects of the day. Gutin's oversight underscores one aim of my dissertation, which is to offer a corrective to readings of this column that limit our understanding of its purposes, reach, and scope.

*The Newspaper Column as an Undervalued Rhetorical Form*

Despite progress, there continues to be a need for scholars of women's public address to expand our critical lens to include unusual or novel rhetorical forms. In their anthology of women's rhetoric(s) titled *Available Means: An Anthology of Women's Rhetoric(s)*, Joy Ritchie and Kate Ronald pose a number of provocative thoughts and questions related to the gathering and study of women's rhetoric(s) and the implications this might have for rhetorical history, theory, and pedagogy. Within this collection, Ritchie and Ronald include texts that

demonstrate an emerging tradition of women's rhetorics – a long-standing tradition, yet one so “new” that its primary texts have not until now been collected; a tradition that has existed only in the shadows for centuries because women's writing and speaking have not been gathered together as “rhetoric.” (xvi)

Citing Aristotle's definition of rhetoric as “the discovery of the available means of persuasion,” the editors attempt to “reclaim” these words for women rhetors through the very gathering of texts which, in itself, is a rhetorical act. In the process, Ritchie and Ronald liberally “use the term ‘available means’ both to connect with and depart from the rhetorical traditions” (xvii).

A chief concern of Ritchie and Ronald is their aim to move beyond canonization and the “recreat[ion] [of] traditional, exclusive rhetorical frameworks” that exclude and/or offer limited understandings of women’s rhetorical practices (xx). Thus, they consider alternative forms and contents as rhetorics – particularly, works that “challenge and redefine traditional notions of invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery” (xx). Among these are what Ritchie and Ronald identify as “underprivileged or devalued forms, such as letters, journals, and speeches to other women” (xx). They also cite newspaper columns, critical essays, diaries, meditations, and fables as further examples of underprivileged or devalued rhetorical forms.

I adhere to their view that there is a need to “reclaim the discovery of the available means of persuasion” not only for women rhetors in general, but for first ladies and Hillary Rodham Clinton in particular. More broadly and as Ronald and Ritchie suggest, close examination of undervalued rhetorical forms is one step that can be taken to overcome exclusivity and gaps in rhetorical canons and traditions and to craft a space for more fully understanding and appreciating women’s writing and speaking. Yet more specifically, and as I demonstrate throughout this dissertation, the tendency for communication scholars has thus far been to study Hillary in terms of her speech-making and as the subject of media coverage which was often belittling and even contemptuous. As a rare first lady who intervenes on her press coverage by actively creating press by/about herself, Hillary uses her column as a resource for crafting a political agenda. Exploring the dimensions of this political agenda through its presentation in an unusual rhetorical form is another objective of this project.

### *Advocacy and the Rhetorical First Lady*

There also continues to be a need for establishing ways to study the political advocacy of first ladies. “Her name has routinely appeared atop the annual Gallup poll of America’s most admired women in the world, but there exists little systematic study of what she has done to deserve this attention,” laments one first lady historian (Watson, “The First Lady Reconsidered,” 805). First lady historians agree that “there exists...no ‘tightly argued thesis’ or scholarly theories and models on the first lady. No frameworks exist to guide scholarly research on the subject although arguments have been made to formalize the field of study of the institution” (Watson, “The First Lady Reconsidered,” 807). These points are well taken and useful insights, particularly when considered as having rhetorical implications. While systematic study, tightly argued theses, scholarly theories, rigid frameworks, and formalization of study are not end goals here, they are pragmatic entry points into inquiring into the advocacy of first ladies. Accordingly, this dissertation is an extended case study which traces where and how a first lady might find, or develop, rhetorical resources for advocacy, what inventive strategies these resources might afford her, and what are the possibilities and limitations for such an undertaking.

#### **Rhetorical Approach**

In this dissertation, I seek to address the question of how Hillary Rodham Clinton used her newspaper column as a rhetorical resource for political advocacy from 1995 to 2000. To answer this question, I suggest that “Talking It Over” can be read fruitfully as an autobiographical text. Though “Talking It Over” is not an autobiography, I argue that it functions as an autobiographical text due to the various features and strategies employed in the column. To support this approach, I draw from the work of Brenda

DeVore Marshall and Molly A. Mayhead. They have studied the autobiographies of political women (including Hillary Rodham Clinton), arguing that we should think of “the autobiographical text as political discourse and therefore...an appropriate site for the rhetorical construction of a personal and civic self situated within local, national, and/or international political communities” (1). Accordingly, such rhetorical construction relates to

the intersection between the ‘politicization of the private and the personalization of the public evident in the women’s narratives; the description of U.S. politics the women provide in their writings; the ways in which the women’s personal stories craft arguments about their political ideologies; the strategies these women leaders employ in navigating the gendered double-binds of politics; and, the manner in which the women’s discourse serves to encourage, instruct, and empower future women leaders. By writing their autobiographies, female leaders further legitimize their roles in the public sphere, where, even [today], the validity of their participation may be contested. (1-2)

While “Talking It Over” is not an autobiography, it functions as an autobiographical text due to the various features and strategies employed in the column, including personal narratives and detailed anecdotes about the author’s family, her friends, her travels, her experiences in the White House, her opinions about various issues and people, her descriptions of U.S. and global politics, her descriptions of history, and her descriptions of current events. This column functions as a rhetorical history of Hillary Rodham Clinton’s activities on behalf of a wide range of topics from July 1995 to December 2000. This rhetorical history, I believe, invites a view of her that has been previously missing in the literature and which casts her as a domestic and global advocate.



## Preview of Chapters

In the second chapter, I articulate the rhetorical dimensions of the first lady position and focus on how different first ladies, preceding and including Hillary, have used the position as a platform for political advocacy. In this chapter, I establish a vocabulary for my endeavor, focusing on concepts like “first lady,” “rhetorical first lady,” and “advocacy” as a way to clarify my terminology and frame my later arguments. This chapter also explores the different kinds of advocacy that first ladies may engage in rhetorically, including ceremonial hosting, political support, pet projects, and policy work. While these categories are not discrete, they are useful for differentiating between the various rhetorical forms through which advocacy can take place. Finally, this chapter closes with general conclusions about the rhetorical history of advocacy as related to the first lady position.

The third chapter provides a historical overview of Hillary Rodham’s early advocacy, in an effort to provide context for her work as first lady. Starting with her early years, this chapter maps out a trajectory for Hillary Rodham, as one contemporary put it, as a “young activist breathing fire.” Before ever becoming “Mrs. Clinton” or setting foot in Washington D.C., Hillary Rodham of Park Ridge, Illinois was a student leader and activist lawyer who immersed herself in causes like the status of migrant workers and their children in America, the rights of the poor, the rights of the accused, gender equality in the workplace, and education reform from Yale University to the University of Arkansas to the Governor’s Mansion in Little Rock, Arkansas. This chapter tells that story and sets the stage for the future first lady’s advocacy.

The fourth chapter finds its starting point in the existing literature on Hillary Rodham Clinton as a rhetorical first lady. Here, I trace the recurring tendencies, and advance the thesis that there exists a “Hillary Problem” in rhetorical studies. This problem, I argue, is the gap between Hillary Rodham Clinton’s advocacy as first lady and the communication scholarship which has analyzed her rhetoric across the two Clinton administrations. My survey of this literature reveals four overarching emphases which consider Hillary as a political partner, a media polarizer, an image-maker, and a political candidate. These emphases frame Hillary’s first lady rhetoric as having several purposes, including managing various Clinton crises, image restoration following these scandals, and launching her own historic Senate campaign. Furthermore, this scholarship focuses on the media reception of these subjects, rather than the actual rhetoric of the first lady. As I show, the existing literature about Hillary Rodham Clinton as a first lady focuses on other aspects of her communication, and ultimately fails to properly, if at all, assess her advocacy.

The fifth chapter seeks to rectify this failure by closely analyzing how “Talking It Over” can be read as a rhetorical resource that Hillary Rodham Clinton uses for advocacy. Specifically, this chapter focuses on her advocacy about national matters. Drawing from a conceptual frame first articulated in the literature about how the autobiographical discourse of women can function as political discourse, I narrow in on how three complimentary rhetorical strategies – personal stories, narratives, and descriptions – advance Hillary’s advocacy. Through closely reading a select few “Talking It Over” columns, I show how personal stories help Hillary to craft political critiques, to exercise political judgment, and to offer a model of democratic citizenship. I then argue

that narratives in the column have both instrumental and constitutive functions within Hillary's argumentation. Finally, I show how descriptions of both historic and contemporary situations work argumentatively as definitions or revisionist definitions of American politics which, in turn, amplify the political positions Hillary takes in her column.

The sixth chapter follows suit by examining the nuances of Hillary's global advocacy through "Talking It Over." As I show, Hillary employs personal stories, narratives, and descriptions to map an international legacy which places her in the diplomatic center of Bosnia and Northern Ireland. Her crowning achievement, too, is her speech in Beijing, China, where she famously argued that "women's rights are human rights." Much like her national advocacy, Hillary's global advocacy relies heavily on women, both famous and unknown, to describe this progress. I show how descriptions, in particular, work to advance this goal.

The final chapter offers a brief summary of my interpretative findings related to how Hillary Rodham Clinton's newspaper column "Talking It Over" was a resource for her political advocacy as a first lady. Here, I also explain the limitations of my reading and note future directions for this project. Finally, I articulate what I believe to be the legacy of "Talking It Over" as a rhetorical artifact which contributes to our understanding of the advocacy of first ladies in general and Hillary Rodham Clinton in particular.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE RHETORICAL FIRST LADY AND ADVOCACY

As Molly Meijer Wertheimer points out, “for better or worse, a first lady cannot *not* communicate” (xx). The first lady is, in fact, “a key player in the presidential administration who must use rhetorical discourse to help advance her own and her husband’s agenda” (xx). As has come to be more the rule rather the exception, modern first ladies have advocated on behalf of various political agendas, from championing women’s rights to civil rights to children’s rights to the rights of the disabled to human rights and more. These agendas have taken shape through various published and unpublished forms, including speeches, interviews, press conferences, newspaper columns, press releases, memorandums, diary entries, letters, autobiographies, non-fiction publications, and other campaign materials.

While individual case studies of the advocacy of various first ladies are emerging, there is still much to be done in not only recovering their advocacy, but in reading it carefully as a rhetorical history that has developed across time and through practice. A limited number of communication studies exist which examine the intersections of advocacy and rhetoric as it pertains to first ladies. While Molly Wertheimer’s 2004 edited collection *Inventing a Voice: The Rhetoric of American First Ladies of the Twentieth Century* came about in response to, as the editor put it in her acknowledgements for her second book on first ladies, “the need for a book examining the rhetoric of first ladies,” this represents one of only two existing books about the rhetorical first lady (*Leading Ladies* vii). These books, along with Shawn Parry-Giles and Diane Blair’s comprehensive essay on “The Rhetorical First Lady,” represent not close examinations of

individual cases and contributions, per se, but instead offer a broader understanding of the historical development of the position and the role of rhetoric in this development. Entries on individual first ladies are encyclopedia-like, offering a biography, an overview of their first lady activities, a broad description of their rhetorical strategies, and brief commentary on their rhetorical legacies or, rather, what they contributed to the position's rhetorical history.

In terms of focused case studies, the findings are promising, though also limited. Communication scholars have thus far examined Eleanor Roosevelt's use of letters as a rhetorical resource for crafting "a political agenda of economic and social change" (Blair, "I Want You To Write Me," 416), Rosalynn Carter's 1977 Latin America trip as an exercise in foreign diplomacy (Maddux), Laura Bush's speeches about the rights of women and children in Afghanistan (Dubriwny), and Michelle Obama's advocacy on behalf of "strong families" (Kahl). Other than these notable exceptions, there is a perceptible shortage of case studies inquiring into the individual contributions of first ladies. This shortage, in turn, makes it all the more difficult to argue that the position itself has a history of advocacy made possible through the individual women who have assumed the role of first lady.

Given how much has been made of her controversial first ladyship, Hillary Rodham Clinton's rhetoric has been largely unstudied in terms of her advocacy on behalf of a wide range of subjects. A few important exceptions exist, of course, including a case study of Hillary's strategies as a spokesperson for national health care reform (Corrigan) and a case study of how Hillary used her autobiography *Living History* "as a rhetorical strategy to outline her political ideology" (Anderson, "The Personal is Political," 132).

However, these examples are exceptions, and a more comprehensive overview of the literature on Hillary's first lady rhetoric leaves much unstudied, particularly in terms of her advocacy. This dissertation is, thus, an effort to address this discrepancy. To do so, however, requires a more in-depth look at how first ladies have been treated by academic scholars.

The first part of this chapter is concerned with establishing a vocabulary for inquiring into the advocacy of the first lady, and how this advocacy has developed over time. I will define key terms like "first lady," "rhetorical first lady," and "advocacy," before moving to identify and explore the figures and features which constitute this distinct history. The next section considers what it means for the first lady to assume the role of advocate through rhetoric. Robert P. Watson has identified four ways through which a first lady may engage in advocacy: ceremonial/hosting functions, political support, pet projects, and policy work. Through extended studies of some key first ladies, who are read alongside one another, I show how the first lady position offers opportunities for these forms of advocacy. Finally, I offer a brief overview of the existing communication scholarship concerned with the advocacy of first ladies, including Eleanor Roosevelt, Rosalynn Carter, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Laura Bush, and Michelle Obama.

### **The Vocabulary of the First Lady as Advocate**

On May 26, 1789, Martha Dandridge Custis Washington was escorted to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania by "the governor, with two military troops, and a group of women in smaller coaches" (Anthony, Vol. 1, 37). Unbeknownst to the new president's wife, a crowd was waiting expectantly to meet her: bells rang, guns saluted, and the

crowd cheered “God Bless Lady Washington!” and “Long Live Lady Washington!” upon her arrival (Anthony, Vol. 1, 37; Caroli 3). It is at this point that Martha Washington, in a manner of speaking, “went public,” delivering brief extemporaneous remarks thanking those who had travelled with her and those who had gathered to greet her. While first lady historian Carl Sfezzerra Anthony explains Washington’s appearance “was the first public act in the role” of first lady, the appearance is important for another reason: it marks the beginning of the public’s recognition of the first lady as a rhetorical being (Anthony, Vol. 1, 38).

Unofficially associated with the presidency since its inception, the first lady position is one of the oldest political institutions in American history. Yet, this position represents an immeasurable combination of custom and ambiguity. In other words, “this institution, albeit unofficial, has its own history and roots” (Anthony, Vol. 1, 7). The very title “first lady” is central to this institution’s complicated history. From the very beginning, there was disagreement and confusion about how to address the wife of the president. The task of decision-making about an appropriate title fell largely to the whims of the press, some of whom allowed either support of or disdain for the new president to influence their choices. While Washington’s supporters like journalist John Fenno of the *Gazette of the United States* offered “Marquise” and “Lady” as appropriate choices, a writer from the *New York Daily Advertiser* argued that bestowing such a title was an anti-democratic act and would, as Betty Boyd Caroli puts it, “quickly lead to a full-fledged royal court” (323). Despite such concerns, the pragmatic need for a means of addressing and referring to the president’s spouse won over debates about the wisdom behind lofty monarchical titles. There remains some disagreement among historians regarding the

precise time when “first lady” became the fashionable standard. Carl Sferrazza Anthony locates its origin in the title of “Lady Washington” (Vol. 1, 16), yet Betty Boyd Caroli explains that early first ladies were addressed as “Presidentress,” “Mrs. President,” or not referred to at all outside of the nation’s capital (xv). Nevertheless, in spite of – and perhaps because of – such inconsistencies, “first lady” became the commonplace title.

While the title of “first lady” was eventually accepted, the nature of the role continues to confound the women who assume it and the public who scrutinize their every move. At first glance, the role and its title seem primarily symbolic, a place-holder created out of sheer necessity grounded in the marital status of the nation’s most powerful elected leader. Unlike her husband, the first lady is unelected and does not exist according to the Constitution; yet her role is intricately related to the presidency in ways possible to observe but impossible to measure. She is guided, among other things, by the example of her predecessors, the party affiliation of her and her husband, the current political climate, the status of American women in that particular time, and her own training and interests.

More precisely, Robert P. Watson has identified eleven fundamental duties that are now associated with the first lady, which have evolved over time, and which shape the public’s perception of appropriate behavior for the president’s spouse. These roles are wife and mother, public figure and celebrity, nation’s social hostess, symbol of American womanhood, White House manager and preservationist, campaigner, social and political advocate, presidential spokesperson, presidential and party booster, diplomat, and political and presidential partner (*The Presidents’ Wives* 71-93). Of course, not every role has always existed, not every first lady performs every duty, nor is every first lady’s



performances of these duties always popular with the public or successful in its aims. Nevertheless, Watson's taxonomy offers insight into the ways that the public eventually became oriented to a view of the first lady as having a rhetorical capacity, even an obligation, to perform the duties associated with her role.

### *The Rhetorical First Lady*

Not until the twentieth century would the first lady become widely recognizable as a rhetorical being. As Shawn J. Parry-Giles and Diane M. Blair note, "although rhetoric has always been a central characteristic of presidential governance, the recognition of a *rhetorical* [emphasis added] first lady is significant because it accentuates the gradual rise of public persuasion's importance to the first lady position" from 1920 to the present (566-67). As they explain,

conceptualizing and contextualizing the "rhetorical first lady" in history centers attention on *the public, discursive performances of first ladies for political and persuasive ends. Such performances are targeted to specific and mass audiences and are restricted and/or empowered by gender ideology and institutional prescriptions* [emphasis original]. (567)

Thus, a rhetorical view of the first lady emphasizes her performance in terms both public and linguistic, designed for political and persuasive purposes, simultaneously directed at particular and universal audiences, and at once made possible by and limited by the first lady's position, as well as her gender. These facets of the definition of a "rhetorical first lady" are complimentary and contradictory as, for instance, a first lady tries to support her husband and may instead be accused of seeking power for herself, as notably demonstrated by the cases of Edith Wilson ("petticoat government"), Florence Harding ("running [her] husband's career"), Eleanor Roosevelt ("putting words into the

president's mouth"), Nancy Reagan ("getting people fired"), and Hillary Rodham Clinton ("making her husband look like a wimp") (Caroli xxi).

Myra Gutin was among the first to identify the diverse artifacts rhetoric scholars should include in their assessments of first ladies. Gutin argues that

by analyzing the communication activities of the president's spouse – the speeches, television and radio broadcasts, interviews, press conferences, press releases, and magazine and newspaper articles written by the first lady – one is able to gain considerable understanding of the events and changes that have taken place over the last century. ("Using All Available Means" 563)

Gutin's view of the rhetorical practices of first ladies reflects the view of women's rhetorical practices advanced by Joy Ritchie and Kate Ronald. As noted, Ritchie and Ronald read not only letters, journals, and speeches of women as underprivileged or devalued forms, but also newspaper columns, critical essays, diaries, meditations, and fables. Their argument that such forms should be considered within the study of women's public address echoes Gutin's insight that the first lady's communication activities take place through diverse means and forms which might otherwise not be valued and included in the study of rhetoric.

One of the many duties the first lady performs is that of advocate, as Watson's taxonomy indicates. The first lady advocates on behalf of her husband, her party, and her country. In more contemporary times, many first ladies have moved beyond their husband's administration, party lines, and patriotism to focus attention on a particular social or political issue. Arguably, the rhetorical practices of those women who have assumed the role of advocate have increased the rhetoricity of the first lady role.

*The First Lady and the Nature of Advocacy*

Karlyn Kohrs Campbell writes: “In rhetoric, activists define their ideology, urge their demands upon outsiders, refute their opposition, maintain the morale of stalwarts, struggle to enliven familiar arguments, and attempt to keep their concerns high on the political agenda” (iv). This definition is very much in concert with how Myra Gutin defines advocacy as it relates to first ladies. She says that in the role of advocate, first ladies, like Eleanor Roosevelt, Lady Bird Johnson, Betty Ford, Rosalynn Carter, and Hillary Rodham Clinton “used all available means of persuasion in order to influence, educate, and impress their concerns on the minds of the American people” (“Using All Available Means” 564). Together, Campbell and Gutin’s definitions capture both the inner-workings and outcomes of the advocate of first ladies: *First ladies craft arguments grounded in ideology, simultaneously direct these arguments to loyalists and critics, and do so to inform, persuade, and move audiences to action about issues of social and political importance.*

The first lady is not always accepted in the role of advocate, nor has an impulse for advocacy always been pursued by a first lady. The political activities of early first ladies were generally limited to the private sphere and concerned largely with ceremony. As the nation formed and the body politic grew, the first lady fulfilled the role of “republican mother”: it was her unstated job, above all, to model morality, piety, and femininity to the nation. The first lady was, in fact, viewed as the nation’s mother. Yet, as Shawn Parry-Giles and Diane Blair explain, in addition to “patronage solicitation and presidential advising,” “the precedent-setting first ladies also engaged in acts of volunteerism that extended the values of republican motherhood beyond the home to

frame women's philanthropic activities during the nineteenth century" (567). As issues like temperance, education, housing, and the arts provided a way for first ladies to become politically active, many rose to the occasion through semi-public "social politicking and benevolent volunteerism" (567).

Through a combination of contextual factors, such as the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, the dawn of the mass media age, and the two World Wars, the activities of twentieth century first ladies continued to reflect "the ideology of republican motherhood, yet simultaneously expanded their space of authority to local, state, national, and international communities" (567). As Parry-Giles and Blair describe,

Although still often confined to nongovernmental activities, many contemporary first ladies politicked publicly; some promoted their husband's political platforms, others showcased their own political agenda through legislative action, and many helped craft a role for women's participation in the political sphere, transforming the twentieth-century version of the republican mother into an activist voice of national consequence. (567)

Such activities are restricted, however, by cultural ideologies which have historically directed first ladies to issues perceived to be gender-appropriate and, to some degree, less meaningful. In other words, "while women have overcome many of the political obstacles, the predominance of these tradition-bound ideologies often work to limit first ladies' rhetorical activities to social welfare causes, especially those involving children and women" (586). Despite such restrictions and obstacles, many first ladies have successfully

contributed to the activation of a women's public citizenry that likewise helped make "women's issues" part of the deliberative political space. As a visible voice for women, certain first ladies facilitated the transformation of women's issues into national issues, evidencing the rhetorical power of the post and the public visibility of first ladies on important deliberative matters. (587)

Such issues have, notably, included housing, poverty, breast cancer awareness, mental health, literacy, volunteerism, and equality in sports.

### **The First Lady as Advocate**

Close study of the rhetorical activities of first ladies shows that there is an observable trajectory of advocacy that has evolved from ceremony to political support to pet projects and, eventually, to political policy itself. Eleanor Roosevelt (1933-1945) is often cited as the first lady who “effectively changed the role...from a predominantly social hostess role to a social activist” (Barry 17). As first lady historian Lewis Gould explains,

the major innovations in what a First Lady could do, of course, came with the twelve-year tenure of Eleanor Roosevelt. Her press conferences, daily newspaper column, and extensive travels made her a national personality in a way no previous First Lady had achieved. (xvii)

However, scholars of communication and rhetoric have been slower than historians to acknowledge the advocacy of first ladies preceding Roosevelt. Acknowledging these activities has proven challenging because no libraries exist for presidents before Herbert Hoover, making it difficult to access the surviving papers of first ladies. In addition, the extent to which the press functions as a capable record of such activities, and the extent to which such reports are accessible and comprehensive can inform or prohibit our understanding of earlier first ladies. Moreover, communication scholarship has generally studied the first lady position as related to notions of “femininity” and “womanhood,” which, while important insights, do not tell the whole story.

Grace Coolidge (1923-1929), for instance, “spent over fifty years of her life promoting education for the hearing-impaired” (Miller 405). Ellen Wilson (1913-1914) worked alongside Charlotte Everette Wise Hopkins, the chair of the National Civic

Federation, “to improve the deplorable living conditions of African Americans in the city” (Sallee 349). Notably, the first Mrs. Wilson embarked on a tour of the worst American cities, “speaking with residents without revealing her identity” (Sallee 349). And Caroline Harrison (1889-1892) served as the first president-general for the “newly formed Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR)” (Calhoun 273). The organization was concerned with, among other things, “promoting citizenship education” (Calhoun 273). Harrison’s position in the DAR was not merely symbolic: she spoke at a number of meetings, stating at the organization’s First Continental Congress that “‘the early struggle of this country’ showed ‘that much of its success was due to the character of the women of that era’” (Calhoun 273). These examples, while in no way comprehensive, represent early impulses to engage in advocacy for a range of causes both social and political. More importantly, these early examples helped to pave the way for first ladies to more routinely and publicly speak in support of or against various social/political issues.

Such happenings are not to be taken for granted, and have been enabled by the performances of earlier first ladies. As Robert P. Watson explains, “considering the social forces limiting women’s involvement in politics and influence in society and the fact that women could not even vote until 1920, the political advocacy and influence of several pre-twentieth century first ladies is remarkable” (Watson, “The First Lady Reconsidered,” 805). “In fact,” Watson continues, “a new view of an ‘activist political partner’ is emerging as possibly the rule rather than the exception for the female occupants of the White House” (Watson, “The First Lady Reconsidered,” 805-6). This view of the first lady as an “activist political partner” can be attributed to a number of factors, including the early examples of first ladies, advents in the media, advances in

women's rights, and changing perceptions of the United States presidency both at home and abroad.

### *Ceremonial and Social Functions*

Robert P. Watson has identified four categories of social and political advocacy for first ladies. First, *ceremonial and social functions* can afford a first lady the means to engage in a more subtle form of public political and social advocacy. Watson's argument is that the publicity and media visibility surrounding events (particularly of an international nature) where a first lady is functioning as a hostess often contain a "political dimension" ("The First Lady Reconsidered" 815). Elsewhere, this kind of influence is what Watson and Anthony J. Eksterowicz call "social and behind-the-scenes influence" (75-76). As they put it about the early history of the nation:

Among the few roles within the purview of women – indeed, dominated by women – was that of domesticity and the social role of hostess. It should not be surprising, then, that a long history of accomplishments in the first ladyship can be traced to the social arena, where first ladies have served as the nation's hostesses and White House managers – presiding over state affairs, renovating the White House, and making their presence known in the official residence. (75)

In particular, Dolley Madison and Jacqueline Kennedy warrant an extended look here.

There is a pre-advocate political dimension embedded in situations where a first lady acts as hostess. Dolley Madison's contributions to the formation of the early Republic fit well into this discussion, though her contributions have long confounded historians. As Catherine Allgor notes:

Dolley Madison's name is still familiar. Even twentieth-century historians who sometimes grudgingly acknowledge Dolley's fame and popularity – evidence for her renown is too present in the sources to ignore – cannot comprehend how she attained this prominence and why it lasted so long. Left to their own devices, modern scholars attribute the persistent power she had in Washington City solely to "charm and popularity," which seems even to them a rather weak explanation. (36)

Yet, as Allgor goes on to explain, “Dolley Madison, [historians] conclude with puzzlement, achieved renown as *hostess*, an occupation that seems to belong to private life, to the frivolous, to the marginal, to the female, and thus to the powerless” (36). Nonetheless, and as Allgor is quick to identify, such a reading misunderstands the publicity surrounding the first lady and the various ways that the ambiguity surrounding this role could be a resource.

For example, Madison’s parties – called “crushes” and “squeezes” – functioned as bipartisan gatherings where, “unlike any other in Washington” at the time, political enemies could meet together and engage in civil conversation (Allgor 43). Less concerned with ceremony and more concerned with free movement across various public rooms, these gatherings were “open to Americans from many classes” as forums which “allowed for freewheeling atmosphere of political activity that could take in all numbers and combinations of folks, encouraging display and providing ample opportunity for private conversation” (Allgor 43). Such happenings were more than serendipitous; they were vital in times that, as historians have noted, “no president has ever had a worse Congress,” characterized by fierce disagreement over whether or not to declare war with England (Allgor 43). At Dolley Madison’s parties, opposing politicians met together in a fashion that, by a design both purposeful and opportune, facilitated dialogue in a critical time during our nation’s early history. Where once Congressmen did not typically meet socially, they now had cause and opportunity to do so. Moreover, these “social events could cut both ways as a method of communication between Congress and the executive branch” (Allgor 43). As a direct line of communication to the president was afforded to Congressmen by means of a space created and facilitated by the president’s wife, all



parties could engage in a host of political activities, including “obtaining, giving, or disseminating information; proposing future legislation or political projects; office-seeking and patronage, mediating conflicts and compromises; and ‘horse-trading’ of all kinds” (Allgor 45). In the end, and as Allgor reminds us, “the ‘Lady Presidentess’ secured a second term for her husband by her social lobby” through her political savvy and recognition of the importance of communication (47).

Various first ladies succeeding Madison, whether by chance or by choice, have discovered and made use of the political dimensions associated with hosting and ceremony. But perhaps no first lady used it to her advantage as did Jacqueline Kennedy. As a modern first lady who rarely, if ever, spoke in public (a point made important by how rhetorically active some of her immediate predecessors, like Eleanor Roosevelt and Lou Hoover, were), Kennedy invented other means of securing the public’s goodwill and supporting her husband. Embodying an era increasingly concerned with style and celebrity, made possible and encouraged by the media, Jackie Kennedy has often been dismissed by historians as contributing very little politically to her husband’s legacy. Yet, like Dolley Madison, a closer look reveals a contrary account.

For instance, “immediately upon JFK’s election to the presidency, Jacqueline assembled members of a team who would assist her to literally transform White House style in entertaining” (Natalle 52). No detail was left unturned: menus, flowers, guest lists, seating charts – “the total sensual appeal of sight, fragrance, taste, and sound” – were planned together so as to facilitate a more easy flow of conversation and entertainment (Natalle 52). In a “break in tradition,” large dinners were held in two dining rooms, where the president and first lady separately entertained political guests,

intellectuals, artists, and celebrities (Natalle 52). These open, yet intimate dinners were an innovation and their “rhetorical impact...was not lost on the rest of the world,” which could now see that “we, too, appreciated music, art, intellect, and politics as part of our great traditions” (Natalle 52-54). An even better example of Jacqueline Kennedy’s ability to navigate political situations with dexterity is what Elizabeth J. Natalle calls her “interpersonal diplomacy” (55). Exhibiting deep understanding and sensitivity, Jacqueline Kennedy “did find a way to engage politics, even if she did not set an official political agenda” (56). As Natalle argues, Kennedy’s “iconic beauty and sophisticated interpersonal style particularly paid off in smoothing the relationships between President Kennedy and French president Charles de Gaulle, and more importantly, President Kennedy and Russian president Nikita Khrushchev” (56). This was best seen during the Kennedy’s famous 1961 trip to Paris, where the first lady’s ability to speak French allowed her to serve as a translator, famously facilitating conversations between both presidents. In the end, this successful visit “solidified Mrs. Kennedy’s position as the pivot on which French-American relations were strengthened” (57).

Though not used as opportunities for making arguments, sharing ideologies, and engaging in purposeful politicized advocacy, social/ceremonial events nevertheless have historically afforded first ladies an opportunity to engage in various kinds of diplomacy. While Dolley Madison’s semi-public soirees played host to members of opposing political parties, Jacqueline Kennedy travelled to countries like France and India to represent America’s culture and taste abroad. Though perhaps not immediately apparent, such efforts went a long way toward creating concord out of discord in their particular

historic contexts. The political dimensions to ceremony have afforded first ladies an opportunity for engaging in a multifaceted kind of diplomacy.

### *Political Support*

A second category of political advocacy is *political support*, a more intangible, privatized form of advocacy which entails the first lady engaging in politicking through an informal advising relationship to the president. The presidential marriage offers the presidential wife direct access to the president's ear through the marriage itself. While wives may support husbands, and first ladies may support presidents, the kind of political support at hand here is more specifically related to subjects of a political nature. Political support requires a first lady to be interested in, informed about, and opinioned on the political topics of the day. Of course, much of this kind of support and advising takes place behind closed doors and, thus, leaves hardly any record. Even so, the press and public occasionally get glimpses of the various ways that a first lady's advice might take on a more influential role in the political process.

The exemplar of political support is Abigail Adams. One historian writes that "although she never presumed to press her ideas on John, she did offer her advice, and he came to depend on her as his closest confidante" (Withey 253). The public soon became wise to Abigail Adams's intangible, persuasive role in the presidency.

Other people recognized her great influence over John. She received frequent letters from office-seekers asking her to intercede with the President, and she answered many of them. Some people thought she had too much influence; one Republican senator observed sarcastically that "the President would not dare to make a nomination without her approbation." (Withey 253-54)

Too, Abigail Adams privately advocated on behalf of "both the rights of women and the abolishment of slavery" (Levin 43).

A lesser known example is that of Helen Taft. Struck by a stroke which left “her face slightly disfigured, her speech slurred, and her movement uncertain” only two months into her husband’s presidency, Nellie Taft nevertheless made the most of these two months (Anthony, Vol. 1, 326). Mrs. Taft wielded considerable influence behind closed doors, once even vetoing the parsonage of Theodore Roosevelt’s American Ambassador to Paris, Henry White (a “perfectly awful man,” she called White) and Nicholas Longworth, husband to Theodore Roosevelt’s daughter Alice (Anthony, Vol. 1, 315). An internal memo from President Taft to his wife reinforces this influence when, tongue-in-cheek, he addressed it as “Memorandum for Mrs. Taft – the real President from the nominal President” (Anthony, Vol. 1, 315). As a way to legitimize and bolster her influence, the first lady “often sat in on Taft’s conferences with politicians and diplomats, listening and contributing to them,” while also listening to “Senate and House debates” (Cordery 334-35). The first lady’s concerns were not limited to political appointments, however. Helen Taft “was the first to display real sympathy with the tribulations of the millions of immigrants pouring into America” (Anthony, Vol. 1, 320). In interviews, she gave permission to be directly quoted as supporting “women’s right to independent careers,” and she was only the second first lady, after Julia Grant, to openly support suffrage for women (Anthony, Vol. 1, 320-21).

Perhaps the best indication of her informal advising to her husband can be found in her observation that:

I do not believe in a woman meddling in politics or asserting herself along those lines, but I think any woman can discuss with her husband topics of national interest and, in many instances, she might give her opinion of questions with which, through study and contact, she has become familiar. (qtd. in Anthony, Vol. 1, 321)

Her observation here, read alongside her views on women's rights to vote and have careers, her sensitivity to the status of immigrants, and her influence on political appointments in her husband's administration, offer a unique precursor of how first ladies have rhetorically negotiated the constraints of their performances. After her stroke, Mrs. Taft eventually regained some function and left as her legacy, among other things, the institution of the Smithsonian Institute's First Ladies' gown collection (Cordery 336). At least one historian has recognized that "if [Helen Taft] had been healthy enough to give advice early in his presidency, Taft might have retained control of the Republican Party and been reelected in 1912" (Cordery 338).

A more contemporary example of a presidential wife politically supporting and advising her husband is that of Betty Ford, whose use of "pillow talk" emphasizes the privatized nature of such support and advising. Though best remembered for championing breast cancer awareness as first lady and, in her post-White House years, raising consciousness about addiction, a good deal of Betty Ford's advocacy took place behind closed doors. After her mastectomy, Ford renewed work on a cause which meant a great deal to her: the Equal Rights Amendment. She writes candidly in her memoirs, *The Times of My Life*, about how she privately appealed to the president to lend his voice of support to this amendment.

As wife of the Vice President, I was already involved with the Equal Rights Amendment, and when Jerry became President, I kept pushing, trying to influence him. I used everything, including *pillow talk* [emphasis mine] at the end of the day, when I figured he was most tired and vulnerable. I championed the idea of women in high places. Carla Hills came into his Cabinet as HUD Secretary, Anne Armstrong was named Ambassador to Great Britain...but my big disappointment is I never got him to appoint a woman to the Supreme Court. I probably didn't do enough research, and I lost that battle. (219)

This remarkable passage most directly asserts the power, albeit privately exercised, a first lady can wield. Though certainly not the first presidential wife to engage in private “pillow talk,” Betty Ford was the first presidential wife to publicly own up to it.

The exact effect of political support is not only difficult to observe, but also difficult to measure. Other first ladies in addition to Adams, Taft, and Ford – particularly Florence Harding, Edith Wilson, Eleanor Roosevelt, Bess Truman, Rosalynn Carter, Nancy Reagan, and Hillary Rodham Clinton – are credited by historians as ones who exercised great power through a semi-private advising role to the president. More often than not, the press and public were attentive to and disapproving of an unelected political figure wielding such considerable influence to an extent that was only partly visible. To some degree, however, offering political support to the president is “safe” way, much like championing a pet project, for a first lady to participate in the political process as a figure who advocates on behalf of others, as the particular cases of Abigail Adams, Helen Taft, and Betty Ford underscore.

### *Pet Projects*

*Pet projects* are perhaps the best known and, now, expected form of advocacy. Though pet projects are “socially oriented and purposefully selected to be safe politically, they are nevertheless important and national crusades” (Watson, “The First Lady Reconsidered,” 814). Furthermore, while pet projects may be connected with particular legislation or policy, laws and bills are not necessarily their end goal. While many early first ladies championed smaller projects, it was only during the twentieth century that first ladies came to define and be defined by more substantial projects. Many first ladies,

especially Lou Hoover, Lady Bird Johnson, and both Barbara and Laura Bush, championed pet projects for which, eventually, they became best remembered.

Lou Hoover stands out as the earliest first lady to routinely engage in “the practice of delivering formal speeches”; thus, she “notably advanced the role of First Lady as a spokeswoman and communicator” (Cottrell 415). Indeed, though her legacy has been overshadowed by her famous immediate successor, Eleanor Roosevelt, Lou Hoover “had exceptional ability and training for leadership” (Caroli 184). Before assuming the role of first lady, Hoover gained significant speaking experience, during both World War I and through her continuing affiliation with the Girl Scouts of America (Cottrell 415). The advancement of the Girl Scouts was, indeed, Mrs. Hoover’s most notable pet project as first lady.

As the earliest first lady to utilize the radio medium, Hoover delivered numerous radio addresses where she established a clear connection between volunteerism and the Girl Scouts as a way to generate relief during the Great Depression (Cottrell 415-419). “Sworn in as a troop leader by [Girl Scouts] founder Juliette Low in 1917,” Lou Hoover made her “scouting role more than honorary” (Anthony, Vol. 1, 437). As her continued affiliation with the Girl Scouts underscores, Hoover held a strong “belief in women’s physical power,” which in turn prompted her to “organize the National Women’s Athletic Association” (Anthony, Vol. 1, 436-37). In her role as the association’s Vice President, which she held as first lady, Hoover “espoused equal opportunity for women in competitive sports” (Anthony, Vol. 1, 437). So while Lou Hoover located her pet project in the Girl Scouts, she championed other issues like volunteerism, education, and gender equality in athletics through this project in her radio addresses and speeches.

Likewise, Lady Bird Johnson's historical legacy is her beautification work. As one historian writes, Johnson championed preschool education early on following her husband's election. Yet, "the cause with which she became most identified...was the beautification of the natural environment" (Gould 504). Put differently, and as Johnson's biographer Jan Russell aptly points out, "the word she favored for her cause was 'conservation,' which implies saving something that is in danger of being lost" (277). Advised to focus her efforts on Washington D.C. – "to make it a model for the nation" – Johnson formed and oversaw the "First Lady's Committee for a More Beautiful Capital," and later the Society for a More Beautiful Capital, highlighting how first lady's pet projects eventually became organized, large scale efforts (Gould 505). A highlight of Lady Bird's work was the first-ever White House Conference on Natural Beauty, held on May 24-25, 1965 at the White House (Gould 505). There, the first lady addressed conference attendees with the following:

During these two days you will discuss and originate plans and projects both great and small...The vaster scope of it will call for much coordination on the highest levels...there is much that government can and should do, but it is the individual who not only benefits, but must protect a heritage...I firmly believe this national will can be given energy and force, and produce a more beautiful America. (Anthony, Vol. 2, 132)

To be sure, Lady Bird Johnson's efforts were not confined to planting flowers and picking up litter. While Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society" "saw paradise as an end to poverty, illiteracy, and racial disorder," "Lady Bird viewed it as a struggle to live harmoniously in nature" (Russell 277). In other words,

her pitch was that if Americans could drive on better-designed highways, reduce the number of junkyards, build more playgrounds and parks, and keep the streets swept clean, then those physical conditions would produce better living conditions. (Russell 277)



Thus, like Lou Hoover before, Lady Bird Johnson strategically used her pet project to address broader social issues. Her efforts were fruitful, as demonstrated by the passage of “Lady Bird’s Bill,” or more properly the Highway Beautification Act of 1967, along with other policies that she influenced to varying degrees: “the National Historic Preservation Act, the Clean Rivers Restoration Act, the Air Quality Act, the National Trails System Act, and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act” (Campbell and McCluskie 173).

As the Vice President’s wife, or as “Second Lady,” Barbara Bush identified literacy as an entry point to addressing other kinds of issues. In 1980, she said, “I once spent the summer thinking of all the things that bothered me – teen pregnancy, drugs, everything – and I realized everything would be better if more people could read and write” (Anthony, Vol. 2, 337). Reinforcing Robert Watson’s criteria that, while significant national crusades in their own right, pet projects were designed to be socially-oriented and politically safe, Bush noted that her project should “not be controversial, help the most people possible and maybe not cost more government money” (Anthony, Vol. 2, 337). As first lady, Barbara Bush spoke about literacy across the nation and across the world, appeared on popular programs like *The Oprah Winfrey Show* and *The Today Show*, wrote articles for magazines like *Reader’s Digest*, held fundraisers to raise money for this cause, and read stories on a radio program called “Mrs. Bush’s Storytime” (later, her program was released on audiocassette) (Wertheimer, “Barbara Bush,” 204-5). The legacy of her efforts is the National Literacy Act of 1991, signed into law by President Bush as

the first piece of legislation – and to date, the only one – ever enacted specifically for literacy, with the goal of ensuring that every American adult acquires basic literacy skills...But even more than that, the act seeks to strengthen our nation by

giving us more productive workers and informed citizens. (Wertheimer, “Barbara Bush,” 211)

Like her mother-in-law, Laura Bush became “known nationally as an advocate for education,” channeling her efforts into the “Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Initiative” early in her husband’s first administration (Wertheimer, “Laura Bush,” 236). She had similarly championed education and literacy as the first lady of Texas, most significantly reflected in the Texas Book Festival, a combination festival and fundraiser where “authors read from their works and signed books, while children listened to storytellers, made bookmarks, watched jugglers, and more” (Wertheimer, “Laura Bush,” 241). Proceeds from the festival were used to buy books for libraries, and “from 1996-2000, nearly 400 Texas libraries shared the nearly \$1 million dollars raised” (Wertheimer, “Laura Bush,” 241). As first lady, primarily before the events of September 11, 2001, Laura Bush’s main focus was early education and advocacy on behalf of teachers. Similarly, the first lady created the Laura Bush Foundation for American Libraries which, by May 2005, had “given grants to 428 school libraries nationwide” (Bush 345). Her efforts were particularly important following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, where children were out of school for an extended amount of time. The foundation helped schools like Chalmette High School rebuild their school library in an effort that Laura Bush described in her memoirs as “one of the most important things that could be done to return some normalcy to their lives” (Bush 346-47).

Whether arguing for equality in sports, motivating a nation to live harmoniously in nature, seeking ways to address drug use and teen pregnancy, or joining the effort to rebuild a destroyed city, modern first ladies have skillfully and strategically crafted a place for themselves in their husband’s administrations by energetically selecting pet

projects which offer them an entrance into the political process. First ladies like Lou Hoover, Lady Bird Johnson, Barbara Bush, and Laura Bush are best remembered for their pet projects and for the successes these projects afforded them. While often considered a “safe” way to contribute politically, such projects are a more multilayered way for first ladies to assume the role of advocate.

### *Substantive Policy Issues*

The fourth category of political advocacy is *substantive policy issues*, reflected by the first ladies who “have chaired task forces or commissions, traveled or spoken on behalf of the present, and were responsible for developing public policy” (Watson, “The First Lady Reconsidered,” 814). As the first lady position has become a more professional office throughout the twentieth century, so too have various first ladies directly influenced policy through their advocacy. Ellen Wilson, Eleanor Roosevelt, Rosalynn Carter, and Hillary Rodham Clinton best exemplify the kind of advocacy which falls into the sphere of substantive policy issues.

Even before Eleanor Roosevelt, who is often credited as the first and most important first lady to ever advocate on behalf of particular policies, Ellen Wilson, the first wife of Woodrow Wilson, publicly advocated an urban housing bill. The very same month her husband took office, the new first lady “started her own investigation of Washington’s slums” on the basis that “the fallout from slums hurt everyone, resulting in epidemics, increased infant mortality, and absenteeism” (Caroli 140). Paradoxically, while her husband focused on segregating various government departments throughout his first administration, Ellen Wilson directed her attention to areas where the poor, mostly blacks and immigrants, lived in destitution (Caroli 140-41). Earlier reforms had

failed and “housing had become a major reform movement throughout Europe and the United States” in the early twentieth century (Caroli 140). As one historian writes, “Ellen Wilson’s involvement in slum clearance gave the topic a respectability and urgency that it had not had” and, ultimately, her ability to champion such an issue would not have been possible even “half a century earlier” (Caroli 141). A bill known to be “Ellen Wilson’s bill” was introduced as a piece of legislation in February 1914. Though the bill’s merits were undeniable, legislators debated how best to go about addressing this issue. Perhaps because of Ellen Wilson’s untimely death on August 6, 1914, the first lady’s urban housing bill was approved, making it “the first piece of legislation to be passed with such direct and public assistance from a president’s wife” (Caroli 142).

Notably following the first Mrs. Wilson, Eleanor Roosevelt engaged in various social and political activities before ever setting foot in the White House. Not until she was first lady was Roosevelt able to channel her advocacy into particular policies and legislation. Departing from her predecessors by holding press conferences, embarking on various public speaking engagements, and writing a daily column called “My Day,” Roosevelt indicated early on in her husband’s first administration that she would be a lot like Ellen Wilson and Lou Hoover before her. Disturbed by the deplorable conditions in Scott’s Run, a coal town in West Virginia, the first lady reasoned that “the Subsistence Homestead provision of the National Recovery Act would help address the community’s problems” (Black 436). As Allida Black notes, “the First Lady did more than champion a single antipoverty program” in the New Deal era:

She introduced programs for groups not originally included in the New Deal plans; supported other programs that were in danger of elimination or having their funds cut; pushed the hiring of women, blacks, and liberals within federal

agencies; and acted as the administration's most outspoken champion of liberal reform. (437)

To name a few of the other reforms, organizations, and events the first lady was intimately connected to: the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), the Civil Works Administration (CWA), the White House Conference on the Emergency Needs of Women, the Household Workers' Training Program, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the National Youth Administration (NYA), the Public Works Project (PWAP), the Works Progress Administration's (WPA) programs, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) (Black 437-40).

Other policy areas which Eleanor Roosevelt lent her time, ideas, and voice to included civil defense, prison reform, hospital reform, and civil rights initiatives (Watson, "The First Lady Reconsidered," 814). A first lady of many firsts, Roosevelt remains

the first presidential wife to testify before a congressional committee, the first to hold a government office (an assistant director to the Office of Civilian Defense), the first nominated to a post requiring Senate confirmation (as a U.S. representative to the United Nations General Assembly), and the first to promote or oppose legislation through newspaper columns and radio addresses. (Campbell and McCluskie 172)

Of course, not all of these activities were well-received by the press and the public:

Roosevelt was subject to criticism from both ends of the political spectrum, drawing the nickname "Lenin in skirts" from some Republicans for her efforts (Campbell and McCluskie 174-75).

Not until Rosalynn Carter did America see another first lady who would so openly venture into the realm of policy during her husband's administration. "Before going to the White House, I knew that some First Ladies had had special areas of interest, and because of their influence, had been able to accomplish worthy goals," wrote Carter

candidly in her memoirs *First Lady from Plains* (270). “Although I wanted to work with the elderly and issues of concern to women,” she continues, “my main project as First Lady would be to develop a strategy for helping the mentally ill” (270). Carter lobbied members of Congress, worked as an honorary chairperson for the National Commission on Mental Health (which she “persuaded her husband to appoint”), and delivered speeches as a part of her activities (Campbell and McCluskie 173). On February 7, 1979, Rosalynn Carter became only the second first lady to appear before a congressional committee, where she testified in favor of funding for mental health care programs (Campbell and McCluskie 173). There, she “tangl[ed] with then-chair Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) over what constituted a satisfactory federal health budget” (Campbell and McCluskie 173). “In September of 1980, the Mental Health Systems Act was passed by Congress and funded – the first major reform of federal, publicly funded mental health programs since the Community Mental Health Centers Act of 1963,” Carter wrote with satisfaction in her memoirs. Also worth noting, despite its ultimate defeat, is Carter’s support of passing the Equal Rights Amendment, which her predecessors Lady Bird Johnson, Pat Nixon, and Betty Ford also lent their support to at various points and with varying levels of commitment.

While Roosevelt and Carter had worked in the realm of policy, Hillary Rodham Clinton was the first to have a direct policy role announced at the beginning of her tenure. She “spearheaded the Clinton administration’s health care reform efforts on Capitol Hill in 1993 and 1994,” for which she “travelled around the country meeting with health care professionals, interest groups, and ordinary people,” “regularly attended policy strategy meetings, consulted with members of Congress, and testified before congressional

committees on the president's health care plan" (Campbell and McCluskie 173). Clinton did not only speak, testify, and travel on behalf of health care. She also "put forth a proposal on health care of which she was the principal architect" (Campbell and McCluskie 175). In response to Clinton's high-profile policy role within her husband's administration, "a 1993 U.S. Court of Appeals decision, *Association of American Physicians and Surgeons v. Hillary Rodham Clinton*, addressed the question of whether the role of first lady constitutes an 'Office under the United States'" (Campbell and McCluskie 174). To support Mrs. Clinton, the Clinton administration argued that the first lady is "the functional equivalent of a government officer or employee," a depiction the court accepted in the end (Campbell and McCluskie 174). But not everyone else accepted Clinton in this role. Like Eleanor Roosevelt, Clinton too drew criticism for her policy role. *Newsweek* magazine, for example, ran a cover asking the question "Who's in charge?" which not-so-subtly hinted that the first lady was overstepping her role. The point of tension, by this account, was the first lady's shift from "advocating a cause" to being "directly involved in policy making" (Knickrehm and Teske 245). Yet, upon closer examination, the case of Hillary Rodham Clinton challenges this description; close study of her first lady rhetoric provides a new view of how advocacy and policy making can be rhetorically accomplished at the same time.

In the end, when a first lady assumes the role of policy shaper or policy maker, she undertakes a responsibility which may or may not be effective or received well by the public. On one hand, the issue the first lady concerns herself with must be acceptable. Kay M. Knickrehm and Robin Teske put it best when they note that "because first ladies are expected to be active and yet not overstep the boundaries between appropriate and

inappropriate behavior, they must choose the issues they champion with care” (244). At the same time, the way a first lady goes about championing this issue requires deft skill and political know-how, as the examples of Wilson, Roosevelt, Carter, and Clinton demonstrate here.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have traced the theoretical treatment of first ladies by disciplines ranging from communication studies to history to political science, paying particular attention to how academics and others have recognized that first ladies can play a significant role in American political culture when engaging in political advocacy. I have defined key terms like “first lady,” “rhetorical first lady,” and “advocate” so as to better explain their etymology and use in the literature. I have also accounted for the shapes and forms through which first ladies have engaged in advocacy.

Yet, an understanding of the literature only tells part of the story when it comes to individual first ladies. Too, it is necessary to account for the contextual factors which may prompt and enable the person who assumes the role of advocate. Whether stemming from their personal experience, education, or career, first ladies bring with them to the White House individual interests, training, and experience. These, in turn, have influenced the political choices of the women who become first ladies. In the case of Hillary Rodham Clinton, her personal experiences, education, and career worked together to guide her as an advocate. The next chapter offers a portrait of this guidance.



## CHAPTER THREE

### THE YOUNG ACTIVIST: BREATHING FIRE AMIDST ENGAGEMENT

The precise nature of Hillary Rodham Clinton's character, and how it relates to her political advocacy, has long eluded the biographers and journalists who have labored over countless portraits of her. Stephanie McCrummen of the *Washington Post* offers this succinct, yet perceptive analysis of what she believes to be Hillary's character:

Of all the things that Clinton's friends say about her, opinions bend toward two essential facets of her character. The first is that in the time they have known her – as a student leader in the 1960s, as a first lady, as a U.S. senator or now – Clinton has not really changed except to become more of the person she has always been: a deeply optimistic Methodist who believes that government can advance human progress and a hopeless wonk who knows her yurts from her gers [*referring to a distinction between Mongolian terms for the home*]. The second is that while Clinton is a famously shrewd political operator, she is never more energized or relentless as when she is pursuing a cause that she believes will improve people's lives, however incrementally. (McCrummen)

McCrummen goes on to say that

this has often been Clinton's most polarizing quality. It is what her detractors have, at times interpreted as self-righteousness and a precursor to classic, big-government liberalism. It is what her admirers have viewed as the doggedly pragmatic, in-the-trenches quality that makes Clinton an almost heroic, if also at times tragic, figure. (McCrummen)

In these brief terms, McCrummen has captured a view of Hillary Rodham Clinton which, amidst a limitless array of psychoanalyses and hagiographies, is both instructive and intriguing. This view generally deviates from the endless supply of character studies which argue that Hillary has undergone various transformations of body, of style, and of language in ways which are simultaneously visible and slippery, necessary and yet problematic; and which, above all, are indicative of serious flaws in her character. This view, instead, emphasizes a career of political activism and advocacy grounded in the context of her early ideological formations. It not only advances an argument that the two

simply cannot be understood without each other, but also suggests that Hillary's advocacy should be at the center of our inquiries into her politics and her person.

In this chapter, I offer a narrative history of Hillary Rodham Clinton's ideological, spiritual, and political development before ever reaching the White House. To do so, I provide a biographical sketch of key moments in Hillary's pre-White House life in an effort to lay contextual groundwork for her later advocacy as first lady. It is, in other words, an inquiry into the life of Hillary Rodham, not the life of Hillary Rodham Clinton. I divide my findings into four main sections. The first considers her early years, as Hillary Rodham of Park Ridge, Illinois. Here, I put into conversation the teachings of Paul Carlson and Don Jones, Hillary's high school history and youth minister, both of whom provided Hillary with the linguistic and ideological tools to help her identify and reconcile seemingly incompatible notions of individual responsibility and social welfare. Next, I discuss Hillary's formative years at Wellesley College, locating the development and articulation of her political ideology in two important texts: her thesis project on community organizing and her famous commencement address. Third, I move to the Yale years, exploring texts which, as one Hillary biographer points out, were largely unaffected by Bill Clinton's political influence and represent a purer understanding of Hillary's ideological transformation during this period. Particularly, I focus on her continuing efforts on behalf of migrant workers and children, evident throughout her speeches and writings at this time. I then move to the Arkansas years, considering Hillary's time spent both in Fayetteville as a law professor and in Little Rock as a lawyer and the governor's wife. In both places, Hillary used her legal training to advocate on behalf of the rights of the poor and the accused, and as governor's wife, her most

important achievement was her state-wide work to reform education. Finally, I conclude by identifying and synthesizing the common themes that run through this ideology-shaping narrative, and link it to what will be my analysis of Hillary's advocacy as first lady.

### **The Early Years: Conservatism, Faith, and the University of Life**

Many oft-repeated and widely reported anecdotes have been passed down as a way to define, explain, and condense her early political inclinations, her independence and self-possession, her orientation toward civic service, and her early promise as a future political figure. The rejection of Hillary's earnest application to be a NASA astronaut because she was female. Hillary's stinging defeat in the campaign to be student council president in high school. The teacher who assigned Hillary, a staunch Goldwater girl, to play the role of Lyndon Johnson in a class debate. The other teacher who was so impressed with young Hillary that she transferred schools for the sole purpose of teaching her favorite student for two more years. And, of course, the complicated political leanings of her parents, a vocal Republican father and a quiet Democrat mother, which would shape her own political transformation during college.

To be sure, Hillary's early accomplishments, particularly her academic achievements, are impressive and reveal a well-rounded inquiring mind. She was one of eleven finalists for a National Merit Scholarship in her school, and participated on the *It's Academic* quiz show team for a local television station (Bernstein 30). Her 1965 school yearbook painstakingly documents her participation in various activities, including

Class Council, junior vice president, class newspaper, Girls Athletic Association, gym leader, National Honor Society, pep club, science award, Speech Activities and Debate, spring musical, Student Council, Cultural Values Committee, Organizations Committee, variety show. (Radcliffe 37)

In her memoirs, Hillary elaborates on the usefulness of participation in these organizations and committees as a way to shape her later politics. For example, the principal of Hillary's high school invited her to join the Cultural Values Committee, which was created as a way to break down the different social groups which can affect everything from lunch table arrangements to which students are likely to be found fighting in the school parking lot. Intended to bring together diverse representatives from each of the various social groups (in other words, students who likely would not have associated with each other), the committee "came up with specific recommendations to promote tolerance and decrease tension" from within the student body (*Living History* 19). A number of the group's members were even invited to appear on local television to explain the group's purpose and efforts. The appearance was, Hillary recalls, her "first appearance on television and [her] first experience with an organized effort to stress American values of pluralism, mutual respect and understanding" (*Living History* 19).

There is great value to be gleaned from these snapshots of Hillary's formative years. Yet, one consequence of relying so heavily on anecdotes, as instructive as they may be, is the minimization of more significant ideological experiences and projects which fashioned and influenced Hillary's political trajectory as an adult. Key people and events moved through the future first lady's life well before her marriage to another high-profile, politically-minded individual. A survey of these people and events forms a coherent narrative which identifies and maps the points in which an impulse toward advocacy was transformed into a tangible set of practices.

*Paul Carlson and the Conscience of a Conservative*

A larger-than-life figure in Hillary's early years was her ninth grade teacher Paul Carlson. Carlson was Hillary's first history teacher and taught a course titled History of Civilization to his students. Carlson has been described as "an ardent anticommunist and passionate libertarian" (Troy 15). Elsewhere, he has been described in even more specific terms: he was "every bit the fiery defender of Joseph McCarthy's muscular anticommunism" (Sheehy 30). Carlson once told Hillary biographer Gail Sheehy the following: "I'm a Fifties person, madam, and my generation fully supported any attempt to rout out Communists" (31). And as he elaborated in the same interview, Hillary Rodham was not only his "model student," but also "a firm supporter basically of ideas I embraced and still embrace twenty-eight years later" (31).

Essentially, Carlson served to reinforce "her father's take-no-prisoners Republicanism and Hillary's own Goldwater Girl tendencies" in her early years (Troy 15). In so doing, Carlson gave her the tools to more eloquently articulate and explore these Republican tendencies. At Carlson's urging, Hillary read Barry Goldwater's *The Conscience of a Conservative*, a "manifesto" its reader carried with her all the way to Wellesley College (Bernstein 38). The book was clearly influential on her, so much so that she wrote about it for her final paper in Carlson's class (seventy-five pages long, complete with fifty bibliography cards).

Though a seemingly innocuous episode, Hillary's formal introduction to Goldwater's political ideology stayed with her even when her own political affiliation shifted. From her memoirs:

I liked Senator Goldwater because he was a rugged individualist who swam against the political tide. Years later, I admired [Goldwater's] outspoken support

of individual rights, which he considered consistent with his old-fashioned conservative principles: “Don’t raise hell about the gays, the blacks and the Mexicans. Free people have a right to do as they damn please.” (21)

Such a description is in sharp contrast with what some have written about Hillary during this time. For instance, Gail Sheehy describes the following: “Like father, like daughter. Hillary, too, thought in absolutes: Republican or Democrat. Black or White. Right or Wrong” (27). Yet, Hillary’s introduction to Goldwater’s own words served a different purpose than reinforcing rigidly held beliefs. It oriented Hillary to a Conservative view of politics which did not place individual responsibility and a concern for the social welfare of others in contradiction with one another. A similar view of politics would be introduced to Hillary by another important man: the Reverend Donald Jones.

#### *The Reverend Don Jones and Social Responsibility*

Don Jones arrived in Illinois as the new youth minister at Park Ridge Methodist Church in September, 1961. Jones, a navy veteran and self-proclaimed “existentialist,” had recently graduated from Drew University Seminary (Radcliffe 44). Determined to “not conform to the traditional style of Methodist minister,” Jones enforced a number of significant changes to the youth group upon his arrival. He renamed the youth group the “University of Life” and used the lyrics of Bob Dylan, the poems of e.e. cummings and T.S. Eliot, the novels of Salinger and Dostoyevsky, the art of Picasso, and the films of Francois Truffaut as resources to orient his students to culture, service, and life outside of what they had always known in Park Ridge (Milton 21; Radcliffe 45; Clinton 22).

One memorable time, Reverend Jones invited a group of atheists to engage in a public debate about the existence of God. Another time his youth group frankly discussed teen pregnancy, a discussion which shocked the older members of the church’s

congregation. Jones also took his youth group to inner-city Chicago to meet black youths who frequented the local recreation center. The youth group even “set up food drives for the poor and even coordinated a ministry to the children of migrant workers” (Kengor 19). These workers were poor Hispanic laborers who were brought in as temporary farming workers. They lived outside of Park Ridge, nearer to Chicago, and Hillary and the rest of the youth group organized babysitting shifts to take care of the worker’s children, serving them cupcakes and drinks during their shifts (Kengor 19).

Perhaps the best example of Jones’s influence is his introduction of his young congregation member to the ongoing struggle for civil rights. “I had only vaguely heard of Rosa Parks and Dr. Martin Luther King,” Hillary readily admits of this time (*Living History* 23). In 1962, Jones organized a trip for the youth group to hear King deliver his famed “Remaining Awake Through a Revolution” address at Orchestra Hall in Chicago. After the speech, the youth group, including Hillary, was able to briefly meet King and shake his hand (Kengor 17). For Hillary, the experience was transformative. “Until then, I had been dimly aware of the social revolution occurring in our country, but Dr. King’s words illuminated the struggle taking place and challenged our indifference,” she once wrote (23).

We can get an even clear sense of the impact Don Jones had on his pupil. His “University of Life” program was “not just about art and literature,” as Hillary later observed, but about something more transcendent and intangible (22). Even after Hillary graduated from the youth group and left Park Ridge to attend college, she and Jones corresponded frequently. As Carl Bernstein has written, Jones was “the most important man in her life during the Wellesley years” (40). “By mail,” Bernstein continues, Jones

was “her counselor, correspondent, confessor, partner in Socratic debate, and spiritual adviser” (40). In one such letter, Hillary defined herself to Jones as “a progressive, an ethical Christian and a political activist” (Bernstein 50). Another biographer writes that the Wellesley girl wrote to Jones “long, painfully earnest letters filled with discussions of philosophy and talk of her search for ways to express her faith through social action” (Milton 23). Hillary herself puts it best when she describes how Jones and her Methodist faith “opened [her] eyes and heart to the needs of others and helped instill a sense of social responsibility rooted in [her] faith” (21).

### *A Battle for Mind and Soul*

Though associated with different spheres of influence in Hillary’s early life, Paul Carlson and Don Jones were not strangers to each other. All three attended First United Methodist Church of Park Ridge, and Jones was vocal about his disagreement with the “University of Life” program created by the new youth minister. Among Carlson’s concerns was his fear that “Jones’s intention was to take Hillary and her white friends to the slums [of Chicago] to blame them and their class for the conditions of the inner city and to fill them with white guilt,” which Jones argued was not his purpose (Kengor 17).

Regardless of his intent, Don Jones came under fire from Carlson and others in the congregation for his unusual methods and socially-conscious trips and projects. As Paul Kengor puts it, “Jones walked a fine line between rightly awakening the young folks to the vast social changes happening beyond the world of Park Ridge and indoctrinating them to a particular political point of view” (14). The way Hillary explains it, “Don once remarked that he and Mr. Carlson were locked in a battle for my mind and soul” (*Living History* 23). Carlson believed that Jones should be removed from his position, and after



two years serving in the capacity of youth minister, Jones left to pursue an academic career at his alma-mater Drew University, where he retired during the second Clinton Administration as a Professor Emeritus of Social Ethics (*Living History* 23).

Though obviously worlds apart politically, Carlson and Jones did not represent a struggle for Hillary. As she concludes,

I now see the conflict between Don Jones and Paul Carlson as an early indication of the cultural, political, and religious fault lines that developed across America in the last forty years. I liked them both personally and did not see their beliefs as diametrically opposed then or now. (*Living History* 23)

The insight is striking, and for many, perhaps even implausible. In his cutting rebuttal to *Living History* – titled *Revising History* – Dick Morris says as much of Hillary by the end of the second Clinton administration: “Hillary recognizes no incongruity or even dissonance between the liberalism of her health care agenda and the relative moderation of her advocacy during her husband’s remaining years in office” (103). Yet, for Hillary, the influence of Carlson and Jones was to put into a tangible dialogue the more intangible, seemingly irreconcilable political beliefs of her conservative Republican father and Democrat mother. Taken together, Carlson and Jones “helped along” Hillary in her self-described “quest to reconcile [her] father’s insistence on self-reliance and [her] mother’s concerns about social justice” (*Living History* 22). Of course, this quest for reconciliation would come into an even sharper focus when Hillary left Park Ridge to attend Wellesley College.

### **The Wellesley Years**

The 1969 graduating class of Wellesley College came of age in an era of change, consciousness-raising, and activism located around civil rights, women’s liberation, and the Vietnam War. As one of the Seven Sisters colleges, Wellesley stood out as a place of

education still committed to a tradition of producing the nation's future wives and mothers. While colleges like Radcliffe and Barnard drew criticism for students with "long hair," "bulging book bags," and "compulsive egalitarianism," *Time* magazine praised Wellesley's incoming class of 1969: "Their distinguishing characteristic is that they don't stand out. They are simply wholesome creatures, unencumbered by the world's woes, who make normal, well-adjusted housewives" (Horn 8). In short, they were "girls of good breeding, many of them descended from several generations of Wellesley women, [who] were being cultivated to marry and rear the men who would run America" (Horn 9).

But when confronted with "the countervailing messages in the culture" throughout their four years at Wellesley, the class of 1969 ultimately challenged this idyllic preconception of manners and femininity (Horn 4). As Miriam Horn describes:

Like reluctant seafarers, one foot aboard ship, the other still reaching for familiar ground, the women of the Wellesley class of '69 spent their years at college poised precariously across a chasm between two worlds. Lagging a breath behind the rest of America's campuses, physically isolated and archaic in its traditions, Wellesley inhabited at the end of the decade an odd crease in time, where everything meant by *the fifties* and all that would come to be called *the sixties* existed for a moment side by side. (Horn 4)

This odd crease represented well the experiences that Hillary brought with her to Wellesley from Park Ridge. While her entire Wellesley education would continue to provide ample opportunities for Hillary to explore and refine her beliefs, it was her senior thesis and her commencement address which would best encapsulate how her years at Wellesley facilitated a continuing commitment to finding middle ground amidst ideological rigidity: a theme we would see later in her columns, and one that predated her association with Bill Clinton.

*Saul Alinsky, the War on Poverty, and Community Organizing*

Hillary's introduction to Saul Alinsky, much like other people and ideas in her life, came through Don Jones. With the rest of her University of Life friends, Hillary attended a lecture on grassroots activism by the radical organizer, met him, and was so inspired that she went to see him in again Boston and Chicago during college (Morris 133). The general substance of Alinsky's ideas was to reform poverty, "an embarrassment to the American soul" according to him, from the bottom up (Morris 133). That is to say, he argued that "the poor were poor because they lacked power and must be locally, practically organized to acquire it" (Morris 133). But teaching "empowerment" and "entitlement" to the poor was not sufficient in and of itself, Alinsky argued (Radcliffe 75). In addition to educating the poor, Alinsky called for the poor to actively "confront" the government and greedy corporations (Radcliffe 75). His tactics for doing so included staging protests outside of corporate executive homes (Milton 22).

Hillary's senior thesis on community organizing would serve to, as she later described, "further test and articulate my beliefs" (*Living History* 37). Though this supposedly radical thesis would later draw criticism from political opponents, surprisingly little has actually been written about it in Clinton's biographies. In fact, most works on the future first lady only devote a handful of pages to her thesis and the extent to which Alinsky's philosophies influenced Hillary's politics. Perhaps this is because the thesis was locked away by her order when Bill Clinton became president. Or, perhaps this is because Alinsky was less central to the thesis as has commonly been reported.

What is known is that the thesis's broader subject was community organizing; specifically, "the community-action programs of Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty"

(Morris 132). Alinsky, it seems, she considered only “in passing” in the paper (Morris 133). Through careful research and interviews, biographer Roger Morris has pieced together the general movement of Hillary’s argument.

Like the author of a literate but blanched bureaucratic report, she meticulously described various programs and assessed their clinical impact. In the spring of 1969 she judged that the already moribund community-action programs had been “constructive” and that the poor would now require something “broader” and more “sustained,” as one of her thesis readers recalled her conclusion. But she stopped well short of analyzing the actual political murder of the programs or of discussing what the episode revealed in a larger sense about power and politics in America. (133)

Alan Schechter, professor of political science at Wellesley, directed the paper and recalls its conclusions about both community organizing in general and Alinsky’s program in particular were as follows:

Organizing the poor for community actions to improve their own lives may have, in certain circumstances, short-term benefits for the poor but would never solve their major problems. You need much more than that. You need leadership, programs, constitutional doctrines. (Morris 133)

For Schechter, Hillary embodied within her writing a

“pragmatic liberal” in the spirit of the early 1960s, someone who shared what [Schechter] called his “instrumental liberalism”: using government to meet the unmet needs of the society to help those people who are not fully included within it. (Morris 133)

Put differently, Hillary’s work on this thesis cultivated in her a particular view toward political advocacy as coming from within existing governmental organizations and structures rather than originating from grassroots origins. This view was reiterated when, after graduation, Saul Alinsky offered Hillary a job as an organizer. She turned him down, telling him she was headed to Yale University. He told her, “Well, that’s no way to change anything,” to which she reportedly replied, “Well, I see a different way than you” (Morris 134).

*Wellesley Commencement Address*

By the time her Wellesley education came to an end, Hillary “had won the admiration of faculty and administrators, even more than students, for her skills at conciliation, damping unruly passions by finding common ground among divided campus factions” as a student leader (Horn 44). Like her peers, Hillary too was poised precariously across a chasm between two worlds during her tenure at Wellesley. In *Living History*, she wrote: “In hindsight, 1968 was a watershed year for the country, and for my own personal and political evolution...by the time I was a college junior, I had gone from being a Goldwater Girl to supporting the anti-war campaign of Eugene McCarthy, a Democratic Senator from Minnesota...” (32). She had come to college a staunch Republican from the Midwest, yet her political allegiance was tested when she was confronted with the divisive issues of her time. Throughout the 1968 presidential cycle, she “wavered between the two major political parties,” attending the Republican Convention in Miami, volunteering for Nelson Rockefeller’s campaign, and interning for the House Republican Conference while, simultaneously, publicly demonstrating grief for Martin Luther King’s assassination by wearing a black arm band, and marching in Boston, campaigning for Hubert Humphrey and Eugene McCarthy (Troy 18-19).

This is the student leader who was headed to Yale Law School that fall and who had been elected by her peers to deliver the first-ever student address at commencement. Republican senator Edward Brooke of Massachusetts had been invited to deliver the keynote address, which would take place before the student speech. Brooke’s address was “long-winded”: he offered praise and support to President Nixon, chastised the graduating class for their “generation’s resort to ‘coercive protest,’” and concluded that

this was a “perversion of democratic privilege” (Horn 45). Outraged by these words, Hillary deviated from her prepared remarks at the beginning of her address, instead speaking extemporaneously in dissent and offering her first major speech as an emerging advocate. “I find myself reacting just briefly to some of the things Senator Brooke said” she begins. Empathy – a theme of Brookes’ speech – is insufficient, she argues: “We’ve had lots of empathy; we’ve had lots of sympathy, but we feel that for too long our leaders have used politics as the art of making what appears to be impossible, possible” (“Wellesley College”). The revelation of the insufficiency of empathy comes, she explains, from what she and her classmates have experienced and witnessed over the past four years:

Our attitudes are easily understood having grown up, having come to consciousness in the first five years of this decade – years dominated by men with dreams, men in the civil rights movement, the Peace Corps, the space program – so we arrived at Wellesley and we found, as all of us have found, that there was a gap between expectation and realities. (“Wellesley College”)

This gap between expectation and realities, Hillary argues, did not produce cynicism, but rather inspired action and dissent from among her class.

She continues: “Every protest, every dissent, whether it’s an individual academic paper, Founder’s parking lot demonstration, is unabashedly an attempt to forge an identity in this particular age” (“Wellesley College”). The goal of a Wellesley education is to nurture this process and to promote a certain kind of “human liberation...enabling each of us to fulfill our capacity so as to be free to create within and around ourselves,” she explains (“Wellesley College”). “To be educated to freedom must be evidenced in action,” she concludes, “and here again is where we ask ourselves, as we have asked our

parents and our teachers, questions about integrity, trust, and respect” (“Wellesley College”).

The controversial address solicited a seven-minute-long standing ovation from her classmates, though many students were fearful about the repercussions of Hillary’s words and many parents, teachers, and administrators were furious (Horn 46). Still, the speech drew more praise than criticism. The *Boston Globe* published an article about the speech titled “Senator Brooke Upstaged at Wellesley Commencement,” while *Life* magazine published a selection from the speech (Horn 47). Furthermore, Hillary was appointed to the League of Women Voters’ Youth Advisory Committee for her efforts (Radcliffe 90). She was well on her way to great things.

### **The Yale Years**

From the start, it was apparent that Yale Law School was a good fit for a “careerist-activist” like Hillary (Troy 21). She arrived there in the fall of 1969 as one of only twenty-seven women, from a grand total of two hundred and thirty-five entering in her class (*Living History* 44). This was an era of, as Hillary recalls in her memoirs, Black Panther trials, the burning of Yale’s International Law Library, the movement of the Vietnam War into Cambodia, and the Kent State Shootings (45). The times were at once precarious and exciting for a woman studying the law. “True to my upbringing,” she explained in *Living History*, “I advocated engagement, not disruption or ‘revolution’” during the Yale years (46). For Hillary, addressing these issues was best carried out through existing measures and structures. Yet, this belies the urgency of her continuing advocacy.

For example, during her second semester at Yale, Hillary delivered an address at the League of Women Voters' National Convention. It was here that she would refine the image of advocate she had started to craft in her Wellesley commencement address.

Wearing a black armband in commemoration of the Kent State University shootings, she spoke with authority and a clear understanding of the interconnectedness of various causes:

Here we are on the other side of a decade that had begun with a plea for nobility and ended with the enshrinement of mediocrity. Our social indictment has broadened. Where once we advocated civil rights, now we advocate a realignment of political and economic power. Where once we exposed the quality of life in the world of the South and of the ghettos, now we condemn the quality of work in factories and corporations. Where once we assaulted the exploitation of man, now we decry the destruction of nature as well... (Radcliffe 95)

Continuing, she asked, "How much longer can we let corporations run us? Isn't it about time that they, as all the rest of our institutions, are held accountable to the people?" (Radcliffe 95).

As seen in this example, there was nothing traditional or conservative about Hillary's message. Indeed, she moves from the more localized "civil rights" to contrast it with the more far-reaching, yet more elusive "realignment of political and economic power." Similarly, her social indictment moves from the private sphere ("the world of the South and of the ghettos") to the public sphere ("the quality of work in factories and corporations"). This speech marked a more formal foray into the world of political activism than did the lively, extemporaneous parts of her commencement address. This foray would continue to be evident throughout Hillary's tenure at Yale.



### *The Rights of Migrant Workers*

Taking a stance from within existing organizations and structures would remain a visible theme throughout Hillary's law school experience. Not long after the beginning of her first year at Yale, Hillary attended a national conference on youth and community development at Colorado State University (*Living History* 47). Ventures like this would strengthen her commitment to championing the rights of children, a concern which in many ways would shape her view of the law. But more than that, it underscores how "children's rights" actually encompassed other civic issues and causes. At this conference, there was a push to lower the voting age from twenty-one to eighteen, in keeping with the adage "if young people were old enough to fight, they were entitled to vote" (*Living History* 47). It was also here that the young law student first met Peter Edelman, husband of children's rights activist Marian Wright Edelman, along with Vernon Jordan, "then Director of the Voter Education Project of the Southern Regional Conference in Atlanta" (*Living History* 47). Peter Edelman would urge Hillary to meet his wife Marian as soon as possible.

Hillary got her chance when Marian Wright Edelman came to Yale to speak. After the speech, Hillary introduced herself to Edelman and asked if there was any way she could have a summer job working for her. Edelman, a Yale Law school graduate herself, said yes, though she would be unable to pay Hillary. To make up the funds, Hillary successfully applied for and was awarded a "grant by the Law Student Civil Rights Research Council supporting students working in civil rights" (Radcliffe 96; *Living History* 47). The grant supported Rodham's continuing work with Edelman's Washington Research Project (*Living History* 47).

Though Hillary's primary interest was moving toward the rights of children, her work for Edelman was couched in a broader social issue than even that. Senator Walter Mondale of Minnesota was conducting Senate hearings to inquire into "the living and working conditions of migrant farmworkers," a concern Hillary held reaching back to her days organizing babysitting shifts for the children of migrant workers outside of Chicago (*Living History* 48). Edelman pointed Hillary in this direction, since she had experience working with Mondale on legislation like the Child and Family Services Act, "a major bill to provide compensatory education and day care in the earliest years of life" (Radcliffe 97). Under Edelman's direction, Hillary researched the status of the children of migrant farm workers, particularly their health and educational opportunities. Her research led her to issues like housing and sanitation not only for migrant children, but also for their working parents in Florida, Texas, and other states and at the hands of companies like Coca-Cola and Minute Maid (*Living History* 48; Morris 143). Biographer Donnie Radcliffe quotes Hillary extensively about her experiences researching these subjects and attending the Senate Committee's hearings, which had made her conscious of

the conditions in migrant labor camps and to the problems posed by segregated academies that were fighting for tax-exempt status under the Nixon Administration...I came back to law school with a growing commitment toward children, and particularly poor and disadvantaged ones. (97)

"She was really something, this young activist breathing fire," observed another lawyer in attendance at the hearings (Morris 143).

### *Children Under the Law*

The growing commitment to children would be further crystallized by means of other avenues throughout Hillary's law school years and in the year immediately after she

graduated in 1972. In her last year in law school, Hillary worked with the local federal Legal Services Program and the New Haven Legal Assistance Association. Issues of concern within her work here included “abortion, surgery, selection of residence or schools,” and the status of foster children (Morris 161). She also “worked as a research assistant to Yale law professor Joseph Goldstein, whose edited collection with Anna Freud and Albert Solnit, *Beyond the Best Interests of the Child*, was one of the prominent volumes of the moment” (Morris 161).

In the 1972-1973 school year, Bill Clinton had one year left at Yale after Hillary had graduated, so for this reason and others, Hillary arranged to stay in New Haven for an additional year to continue her work on children’s rights. Hillary was “assigned to review the legal rights of children in terms of public policy as well as legal doctrine and judicial practice” as a part of “a special program of Yale’s law and medical schools and its Child Study Center” (Morris 160). Perhaps the most lasting, though generally unknown, record is to be found in her publications. Hillary’s work would culminate in “three articles published between 1973 and 1979 in the *Harvard Educational Review*, the *Yale Law Journal*, and an academic anthology entitled *Children’s Rights: Contemporary Perspectives*” (Morris 160). On the subject of these three publications, one biographer puts it best when he writes that

unlike later speeches or lectures, [Hillary’s] writing at Yale was unaffected by Bill Clinton’s electoral career, and thus they stand alone as rare documents, glimpses of what Hillary Rodham then believed about the society she and Clinton were one day to lead. (Morris 160)

Though not unimportant, these publications were generally moderate in their arguments. Less controversially than other children’s rights advocates of the day, Hillary

stopped short of advocating the emancipation sanctioned by some at the time and appeared to suggest only that the courts stop automatically regarding minors as legally incompetent until eighteen or twenty-one and that instead judges or other arbiters decide on a case-by-case basis if younger children might be competent to make certain specific, defined decisions about their parents, at least on the gravest matters. (Morris 161)

In her exact words: “I prefer that intervention into an ongoing family be limited to decisions that could have long-term and possibly irreparable effects if they were not resolved” (Morris 161).

Donnie Radcliffe notes the “confusion” the article generated because “she argued both for more state power and more individual responsibility” when it comes to children, in cases where they are deemed to be competent, advocating on behalf of themselves” (166). Even harsher critics wrote that her writing was “overly abstract,” “naïve,” “unsatisfying,” and even “unoriginal” (Morris 161-62). But it can be argued that she was continuing to try to negotiate the seemingly incompatible “self-reliance” and “social responsibility and justice” that her parents, Paul Carlson, and Don Jones had introduced her to so many years ago. Furthermore, these writings serve to demonstrate an independent voice for Hillary, who would shortly thereafter marry Bill Clinton and, as Roger Morris observes, hardly remain unaffected by his rising political star.

#### *A Particular Kind of Activism*

As the Yale years demonstrate, Hillary honed her speaking and writing skills for the purpose of engaging in a particular kind of activism. Her activism took place through speaking at conferences like the League of Women Voters’ Convention, researching generally unrecognized subjects like the status of the poor and disadvantaged, attending Congressional hearings about migrant workers, and publishing journal articles about children’s rights. Such activism was not confined to the walls of the academy as might

readily seem the case, but rather it raised consciousness within classrooms, legislative bodies, and even within Hillary herself. “Protest, in her book,” summarized one biographer, “called for a cerebral approach through writings and speeches” (Radcliffe 150). This activism reinforced her earlier views from her Wellesley work on Alinsky and community organizing: that the most fruitful way to realize change was from within existing organizations and structures rather than from grassroots origins.

### **The Arkansas Years**

Hillary’s trajectory after her graduation from law school is not unknown, though it is usually glossed over rather quickly in biographies of her life. She spent the summer of 1972 in Texas with Bill Clinton helping to register young Hispanic voters and working for George McGovern’s campaign. While Bill Clinton was in Fayetteville, Arkansas campaigning for a Congressional seat after graduation, Hillary was in Washington, one of three women lawyers from among a team of forty-four, working for John Doar’s staff inquiring into the impeachability of Richard Nixon’s Watergate scandal (*Living History* 66). Quick trips were taken throughout this time, Bill to Washington and Hillary to Fayetteville, but Hillary eventually went to Arkansas to help with Bill’s campaign. When Hillary’s work in Washington ended, she decided to make Arkansas her permanent home for the time being. The two were married on October 11, 1975.

With Bill running for office, it would eventually fall to Hillary to be the primary breadwinner. Bill was already teaching constitutional law at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, and Hillary was offered a job to join the faculty, which at the time only had one other female law professor (*Living History* 70). “I would be teaching criminal law and trial advocacy and running the legal aid clinic and the prison projects, both of

which required that I supervise the students providing legal assistance to the poor and incarcerated,” she recalled (*Living History* 70). At the same time, Clinton’s political star was rising, helped along in large part by the anti-Republican sentiment growing across the nation as a result of President Nixon’s disgrace. In 1976, Clinton was elected as Arkansas’s Attorney General. The year before, he worked for Jimmy Carter’s presidential campaign in Arkansas while Hillary was the field coordinator in Indiana (*Living History* 77). Things looked bright for the Clintons in Arkansas.

In her 538-page autobiography, Hillary surprisingly devotes less than forty pages to her life in Fayetteville and Little Rock. Unfortunately, many of the other publications about her seem to represent Arkansas as a mere stop along the Clinton path to Pennsylvania Avenue. But Hillary was not inactive for the nearly twenty years between law school and the White House. Her legal career and advocacy would necessarily adjust to life in “Arkansas’s conservative political and social milieu,” though Hillary certainly continued to push the envelope on various social and political causes (Bernstein 112).

#### *The Lady Law Professor*

As a law professor at the University of Arkansas, Hillary Rodham was a very different kind of professor than her soon-to-be-husband Bill Clinton. Bill’s teaching style was “conversational,” while Hillary’s law students recall her employing the “Socratic method” in her criminal law classes (Radcliffe 138). Joyce Milton writes about how Bill’s “lectures were open-ended, weaving together observations from American history, sociology, and current events” (82). Hillary, on the other hand, “was organized, demanding and opinionated,” and “expected her students to come to class prepared and brooked no excuses” (82). As Carl Bernstein sums up, “her questions to students were

tough and demanding. Bill almost never put his students on the spot” (109). “There was little doubt,” Bernstein concludes, “that she was the better teacher” (109).

One biographer writes that Hillary’s style of and philosophy toward teaching carried over into her participation in faculty meetings. In these meetings, the new “lady law professor,” as some called her, could be found “insisting that she and her colleagues address university policies affecting women and minorities” (*Living History* 71; Radcliffe 138). The same biographer writes that “she pressed for the hiring of more competent women in faculty and staff positions and, if a report about racial discrimination would come to her attention, would keep after her superiors to get to the bottom of it” (Radcliffe 138). Another biographer describes how “she pressed trustees to include women in the search for a new chancellor” (Morris 185). Yet another time, she “enthusiastically helped brief a newfound faculty friend and political science instructor for a debate with Phyllis Schlafly on the Equal Rights Amendment before the Arkansas legislature” (Morris 185). The persuasiveness of her arguments or the impact her efforts may have had remains to be seen, though we should not underestimate the significance of a new, inexperienced female faculty member speaking so openly about discrimination in faculty meetings.

*The Rights of Victims, the Rights of the Accused, and the Rights of the Poor*

As noted in *The First Partner*, “Hillary’s chief accomplishment was founding the university’s first legal aid clinic” (Milton 83). The accomplishment was a part of her initial job offer from the University of Arkansas, and “by first semester’s end she had obtained support from the county’s judges and the bar association,” not to mention several federal grants she successfully won to support the clinic (Bernstein 126). Offering practically pro bono representation to poor clients, the clinic was staffed by third-year

law students who were supervised by the university's law professors and approved by their dean (Radcliffe 140). In the first year alone, "the clinic served three hundred clients," who were represented in some fifty cases (Bernstein 127). The clinic was, as political science professor at the University of Arkansas and Hillary's close friend Diane Blair described, "constitutional but controversial" (Radcliffe 141). Other attorneys in the area worried that their clients were being stolen out from under their noses, so the job fell to Hillary to diplomatically reassure them that the clinic did not serve that function, which she did.

Hillary's chief concern with the legal clinic was "inadequate legal services" for the poor. She did not "differentiate between victims and the accused when it came to their right to legal advice or counsel," a point made salient through her volunteerism with a legal program that offered assistance to convicted criminals who otherwise could not afford such assistance (Radcliffe 140-41). Van Gearhart, the student coordinator for the clinic, later recalled that Hillary was "more involved in administration than in trying actual cases, though she handled a few" (Radcliffe 141). Donnie Radcliffe nicely synthesizes the importance of this point that Hillary worked within an existing system than working outside of it:

While she enjoyed teaching, it was no secret that in an academic community change came slowly. Her interests lay in helping set policy. Yale had taught her that policy was made in different ways, including the use of lawsuits and changes in the law. If the system was wrong in certain areas, then you had to find a case that allowed it to be challenged and use that as a vehicle to make change. Hers was among the most activist visions of the legal system. (145-46)

As her work with the legal clinic shows, the problems she identified in the system were the ways that the poor in Arkansas were often denied legal representation simply because



they were poor. So, the clinic and the law itself became one vehicle through which this problem was recognized and addressed.

In a similar vein, in 1977, President Jimmy Carter appointed Hillary to be Chair of the Legal Services Corporation (LSC), “an extension of Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty programs of the 1960s,” in 1977 (Bernstein 133). Much like the Legal Aid Clinic at the University of Arkansas, the nonprofit Legal Services Corporation existed to offer legal assistance to those who were too poor to afford an attorney. The LSC was run through “335 local Legal Service offices around the country” that were primarily staffed by young, bright attorneys much like Hillary (Bernstein 133). Above all, the Legal Services Corporation was committed to “protecting the constitutional right to a fair trial of the most vulnerable defendants who passed through America’s turnstile system of justice” (Bernstein 133). Under Hillary’s leadership and until her chairmanship ended in 1982, the Legal Service Corporation’s funding increased from \$90 million dollars to \$300 million dollars (Bernstein 133-34). Her efforts were controversial, but effective.

#### *Reforming Education in Arkansas*

Before her husband was governor, Hillary’s advocacy was largely channeled through the judicial system and directed toward offering legal aid to the poor in Arkansas. Once her husband became governor, she became better positioned to actually shape policy on other issues. As Joyce Milton explains,

If practicing law was often unrewarding, Hillary’s first major venture into policy making would be deemed a resounding success, winning national attention and greatly enhancing Bill Clinton’s attractiveness as a future candidate for national office. (152)

In the unique dual position of lawyer and first lady of Arkansas, Hillary stood poised to apply her legal expertise to particular policy initiatives, to an extent that no other

American woman before had accomplished at any level of government. She was to be, as Roger Morris observes, “an advocate and lightning rod” for education reform (318).

With the schools in Arkansas “among the worst in the nation,” along with Hillary’s long-standing commitment to issues affecting children and the poor, it was unsurprising when she elevated educational reform to the top of the list of projects she would direct her attention to as First Lady of Arkansas (Milton 152). When Bill Clinton returned to the governor’s mansion in 1982, after a brief respite following his stunning loss for re-election, he announced the formation of an Education Standards Committee, appointing his wife as the committee’s chair. It was, as Hillary observed later, “a politically risky move” for the governor to suggest that his wife head up a committee that would “recommend sweeping educational reforms” across the state (*Living History* 94). “By naming Hillary,” explained former head of the Arkansas Democratic Party Skip Rutherford, Bill Clinton “sent a signal to the state that not only was education a critical problem and important issue, but *the* issue of his administration” (Radcliffe 204). And as one Hillary biographer notes, training and expertise were not necessarily the foremost qualifications needed for whoever the governor would appoint to chair the committee: “strategizing and public speaking would be paramount in the hard sell” (Radcliffe 201).

For months, Hillary and a committee travelled across Arkansas, meeting with teachers, administrators, students, parents, and others in order to gain a sense of the state of affairs and to solicit input for how the standards could be improved. At the end of a tour defined by the need to “listen” to the voices of the citizens, the committee drafted a series of proposals recommending the implementation of new, stricter standards across the board.

Among the group's key proposals were capping class sizes at between twenty and twenty-five pupils, lengthening the school year from 175 to 180 days by 1989-90, requiring that foreign languages, advanced mathematics, chemistry, physics, art and instrumental music be taught in every high school, toughening up graduation requirements, providing more counselors for elementary and high school pupils, and setting up a state-administered Minimum Placement Test given in the third, sixth and eighth grades, with a mandatory 85 percent pass rate. (Radcliffe 208)

Most controversially, Bill Clinton announced in a televised speech that teachers themselves pass a minimum competency test, a suggestion Dick Morris described as one of "Clinton's first attempts to 'merge Democratic compassion with the Republican notion of responsibility'" (Milton 157).

It was a smartly executed plan for reform. While the governor had "worked what aides called 'the inside,' relentlessly lobbying legislators, school superintendents, and others, the First Lady crisply held the often tedious pro forma public hearings in each of the state's seventy-five counties" (Morris 318). Her legal training and public speaking were put to good use in these settings, as were they in the many instances when she delivered impassioned speeches about the need for reform. The most important of these was a speech she delivered in June of 1983 to a joint House-Senate legislative committee where, after her ninety-minute speech, one representative famously remarked, "Well, fellas, it looks like we might have elected the wrong Clinton!" (Bernstein 172).

While not always popular and while the results of education reform in Arkansas were "mixed at best," Hillary's work on education reform has been widely characterized as her crowning achievement as first lady of Arkansas (Milton 157). Her work in this capacity represents how her legal training and expertise assisted her in transforming a seemingly symbolic position – wife of the governor – into a platform for policy-shaping.

It was, without a doubt, a vital precursor for what she could accomplish as first lady of the nation.

### **Conclusion**

Hillary Rodham Clinton's pre-White House years were formative in preparing her for the politically-charged role of United States first lady. Despite criticism and failures along the way, her early belief that compassion and responsibility need not be mutually exclusive informed her politics at Wellesley, at Yale, and through the Arkansas years. From this narrative history of her early activism, a few consistencies can be drawn that shed light on her later advocacy through her newspaper column.

First, Hillary's early political activism on behalf of women, children, the poor, the accused, workers, and any other disenfranchised groups is rooted in an ideological foundation which couples Democratic compassion with the Republican notion of responsibility. This foundation was formed through the ideological teachings of a sundry group made up of Paul Carlson, Don Jones, Barry Goldwater, and Saul Alinsky, Hillary's politics found their root in her Methodist faith and her parents continued conversations about the compatibility of self-reliance and social justice. These teachings would, in turn, heavily influence her advocacy as first lady, which would focus on similar themes and issues like the status of women, children, and the disenfranchised both at home and abroad.

At the same time, as Hillary moved through her education at Wellesley College and Yale University, she honed her communication skills by delivering speeches, writing an undergraduate thesis, and writing several articles for legal journals: all of which were geared toward advancing a range of political causes. Though she came of age in an era of

protests, marches, sit-ins, book burnings, armbands, and the like, she advocated engagement, not, as she put it, “disruption or revolution.” Armed with her law degree, Hillary’s continued to pursue activist causes through the law and the courts, in keeping with her philosophy of working within existing structures rather than working outside of them. This strategy carried over into her newspaper column, which, as I will show, was a rhetorical project where she advocated for engagement over disruption or revolution.

Furthermore, as this ideological portrait conveys, the causes Hillary pursued before she was first lady were diverse and wide-ranging. In a comprehensive review of 284 speeches delivered by Hillary while she was first lady, Anne F. Mattina finds overwhelming evidence of Hillary’s “deep commitment to empowering women and bringing children’s issues into the realm of public policy” (226). As a “political agenda,” Mattina elaborates, this commitment is “coherent” and one that Hillary has “maintained throughout her public life,” including her life before the White House (226). More cynically, Dick Morris writes: “The only consistent beneficiary of Hillary’s loyalty other than women and children has been political opportunity itself” (104). Without comment on the latter half of that statement, the first half echoes a consistent view that “women and children” encapsulates the breadth and depth of Hillary’s early activism. Though not untrue that her efforts are more-often-than-not directed toward women and children, to say that women and children have been the only beneficiaries of her activism and advocacy provides an incomplete picture. Subsequently, a close reading of Hillary’s column offers one way to see the full picture of her advocacy during her first lady years.

Finally, and as has been a recurring theme throughout this exploration of Hillary’s ideological, spiritual, and political development, her advocacy is decidedly oriented the

law and public policy. Whether working through the judicial process as an attorney or helping to shape and implement policy as a politician's wife, Hillary is, as her thesis advisor put it, best described as a pragmatic liberal who views the government as instrumental in meeting the unmet needs of the society to help those people who are not fully included within it. This view of her, as I will show, holds up when studying her newspaper column many years after she wrote her thesis. Unmatched by any other to take up the position before her, Hillary Rodham Clinton became first lady armed with this training, experience, and view of both the judicial and legislative process in America.

Nevertheless, as a close look at the existing communication literature reveals, scholars are focusing on different aspects of Hillary's rhetorical legacy. As I show, four overarching themes – partnership, polarizer, image-maker, and political ambition – have dominated our scholarly conversations about our understanding of Hillary as a rhetorical first lady and advocate. These themes have helped us to see everything from shared power to sexist media coverage to the crafting of political candidacy. Yet, a way of seeing can also be a way of not seeing. In the process of pursuing these interesting and important topics, scholars have lost sight of the substance of Hillary's rhetorical legacy as an advocate. The following chapter illuminates and traces this problem as a way to establish where and how my project fits within the existing scholarship, as well as how my analysis seeks to refocus our attention to Hillary's rhetorical record in terms of what it can teach us about political advocacy.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE HILLARY PROBLEM IN RHETORICAL STUDIES

As Janis Edwards explains, Hillary Rodham Clinton “has motivated and invigorated feminist political communication scholarship more than any other person in contemporary politics” (“The 2008 Gendered Campaign” 157). “A significant portion of political communication scholarship,” Edwards continues, “can be termed ‘Hillary Studies’” (“The 2008 Gendered Campaign” 157). “There’s plenty of Hillary Studies literature out there that parses the candidate’s stands on policy issues, her Senate votes, and her track record as First Lady,” concurs Susan Morrison in the introduction to her edited collection *Thirty Ways of Looking at Hillary: Reflections by Women Writers* (xiv). Hillary has been the subject of countless studies originating in disciplines like communication, political science, history, and women’s studies, not to mention popular portrayals and press accounts of her which make accurate and substantial contributions to our understanding of her capabilities as a politician and as a speaker.

Nevertheless, there is a problem within “Hillary Studies” and defining this problem is the subject of this chapter. I argue that this problem is neither related to the quantity or the quality of studies about Hillary Rodham Clinton during her first lady years, as a senator, and as a presidential candidate. Rather, this problem is related to *how* we have tended to view Hillary and her advocacy in rhetorical terms. While various historians, biographers, journalists, and media personalities have noted the many shapes and forms which Hillary’s advocacy has taken over the years, scholars of communication and rhetoric have been slower to view her in this role. We are so distracted and influenced by how others have appropriated Hillary, by how she has fashioned and refashioned her political image, by the ways that her style has bodily and rhetorically

adhered to (or deviated from) expectations for traditional femininity, and the ways that she has either appropriately or wrongly claimed political power for herself that we have failed to adequately examine the rhetorical substance of her advocacy. Although she is, in many ways, the ideal case study for better understanding everything from sexism in the press to the double-binds that political women must constantly identify and negotiate, Hillary Rodham Clinton is also a significant political advocate.

A survey of the existing literature on Hillary as a rhetorical first lady supports the claim that there is a problem within “Hillary studies.” With few exceptions, the attention Hillary has garnered as a rhetorical first lady has tended to cast her advocacy as the backdrop for the various roles she has played, or been portrayed as playing, spanning her husband’s presidency. These roles are: Hillary as one half of the most powerful political partnership since Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt; Hillary as a polarizing figure covered by a divided and, at times, hostile press; Hillary as an image-maker who has undergone a series of necessary and strategic transformations; and Hillary as a first lady who used her position as a foundation from which to launch her own candidacy for political office. Accordingly, the function of Hillary’s first lady rhetoric, including her advocacy, has been primarily assessed as directed toward or related to these themes. As a result, and problematically, questions related to how Hillary used her experience to establish authority as a rhetor and how she justified and explained her political decision-making go unanswered. My reading of “Talking It Over,” thus, seeks to refocus attention to these questions.

Before doing so, however, I will trace these four trends found in the communication scholarship to show how the rhetorical substance of Hillary Rodham



Clinton's advocacy has frequently, and problematically, been downplayed and even ignored in rhetoric and political communication scholarship. Noting at the onset that the four existing categories of depicting Hillary as first lady are far from discrete, I will explain how she has been widely studied as a political partner, a media polarizer, an image-maker, and a political candidate rather than as a politically-minded advocate. While these depictions are insightful additions to the literature on political women in general and Hillary Rodham Clinton in particular, I argue that there is more to this first lady's rhetorical record which warrants our attention. This chapter concludes by synthesizing the limitations of the existing trends of failing to adequately appraise Hillary as an advocate.

#### *The Theme of Partnership*

The trend of studying the first lady as one half of a political partnership is certainly not limited to Bill and Hillary Rodham Clinton, though they are arguably the most studied political partnership in American history. Roger Morris's *Partners in Power: The Clintons and Their America*, Christopher Anderson's *Bill and Hillary: The Marriage*, Joyce Milton's *The First Partner: Hillary Rodham Clinton, A Biography*, Jerry Oppenheimer's *State of a Union: Inside the Complex Marriage of Bill and Hillary Clinton*, Sally Bedell Smith's *For Love of Politics: Bill and Hillary Clinton: The White House Years*, and Christopher Hitchens' *No One Left To Lie To: The Values of the Worst Family* are just a sampling of the kinds of profiles, whether they be biographies of the first lady or joint biographies of both Clintons, of the Clinton marriage which rely heavily on the theme of an ambitiously (and, sometimes, ambiguously) executed political partnership as its anchor. This partnership, as the story goes, had as its desired end a

singular, all-consuming goal: the United States presidency. As one of the authors baldly put it, “surely no other couple in history ever set out to occupy the White House with such unswerving dedication, such sheer confidence, such unity of purpose” (Oppenheimer 16). Many such historical portrayals of the Clinton partnership inquire into, speculate about, and carefully trace the path of this dedication, confidence, and purpose for a popular readership.

The theme of partnership, signified through the recurrence of terms like “couple” or “team,” is recognizable in academic texts about presidents and first ladies generally and the Clinton’s in particular. One first lady historian, Robert P. Watson, writes:

The presidency can be viewed as a “team.” The various presidential advisors and institutions of the White House form this team. So too must the first lady be included within the “plural presidency.” Not only is her office budget and staff larger than many of the so-called “key” advisors and institutions that presidential scholars study, but as presidential spouse she assumes a role perhaps more central to the president’s career and White House success than any formal adviser. (Watson, “The First Lady Reconsidered,” 806)

First ladies from Betty Ford to Hillary Rodham Clinton are “modern spouses” each of whom was, by definition, “an active and public partner of the president” (814).

Another historian, Gil Troy, proposes the concept of the “presidential couple” as an organizing concept and a way to explain the growing cultural preoccupation with the president and first lady as a singular political unit moving toward singular political ends. The phenomenon of the presidential couple, Troy argues, is at its root the inevitable product of technological advances throughout time. As television, radio, and now the internet place the modern president at the center of our political and celebrity culture, so too does his family – especially his wife – reside there with him in this center. By

definition, the presidential couple is a media construct; it is not just an exercise in joint image-making, however, but also one in joint power-sharing.

Accordingly, this joint power-sharing is reflected in activities ranging from attending cabinet meetings to delivering testimony about policy issues to heading task forces related to public policy (Watson, “The First Lady Reconsidered,” 814). These activities are generally highly visible, policy-oriented, and require an office and staff to execute them alongside the first lady. Put simply, “it has become the rule and not the exception that the first lady has surpassed the vice president and even the most senior advisors and cabinet secretaries in terms of visibility and perhaps even power and influence both in and out of the White House” (Watson, “The First Lady Reconsidered,” 814).

The theme of political partnership, especially about the Clintons, is open to interpretation. Some characterize it as a political asset, others conclude that it is a sign of political failure, and still others are noncommittal in their interpretation of its effects. In Gil Troy’s estimation, the American public has generally come to reject the notion that the president’s unelected spouse should share in power with her husband, as the case of the Clintons shows. In his summation, the Clintons established early on a

co-presidency based on their egalitarian *partnership* [emphasis mine] and characterized by shared power. Yet less than two years later, their co-presidency would be a dud, their health care scheme a dead letter, his Presidency in shambles. She would endure the lowest public approval ratings of any modern First Lady until she transformed herself into a more traditional – a compliant – public figure. And only in 1998, when she suffered through her husband’s infidelities, would Hillary Rodham Clinton achieve the mass popularity she craved. (345-46)

“The failures of the Clintons’ power co-presidency,” Troy concludes, “revealed their own faults, the citizenry’s rejection of their elite values, the national confusion about gender

roles, marriage, and morality, and the peculiar but clear demands for a political co-presidency characterized by joint image-making but minimal powersharing” (346).

Other readings have been more moderate about the question of whether or not the theme of partnership should be equated with political failure. Kati Marton contends that “a politician needs more than ambition and stamina to succeed” (4). “Ideally,” she writes, “he needs a *partner* [emphasis mine] who will be a trusted sounding board, a link to the real world from which his power and position isolate him” (4). On the subject of the Clinton partnership, Marton agrees with Gil Troy’s assessment of the failed Clinton political partnership by claiming that “Hillary’s need for a defined role led to the Clinton administration’s biggest political mistake” (320). Yet, she points out, Hillary’s successful bid for a Senate seat is proof that the partnership can be a political advantage.

Arguments about the presidency and the first lady being politically dependent on each other raise questions about the instrumental role that rhetoric plays in this process. One view holds that as a consequence of the partnership, the rhetoric of the president and the first lady cannot, and should not, be studied as separate enterprises. Clinton biographer Sally Bedell Smith nicely summarizes how difficulties in the media coverage of the president and first lady reflects, and contributes to, questions about how to study their rhetoric.

Although the Clintons years ago backed away from their “two-for-the-price-of-one” rhetoric, it remains impossible to consider either of them in isolation. The dilemma extends even to what to call them. Unless a publication uses the “Mr.” and “Mrs.” style, journalists struggle with awkward constructions, alternately referring to him as “Clinton,” her as “Clinton,” him as “her husband,” her as “his wife,” him as “President,” her as “First Lady,” then “Senator. (xxi)

Janette Muir and Anita Taylor agree that the rhetorical activities of Bill and Hillary

Clinton

must be seen as that of a team, not just two individuals acting, sometimes, in concert. This, of course, makes them inexplicable to one viewing their communication from the viewpoint of the individual rhetor working in isolation. (Muir and Taylor 1)

Of course, this inexplicability produces questions about *how* exactly to go about doing this kind of rhetorical analysis without still, somehow, relegating the first lady to a secondary and reactive role.

That is what happens in Colleen Kelley's *The Rhetoric of First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton*. In her analysis of Hillary's rhetorical strategies during the 1992 presidential campaign and through to the end of the second Clinton administration, Kelley focuses on the ways that the first lady helped to negotiate the bad press that both she and her husband attracted during the many Clinton scandals; that is, Kelley terms the first lady's rhetoric "crisis management discourse." "During Clinton's scandals," Kelley argues,

there was essentially an ongoing campaign to counterbalance rhetorically the weight of negatively framed stories about the presidency with stories and images provided by and from and about Hillary Rodham Clinton that the press could not dismiss or alter in significant ways. (282-83)

To achieve this counterbalance, the first lady invented and assumed a number of roles and employed rhetorical strategies in order to realize these diverse roles, which Kelley catalogs as: private wife/citizen, scapegoat, "wronged woman," "stand-by-my-man" wife, "Hillary the Good," "full-time advocate for children," "mother, wife, daughter, sister, and woman," apologist, and martyr. It is this "flexibility"—an ability to adapt to situations and scandals and assume different personas to meet the individual needs of those situations and scandals—that Kelley finds to be the first lady's rhetorical legacy. Though Hillary is indeed acknowledged as an advocate for one of these roles, this advocacy is

accomplished in the interest of rescuing the president and the first lady from one of the many scandals that plagued the Clintons.

While viewing any first lady, including and especially Hillary Rodham Clinton, as a part of a partnership with her husband helps to rescue the first lady role from obscurity, it still stops short of recognizing the first lady role as having a dynamic rhetorical function. The theme of partnership leaves little room for a first lady to take up projects which reflect her own interests and training and, as Janette Muir and Anita Taylor point out, work as an “individual rhetor” who may engage in advocacy. The first lady is too busy, it would seem, working to sustain the partnership. In the case of Hillary Rodham Clinton, it was the recurring need to rescue her husband (and, at times, herself) from scandal after scandal that prompted her rhetorical responses which, in turn, worked as crisis management discourse. Though it is impossible to claim that any first lady functions as a rhetorical agent completely independent of the president, it is also misleading to limit a first lady, especially one like Hillary, to being merely one part of a partnership, a couple, and/or a team.

Furthermore, when it comes to applying the theme of partnership to the Clintons, it seems that Hillary is perpetually framed in a negative light. That is to say, “the Clinton’s unsuccessful co-presidency approach to Bill Clinton’s administration caused [Hillary] to be viewed as both a First Lady and a political operative, albeit one who was viewed by some as overstepping her boundaries” (Schnoebelen, Carlin, and Warner 46). In assuming the role of political partner so openly and unapologetically, Hillary Rodham Clinton blurred the lines between being a traditional first lady and a savvy political operative. As a result, she had to retreat, in a manner of speaking, or risk continuing to

polarize both the American public and the press. Her advocacy, thus, takes a backseat to these other points.

### *The Theme of Polarizer*

The relationship between the president and the press is a complicated subject. That said, the relationship between the first lady and the press can be equally, if not more complicated. Any inquiry into Hillary Rodham Clinton's relationship with the press shows a widespread consensus that, for better or for worse, she remains the most polarizing first lady to take up residence in the White House. Even a casual survey of some of the titles of the "biographies" about Hillary shows this in action: Barbara Olson's *Hell to Pay: The Unfolding Story of Hillary Rodham Clinton*, Christopher Anderson's *American Evita: Hillary Clinton's Path to Power*, Peggy Noonan's *The Case Against Hillary Clinton*, Edward Klein's *The Truth About Hillary: What She Knew, When She Knew It, and How Far She'll Go To Become President*, and Dick Morris's *Rewriting History* (an unapologetic rebuttal to Hillary's *Living History*) are just a few of the less flattering portraits, while Susan Estrich's *The Case for Hillary Clinton* exemplifies a more complimentary, though rare, rendering.

The theme of media polarizer has offered a way to understand the reception of Hillary Rodham Clinton as a rhetorical first lady. Before she was even first lady, this view of her informed how we talk about her and the way that the media tends to cover her. A study of *The New York Times*' coverage from January to November 1992 during Bill Clinton's presidential campaign reveals the recurring media theme "her strength-his weakness," which in turn raises questions related to how much perceptions of Hillary's strengths lent themselves to perceptions of Bill's weaknesses as a candidate and as a man

(Gardetto 226). Second, as such questions about Hillary's strengths were raised, they were raised in comparison to other political wives, including Barbara Bush, Shelley Buchanan, and even, in light of the controversial "baking cookies" comment on the campaign trail along with Bill Clinton's chronic infidelity, Tammy Wynette. Hillary's "independent wifestyle" was defined, thus, as a contrast to the styles of these other political wives and, like much of the other coverage, waffled between praising and condemning this style. Finally, and as with the studies of the Clinton political partnership, the *New York Times* anticipated the view history would take of Bill and Hillary. Such coverage asked readers to reconceive the "marital relationship as a partnership" (235).

Another survey of five publications – *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Good Housekeeping*, and *McCall's* – shows how media coverage tended to frame Hillary through the newly emergent media frame of "political interloper" alongside Nancy Reagan and Barbara Bush, while other first ladies like Lady Bird Johnson, Pat Nixon, Betty Ford, and Rosalynn Carter were depicted as "activists" (Burns). The frame of political interloper is concerned with the "proper" sphere of influence for a first lady to have in political culture. Lisa Burns summarizes the nature of the political interloper media frame as follows:

According to press coverage, proper first lady comportment included acting as her husband's helpmate and concerning herself primarily with traditional women's public activities. In contrast, using the "hidden power" of the position to advance her own personal or political agenda, whether as advisor, policy maker, or independent advocate, was considered to be overstepping the boundaries of first lady performance. By highlighting these actions as inappropriate, such framing assumed that the first lady's influence should be contained to women's issues, which limited the power of this unelected position. (138)

By this account, media coverage focused on the negative reception of the advocacy of first ladies rather than covering the actual substance of the advocacy.



Moreover, Burns explains an additional nuance to the media coverage of Hillary as a political interloper. She describes how Nancy Reagan and Barbara Bush were also framed as “helpmates” though they had varying degrees of success in this role and that Reagan, in particular, drew extensive criticism for abusing the “hidden power” which came with being first lady. Hillary, however, was framed “not just [as] the ‘power behind the throne’ but a usurper *interested in personal political power* [emphasis added]” (140). In other words, Burns advances the argument that Hillary was not (indeed, could not be) framed by the media as an “activist,” as were her most immediate predecessors, because she was paying the price for their very activism.

“Political interloper” goes by other names. In Maurine Beasley’s study of the partnership between first ladies and the media, her entry on Hillary is titled “Hillary Rodham Clinton as Media Polarizer.” “Few individuals in U.S. history, let alone first ladies, have polarized the public as thoroughly as Hillary Rodham Clinton, the wife of Bill Clinton,” announces Beasley in the chapter’s first sentence (201). Beasley locates the difficulties between Hillary and the press in the fact that as a Yale-trained lawyer and working mother, she “did not fit into the existing patterns of first lady coverage, generally reserved for lifestyle and feature sections” (207). Consequently, there was an anxiety about how to frame the first lady, which was only exacerbated by Hillary’s reluctance to hold press conferences, give interviews, and in general cooperate with or even recognize the media. Elaborating on this anxiety, Beasley identifies no fewer than sixteen frames employed by journalists, including

a saint, a sinner, a career woman, a wife, a mother, a presidential adviser, a political strategist, a feminist, a ruthless power behind the throne, a high-powered lawyer, a global advocate for women and children, a public policy expert, a health care reformer, a hostess, a religious believer, and a sex symbol (after she was

photographed in a seductive pose for *Vogue* magazine wearing a clinging, black Donna Karan dress). (207)

Taken together, these numerous roles emphasize how “Clinton was both idealized as a shining example of an independent woman and vilified as a power-mad consort” by the press as first lady (224). As made evident by such an extensive and varied list, roles like “adviser,” “strategist,” “advocate,” “expert,” and “reformer” can easily get lost amongst other interesting and useful frames like “sinner,” “ruthless power,” and even the perhaps surprising “sex symbol” which tend to take center stage in the studies of Hillary Rodham Clinton. In short, frames like “political interloper” and “media polarizer” tend to be pliable, generalized, and open to interpretation.

Yet, despite this pliability, generalization, and open-endedness, there is consensus that themes of interloping and polarization reflect political failure and, in turn, lead to troubling trends in public discourse about Hillary and her advocacy as first lady. Above all, themes of interloping and polarization signify a lack of femininity. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell has studied Hillary’s advocacy as first lady through the lens of the “hate” it generated in the press and public. “Hillary Rodham Clinton’s style of public advocacy,” Campbell finds, “typically omits virtually all of the discursive markers by which women publicly enact their femininity” (6). Campbell elaborates:

In rhetorical terms, performing or enacting femininity has meant adopting a personal or self-disclosing tone (signifying nurturance, intimacy, and domesticity) and assuming a feminine persona, e.g., mother, or an ungendered person, e.g., mediator or prophet, while speaking. It has meant preferring anecdotal evidence (reflecting women’s experiential learning in contrast to men’s expertise), developing ideas inductively (so the audience thinks that it, not this presumptuous woman, drew the conclusions), and appropriating strategies associated with women – such as domestic metaphors, emotional appeals to motherhood, and the link – and avoiding such “macho” strategies as tough language, confrontation or direct refutation, and any appearance of debating one’s opponents. Note, however,

that feminine style does not preclude substantive depth and argumentative cogency. (5)

Hillary's failure to perform and embody femininity through her first lady rhetoric was the product of her more logical, lawyerly style which, consequently, contributed to the negative coverage of her by the press. Put more simply, the first lady's refusal and/or inability to adopt an appropriately feminine persona through rhetoric caused people to dislike her. This hate took on a larger cultural significance, as various products and images simultaneously fed and reflected this "hate."

Karrin Vasby Anderson has performed an even closer textual reading of this "hate" by examining the first lady's experiences during the first two years of the Clinton administration through the metaphor "bitch." This metaphor, according to Anderson, does not merely serve the function of negatively characterizing a woman's identity and person. Too, this metaphor works "as a contemporary rhetoric of containment disciplining women with power" (600). Media coverage of different Hillary episodes, including the "buy one, get one free" theme of the 1992 campaign, the widely misrepresented "cookies and tea" comment from the same campaign, and Bill Clinton's appointment of Hillary to head national health care reform, fueled and reflected larger public discourse that Hillary was, in a word, "a bitch." More broadly, Anderson argues that these depictions reveal the sexism to be found in American political discourse. More specifically, though, Anderson notes how many accepted – were even excited at the prospect of – the first lady having an "activist role in the administration" (604). Unfortunately, however, Anderson determines that "the positive images of an activist and productive first lady were subsumed almost entirely by the dominant story of a bossy and strident wife who 'takes over'" (604-5).

Many common threads run through the studies of how, as a first lady, Hillary was polarizing in ways which were reflected in the press coverage of her rhetorical activities. Though acknowledging that many found much to praise in Hillary, the authors of the existing communication studies share a concern that her polarity repeatedly translated into media coverage which was not merely negative, but also reflective of more troubling trends. Moments identified as key by the press during Hillary's first lady years, including the Tammy Wynette comment, the "cookies and tea" comment, and the health care reform failure, were the primary focus of these studies, which then explored how the backlash these moments generated came in the form of "Hillary Hate" or "bitchy" portrayals.

To counter such press coverage and public perceptions, these authors agree that in the second half of the Clinton administration, the first lady assumed a more appropriately traditional, feminine stance in her appearance, activities, and rhetoric. Until achieving, or at least *trying* to achieve this stance, however, Hillary was (at worst) a "bitch," and (at best) a "political interloper" in American political culture. While this shift in stance affected, and was affected by, Hillary's advocacy, this aspect of her rhetorical first ladyship becomes overshadowed in the literature about her reception by the press.

#### *The Theme of Image-Making and Image Restoration*

There is a general consensus that in the second half of the Clinton administration, the first lady adjusted her public image to combat the negative press coverage she was attracting. These adjustments were evident in everything from her appearance to her demeanor to her rhetoric. All of these efforts, it seems, were directed toward a larger image-restoration project for the first lady after a series of political gaffes, scandals, and

the health care reform failure. The image-restoration project was, in other words, an effort on behalf of Hillary and her press team to “calm the fears of those who wanted a more traditional First Lady” (Anderson, “Hillary Rodham Clinton as Madonna,” 5). At the same time, the first lady did not merely retreat into silence and obscurity. She continued to work on behalf of a myriad of causes which reflected concerns both national and international. Unfortunately, when studied as an effort in image-restoration, Hillary’s advocacy is not given close attention.

Several of the popular works that have considered Hillary’s efforts in image-restoration have concluded that these efforts were both sinister and disingenuous. Bay Buchanan’s indisputably partisan *The Extreme Makeover of Hillary (Rodham) Clinton* is the clearest, most unapologetic example of the inquiries into Hillary’s image-restoration, and provides a vocabulary for this theme through employing words like “evolutions,” “transformations,” and Buchanan’s signature word, “makeovers.” In this interpretation of Hillary’s advocacy, any shifts in her appearance, demeanor, and rhetoric were deliberate efforts geared toward an eventual presidential campaign.

Hillary Rodham Clinton is going to run for president as someone she is not. This talk of an evolving Hillary is part of an extreme makeover to get the old Hillary remolded and repackaged into a marketable political force for 2008. It involves her looks, her voice, her rhetoric, her attitude, her religion, and her politics. By the time Team Hillary is finished, their product will be kinder, more thoughtful, a person of faith, a politician with beliefs and values that reflect those of Middle America, and a leader tough enough to be the nation’s commander in chief in a time of war. Gone from public view will be the entitled elitist, the angry feminist, the shrill accuser, the environmental extremist, and the “New Age” socialist. The new Hillary won’t demean stay-at-home moms, demonize political opponents, or demand society be remolded. And the new persona will be dramatically more appealing and certainly more likable (8)

Though written with obvious disdain, this passage is demonstrative of the skepticism surrounding any perceivable inconsistencies in Hillary's person or behavior from the time that she was first lady to her post-White House political career.

Early impressions of Hillary's image support the view that her person and persona were unstable, flexible, and multi-layered. One communication study published in 1994 by Mary Ellen Brown relied on focus groups and interviewing to ascertain "middle-class attitudes toward Hillary Clinton's image" (Brown 255). Relying on a video compilation of news images of Hillary's activities to gauge reactions of the study subjects, the study focused on the coverage of the first lady throughout the first year of the first Clinton administration; specifically, "the Inauguration, the White House open house shortly thereafter, and health care reform, including Hillary Clinton's role in constructing, presenting, and defending the health care reform plan" (Brown 256).

The study yielded mixed impressions of Hillary among those interviewed. Some found, surprisingly, a "partnership" frame of the president and first lady to be "completely unproblematic" (Brown 261), while others were concerned about whether or not it was "right to appoint a relative of the president to an important policy position" (Brown 262). Notably, one interviewee expressed concern that, in order to avoid creating the image that she was "a particularly dynamic and different first lady," Hillary was "downplay[ing] her accomplishments" in the public image she was cultivating for the press and instead allowing her staff to construct a more "domestic" image for her (Brown 262, 266). "Although one could argue that the politics of image control means that Hillary Clinton *must* defer to other first ladies to show politeness and good breeding," Brown explains, [one interviewee] wants [Clinton's] image to create empowerment,

which, in such a news venue, the first lady refuses to do” (262). This refusal, Brown contends, contributes largely to the public’s inability to properly negotiate tensions between images of Hillary as a policy-shaper and Hillary as a more traditional first lady (267).

The tension between a perceived policy role and a traditional first lady stance is a recurring theme in other studies concerned with Hillary’s image. Betty Houchin Winfield offers a few reasons for this tension. One is the idealization of a “traditional upper-middle-class American woman in a supportive, nurturing female capacity” in the minds of both journalists and the public (Winfield 241). Another reason is the failure on the part of Hillary’s media team to “clarify her role, or as has been written, to ‘package her’” to the American public (Winfield 243). As a result, Hillary’s team sought to “downplay her controversial candor,” while other strategies included limiting press access to the first lady, stipulating strict guidelines for journalists reporting on the first lady, strategically scheduling television appearances, and allowing “visual and photo opportunities” to work in place of actual interviews and press releases (Winfield 243-44). In short, because “Clinton’s activities broke the traditional coverage patterns of previous first ladies” reporters were unsure how to report on her and her media team were unsure how to cast her (Winfield 246).

While one theme was the fluidity of Hillary’s image, and the problems this caused, another theme is her strategic efforts to gain control of her image. One way Hillary attempted to gain control of her image was through her refusal to grant interviews to programs like CBS’s *60 Minutes*, opting instead to give interviews to women’s magazines like *Elle*, which emphasized more traditionally feminine stories about fashion,

style, and mothering (Winfield 249). At the same time, Winfield notes that Hillary started writing a weekly newspaper column “in an effort to clarify herself and emulate Eleanor Roosevelt’s candor” (Winfield 247). A central focus of this column, she explains, was Hillary’s desire to explain her policy agenda (Winfield 247). Hence, Winfield concludes, these efforts were contradictory and generated confusion about Hillary’s public image.

The problem of Hillary’s “polysemous and contradictory” images suggested that the first lady’s image needed to be anchored in something concrete and consistent. Karrin Vasby Anderson has identified a “Madonna” persona that Hillary assumed during the second Clinton administration. The Madonna trope provided an opportunity to create a still-flexible, though more consistent image. As Madonna, Hillary could simultaneously admit guilt for her political failures, atone for those failures, and rise above those failures during the second Clinton administration (Anderson, “Hillary Clinton as Madonna,” 5).

Evidence of this trope can be found in various places. Hillary’s physical appearance changed during this time: “bold business suits gave way to pastel outfits” (Anderson, “Hillary Clinton as Madonna,” 6). Domestic policy initiatives were seemingly shelved, while the first lady (frequently accompanied by daughter Chelsea) traveled more, focusing her attention on larger international issues which primarily concerned women and children. Hillary’s best-selling *It Takes a Village: And Other Lessons Children Teach Us* was published by Simon & Schuster in 1996 and promoted in a national campaign that framed the first lady as a “stay-at-home mom whose life has been consumed with caring for her own child and the needs of other children,” rather than a “professional who cut her literary teeth writing legal briefs, articles, and opening statements” (Anderson, “Hillary Clinton as Madonna,” 7). In the summer of 1998, Hillary



toured the nation promoting her “Save America’s Treasures” campaign. Taking these steps, Hillary used her appearance and her advocacy as a strategy to outwardly acknowledge previous wrongdoing, to generally “placate her critics,” and to “promote a feminist message” through her rhetoric which focused on the needs and rights of women and children (Anderson, “Hillary Clinton as Madonna,” 7).

The literature on Hillary’s image-making is consistent in crafting a narrative of a politically savvy woman who, despite her training and experience, failed to strike the right chord with the media in the early years of her husband’s presidency and only gained success as the wounded, apologetic wife. Her active, unprecedented role in creating public policy combined with her desire for privacy made warm relations with the press difficult and contributed to her low approval ratings and the persistent question of “just who *is* Hillary Rodham Clinton?” Painfully aware of these failures, the first lady and her press office eventually “softened” and “feminized” her public image by no longer fashioning her as a lawyerly policy wonk, but rather as a mother, an international advocate for women and children, and her husband’s number one defender.

Despite providing insight into the critical role that the press plays in translating the first lady’s role to the public, the shortcomings of scholarship which emphasizes Hillary’s image-making casts her not as a rhetorical actor, but as a rhetorical (re)actor. In this view, her advocacy is primarily an instrument for image-restoration. Any accomplishments made are inextricably linked to image-restoration by way of bad press, rather than achieved in their own right. While the image-making literature focuses on a reactive first lady, another branch of the literature bypasses these concerns and instead

focuses on the ways that Hillary used the first lady position as a springboard to her own political candidacy.

*The Theme of Political Ambition*

In November 2000, Hillary's historic bid for a Senate seat from New York proved successful. In January 2001, she joined the ranks of ninety-nine other senators in a move that many spectators had called not only improbable, but categorically impossible. Her victory far exceeded expectations when the numbers were in: "at 55 to 43 percent, Hillary passed the ten-point threshold that these days constitutes a landslide and won, in raw numbers, more than 800,000 votes" against Republican Rick Lazio (Tomasky 283). This is, perhaps surprising since, as Janis Edwards succinctly put it,

Hillary Clinton's status as a sitting first lady complicated her Senate campaign and required a renovation to her wifely image aimed at voters who were inclined to see her as a fire-breathing dragon who had been overly ambitious in her political reach in the White House and her aspirations beyond. ("Traversing the Wife-Candidate Double-Bind" 173)

Consequently, a fourth theme which emerges from Hillary studies is political ambition by way of Hillary's Senate campaign.

A trend when studying Hillary's political candidacy is to couple her with Elizabeth Dole and to trace their concurrent shifts from political spouse to political candidate. Karrin Vasby Anderson's survey of the media surrounding their two campaigns, along with the rhetorical strategies employed by both in their campaign discourse, concludes that Elizabeth Dole faced more sexism in the press than did Hillary Rodham Clinton because themes of Hillary's "carpetbagging," questions of her qualifications, and concerns about her authenticity dominated media reports. Furthermore, questions about whether the Clintons would divorce, where they would live

in New York, what would become of Bill as a senator's husband, and whether or not Hillary was *really* a Yankees fan persisted in press reports (Anderson, "From Spouse to Candidate," 111-12). While Anderson notes how Hillary's campaign rhetoric avoided these subjects and focused on policy issues, the question of *how* Hillary framed policy issues in her campaign rhetoric goes unexplored.

Janis Edwards does not frame "political spouse" and "political candidate" as roles that Hillary transitioned to and from, but rather considers how Hillary (and Elizabeth Dole) simultaneously embodied the roles of "wife" and "candidate." As opposed to looking to the press coverage of the candidates alongside their campaign rhetoric, Edwards looks to the campaign films the two candidates initially used to announce their intentions. As rhetorical artifacts, these films offer a sense of one strategy for combating rhetorically constructed double-binds that limit women's political participation and leadership.

Edwards finds the displaying aspects of this medium to have been particularly useful for both candidates because it offered them the ability to generate femininity and intimacy in their personas. As she puts it, a

candidate-centered film, produced by and for a campaign, provides an opportunity for a candidate to control his or her image, in contrast to representations provided by other media-originated images circulated in print and on television and the Internet, representations which may play on stereotypes or be unflattering to the candidate. ("Traversing the Wife-Candidate Double-Bind" 171-72)

Edwards' findings "suggest that their films strategically highlight and affirm each woman's traditional femininity and embodiment of the 'social' political style, stemming from her identity as a political wife" ("Traversing the Wife-Candidate Double-Bind" 173).

In the case of Hillary Rodham Clinton, the campaign film *Hillary* drew from images of the candidate's childhood, adolescence, college years, and beyond to juxtapose policy with personality in a way that frames the candidate as a "woman, friend, mother – not so much the wife – who embodied the virtues of an American first lady as exemplar of femininity" "Traversing the Wife-Candidate Double-Bind" (176). "She is," Edwards reveals,

portrayed as warm, gracious, loving, and mothering, humanized by the recollection of her political passions as rooted in childhood experiences and her adult relationships with women, rather than through her political associations with her husband. ("Traversing the Wife-Candidate Double-Bind" 176)

By crafting this image, Edwards argues, Hillary was able to continue to employ a policy-driven, masculinized style in her rhetoric, while relying on the visual, feminine images portrayed in this film to soften and compliment that rhetoric.

While Hillary may have found success in negotiating the wife/candidate double-bind as a Congressional candidate, her 2008 presidential campaign proved to be a more difficult endeavor. James M. Schnoebelen, Diana B. Carlin, and Benjamin R. Warner argue that being first lady "entrapped" Hillary during her presidential bid. The authors are not concerned with Hillary's presidential "campaign artifacts or strategies as unsuccessful, ill-conceived, or ill-advised, but [argue instead] that the fundamental obstacle that was rooted in her past life as First Lady" (45). These obstacles were a combination of lingering problems with appropriately feminizing her person and her rhetoric, the ambiguity (and, the authors argue, liability) surrounding Bill Clinton's presence on the campaign trail, questions about the candidate's authenticity, perceived exaggerations of her record as first lady, and her overall inability to escape the role of "political wife," to which much of her political experience was inextricably linked. In

sum, the candidate's unsuccessful narrative was "that of a woman whose ambition was so blind that she could not see her husband's liabilities as a campaigner and her own set of experiences as an impediment to rather than a confirmation of her ability to lead" (64).

The fundamental question at the center of the studies of Hillary's political candidacies, in relation to her first lady experience, is to what extent being a political wife helped or hindered these candidacies. Whether in comparison to Elizabeth Dole or in her own right, Hillary, it seems, cannot *not* be assessed as a political wife when examined as a political candidate. What's more, as a political candidate, she walked the fine line of needing to continue to demonstrate the appropriate femininity necessary for successfully carrying out her first lady duties while also showing her own leadership capabilities and authenticity as a would-be politician. Problematically, these examinations fail to take into account how Hillary assumed another role – that of advocate – in her respective political campaigns and the extent to which this role may have helped to mediate issues related to her past as a lawyer and activist, and the complications arising from the undefined nature of the first lady role.

### **The Myths of "Hillary Studies" in Communication**

The generic narrative of Hillary Rodham Clinton's political and rhetorical activities, as well as the press about these activities, can be reduced to the following three overarching points:

First, Hillary Clinton was widely criticized as an inappropriate, radical first lady early on in Bill Clinton's first term. Second, Hillary Clinton made several attempts to rectify this perception and to make herself appear more feminine, and thus more conventional and acceptable. Third, Hillary Clinton was considered largely successful in transforming her public image and recapturing the traditional First Lady persona, accomplished largely through her use of communication and image restoration strategies. (Schnoebelen, Carlin, and Warner 50)

My overview of the literature echoes these points and highlights the assumptions underlying the narrative of Hillary's first ladyship and the role of rhetoric during her tenure. Consequently, these assumptions become quite consistent and clear.

First, a rigid separation between Hillary's first lady performance in the first Clinton administration and the second Clinton administration is consistently portrayed. While she is portrayed as policy-oriented and proactive during her husband's first term, the failure of health care reform is universally credited as the reason why she "retreated" during the second term. This retreat was temporary, however. Hillary re-emerged, even more popular and committed to the causes she had already been championing; presumably, concerns which primarily related to women and children. This advocacy, however, was consistently framed as a means to an end, whether it be the Clinton partnership, an effort to reroute negative media coverage, an attempt at image restoration, or channel for the exercise of political ambition.

Closely paralleling this first term/second term dichotomy are other dichotomies. Whether it is a "love her or hate her" dichotomy, a "traditional or non-traditional" dichotomy, a "political wife or political candidate" dichotomy, or questions of whether Hillary employs "masculine rhetoric or feminine rhetoric," scholars are preoccupied with observing the movement across these points to an extent that they have neglected the space in between and beyond these points. The reasoning behind these impulses is not difficult to understand. As Lisa Burns explains, by the time Hillary became first lady, the news

coverage of the first lady institution now reflected the juxtaposition of traditionalism and feminism in the gender debate, with reporters viewing some roles as falling within the boundaries of 'proper' first lady performance while others were framed as crossing such boundaries." (137-38)

Following the example of the press, communication scholars have generally assessed Hillary's rhetorical activities in terms of whether they adhere to or deviate from pre-existing structures related to gendered ideologies governing proper behavior for women. Hence, the various dichotomies related to Hillary's performance are the result of that adherence or deviation, which guide our assessments of her rhetoric.

Furthermore, the existing assessments have overwhelmingly focused on the negative reception of Hillary in the press. When it comes to the press, she is a "polarizer" and an "interloper," words that suggest she is always out of place. Such assessments are, too, episodic, often focusing on the moments which have been generally agreed upon as the low points starting with the 1992 presidential campaign and throughout Hillary's first ladyship. Or, we are left to study the "hate" that she generated: unflattering misogynistic portraits of the first lady resulting from her inability or refusal to properly perform femininity both bodily and rhetorically. Such work is invaluable instructive about the backlash that powerful women give way to, but can be as disheartening as the backlash itself when it dominates our scholarly conversations.

A final thread that can be commonly found in the study of Hillary's rhetorical first ladyship underscores a key purpose of this dissertation. What is perhaps the most underdeveloped point in Hillary's rhetorical career as first lady was highlighted by James Bennett of *The New York Times*. Writing in 1997, Bennett observed that

while the White House may lump her various causes under the anodyne rubric of "children's issues," Mrs. Clinton is still pursuing a far broader agenda of causes – including foreign development, immunization in the inner cities and expanding financial credit for women – than almost any predecessor in the undefined role of First Lady. (qtd. in Burns 144)

Widely characterized across the literature as reemerging in the second Clinton administration as a travelling “advocate for women and children,” Hillary’s rhetorical activities during this period have been reduced to their implications for these groups. While it is certainly not untrue that she engaged in advocacy for women and children across *both* Clinton terms, Bennett’s perceptive insight shows how this banner is far more complex than has been recognized. His observation functions as a call to unpack where, when, and how Hillary defined and pursued these causes rhetorically.

### **Conclusion**

These four trends – the first lady’s transformation between the two Clinton terms, the various double-binds through which we study her, the negative, even hostile feelings her first ladyship aroused in the public and the press, and the relegation of her work to advocacy for women and children – are closely related to the ways that historians, political scientists, and communication scholars have studied the first lady. As a political partner, as a media polarizer, as a first lady who engaged in image restoration, and as a political-wife-turned-political-candidate, Hillary Rodham Clinton has drawn ample attention from scholars across the disciplines, yet this attention has only partially, if at all, accounted for the ways that she has engaged in advocacy as a first lady.

The overwhelming focus on these subjects in the literature, while producing valuable insights into the progress made on the front of women’s political participation, underscores just how much work remains to be done in rhetorical studies to properly account for political advocacy of Hillary Rodham Clinton during her first lady years. As becomes evident from this reading of the literature, the emphasis has not primarily been on Hillary’s rhetoric, but rather on the rhetoric, images, and media *about* Hillary. In order



to refocus our attention to Hillary's advocacy as first lady by using her newspaper column "Talking It Over" as a case study, we must look to the rhetorical substance of this advocacy. I have laid groundwork for doing so by looking to the history of rhetorical advocacy by first ladies, the trajectory of Hillary's own ideological formations which informed her advocacy as a first lady, and articulating the existing lack of scholarship which assumes this perspective. In the following pages, I offer an intervention on the Hillary problem through a close reading of select "Talking It Over" columns in an effort to better understand how this column served as a resource for Hillary's national and global advocacy.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### “TALKING IT OVER” AS NATIONAL ADVOCACY

There is an expanding interdisciplinary tradition of reading diverse rhetorical forms, other than those considered traditional “autobiographies,” as autobiographical. For example, in her theoretical work on autobiography, Leigh Gilmore is concerned with avoiding “the terminal questions of genre and close delimitation” of autobiographical texts, asking instead: “Where is the autobiographical?” (184). Gilmore’s question resonates with the approach of the contributing authors to *Interpreting Women’s Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives*, who collectively chose “to speak of ‘narrative forms’ rather than the genre of autobiography” (Smith and Watson, “Introduction,” 11). As the ten contributors put it, “Women’s personal narratives embody and reflect the reality of difference and complexity and stress the centrality of gender to human life...[they] provide immediate, diverse, and rich sources of feminist revisions of knowledge” (263).

Taking up these ideas in their work on the rhetorical biographies of women leaders in the United States, Brenda DeVore Marshall and Molly A. Mayhead offer a series of analytical prompts which comprise the frame through which I closely read and analyze the inner-workings of key “Talking It Over” columns. Marshall and Mayhead draw from the work of Sidonie Smith to argue that women’s autobiographical writings have several overlapping functions. These are:

the intersection between “the politicization of the private and the personalization of the public” evident in women’s narratives; the description of U.S. politics the women provide in their writings; the ways in which the women’s personal stories craft arguments about their political ideologies; the strategies these women employ in navigating gendered double-binds of politics; and, the manner in which [women’s] discourse serves to encourage, instruct, and empower future women leaders. (2)

Unpacking this observation, I focus on how personal stories, narratives, and descriptions function as complimentary rhetorical strategies for Hillary Rodham Clinton to assume the role of advocate in her newspaper column. To do so, I argue that in “Talking It Over,” Hillary strategically uses personal stories to craft political critiques, to exercise political judgment, and to offer a model of democratic citizenship. Next, I argue that narratives work both instrumentally and constitutively as rhetorical devices intended to either advance or function as political arguments. Finally, I show how descriptions of both historic and contemporary situations work argumentatively as definitions or revisionist definitions of American politics which, in turn, amplify the positions Hillary advances.

### **Personal Stories**

According to Sidonie Smith, “autobiographical writing is always a gesture toward publicity, displaying before an impersonal public an individual’s interpretation of experience” (436). Similarly, as Carolyn Kay Steedman points out, stories function as “interpretations...about the places where we rework what has already happened to give current events meaning” (243). Building on these insights, personal stories in “Talking It Over” work in two complimentary ways which, in turn, assist Hillary in the navigation of expectations for personal disclosure and political judgment commonly found in opinion columns. On one hand, personal stories function as ethotic proofs for Hillary’s character and humanity, a point made important by the preexisting criticisms of her as being disingenuous and even manipulative as a political figure and speaker, as well as the fact that her advocacy on behalf of national health care was perceived to be a rhetorical failure. At the same time, personal stories work as ethotic proofs for Hillary’s capabilities as an informed and judicious advocate for political issues, which helps her to not only

more broadly recast her image as a political advocate, but also model democratic citizenship for her readers. So as to teach us about Hillary as an advocate, the following sections will use “snapshots” from “Talking It Over” to make distinctions between how personal stories can function as critiques, judgments, and examples for Hillary’s political positions.

*Personal Stories as Political Critique*

Before my daughter was born, I did everything I could think of to prepare for the arrival of my new baby. I asked the doctor hundreds of questions. I read every book I could get my hands on. And my husband and I sent to childbirth classes. Even so, I was in for some surprises. I remember lying in bed a few days after Chelsea’s birth, when I was still getting accustomed to breast-feeding. Suddenly, I noticed foam in her nose. Afraid that she was convulsing, I pushed every call button within reach. When the nurse arrived, she assured me that I was simply holding the baby at an awkward angle, making it difficult for her to swallow the milk she took in. That wasn’t the only time nurses came to my rescue during my stay at the hospital. They taught me to bathe and feed my daughter, and also gave me a chance to recover from the emotional and physical toll of a Caesarean section. (Clinton, September 30, 1995)

In “Talking It Over,” Hillary frequently relies on personal stories as entry points for introducing projects, policy, and legislation. These stories allow her to not only boost her credibility by drawing from her own experience to build identification with her readers and critics, but they also function as resources for her to demonstrate political knowledge and expertise through embodying the very ideals she is championing. For example, in the above passage from her September 30, 1995 column about health care, Hillary personalizes the topic of health insurance by anecdotally disclosing her own experiences as a new mother. She uses this experience to foreground a critique that while her own experience may not be unusual for women in countries like Australia, Germany, Japan, Ireland, and France, women in America today are often unable to receive this kind of assistance based on their insurance options (Clinton, September 30, 1995). It is her

experience of being *inexperienced* which serves as proof for a current critique of the health care options for new mothers, who too often, by her account, are denied the time and resources necessary for learning how to care for their newborn children. In her retelling of her past experience from the vantage point of scared and inexpert new mother, Hillary is not a first lady who is distanced from a subject she is arbitrarily championing. Rather her experience – her *own body* and that of her child – become evidence for an urgently articulated criticism that the American health care system is falling short. Her personal disclosure here lends credibility to her ability to argue intelligently about health care in America, while also allowing her to embody the very ideal she is championing.

In her June 25, 1996 column, Hillary similarly uses personal stories as a way to simultaneously boost her credibility and advance a political argument.

Taking care of and spending time with a loved one who is seriously ill is an emotionally wrenching and physically draining process. I know from my own experience. When my father fell ill just after we moved into the White House, I flew back to Little Rock and spent more than two weeks at his bedside. My father, mother, brothers and I spent hours reminiscing about the old days in our home on Wisner Street in Park Ridge, Ill. We laughed about our vacations to Pennsylvania and my brothers' childhood hijinks. We talked of Chelsea and our hopes for her. Although we didn't – and couldn't – say it in so many words, those weeks helped us strengthen our bonds of affection, respect and love. I'll always be grateful that I could be with my father before he died. (Clinton, June 25, 1996)

Here, she is speaking not as the first lady, but as a child whose own parent was seriously ill and who had recently died. Readers are invited to identify and sympathize with her and critics can hardly offer a counter-story to this experience, though they can certainly disagree with how this experience is translated politically. Because of her status as first lady, Hillary was able to spend time with her father before he died: “I was lucky because I didn't have to make a choice between family and work. I was no longer working as a

lawyer, and my husband was President. I was able to give my family all the time and attention they needed”. “The same,” she concludes, “should be true for all Americans” (Clinton, June 25, 1996).

Much like her September 30, 1995 column, Hillary’s interpretation relies on the disparity between her experience and the experiences of so many other Americans to work as proof for the necessity of the Family and Medical Leave Act. The Family and Medical Leave Act, which had become law three years earlier, stood in the face of challenges in the shape of skeptical business owners who believed workers might abuse this policy. Hillary’s position of privilege afforded her the ability to see her father with relative ease, and the same rights are provided to other Americans through the Family and Medical Leave Act. Her personal story gives new meaning and urgency to her political argument that all citizens should enjoy adequate medical coverage.

As arguments from example, personal stories in “Talking It Over” allow Hillary to disclose privately experienced moments, to transform this personal experience into a political necessity, and to then critique the disparities between her experience and that of other Americans to advance views, legislation, and policy. She does this inductively by revealing, interpreting, and giving new meaning to her own experiences as a way to exemplify and idealize, in these examples, the benefits of fair health care coverage and family and medical leave. Doing so not only amplifies her credibility as an advocate, but allows her to generate broad political critiques from particular cases and examples.

#### *Personal Stories as Political Judgment*

It was British sculptor Henry Moore’s “Draped Seated Woman” that first brought Bill and me together. After standing in line to register for law school classes one afternoon, we found ourselves in front of the Yale University Art Gallery, which had a Mark Rothko exhibit inside and works by Moore in the sculpture garden. A

labor dispute had closed the museum's doors, but Bill managed to get the two of us in by offering to pick up trash. This was our first date. (Clinton, November 4, 1998)

Hillary did not only use personal stories and experiences as evidence for the shortcomings of the American political system or as idealizations of how this system should be. Too, she used personal stories as evidence for her own political judgments, beliefs, and actions. A good example of how she does this can be found in her November 4, 1998 column about displaying art exhibits in the White House. After telling the story of how she and Bill Clinton first met, she writes: "I have always loved sculpture and, shortly after Bill's first inauguration, started thinking about bringing favorite American pieces to the White House," she concludes (Clinton, November 4, 1998). By the time of her writing in 1998, more than six million visitors to the White House had walked through the sculpture garden.

There is a political dimension to the selection of what art to display in the White House. As Hillary explains, the "idea for an outdoor sculpture garden that featured work by contemporary American artists" required the approval and support of bodies like the Committee for the Preservation of the White House and the White House Curators (Clinton, November 4, 1998). As their very title suggest, these committees are defined by their purposes of "preserving" and "curating" pieces in the White House. Proposing and implementing this sculpture garden revises what is and is not included in the telling of American political history through the artifacts displayed in the White House.

The best example of how the sculpture garden adjusts the narrative of American history told through White House artifacts is found further into the column: "I will never forget the clear November morning when Phil Minthorn, a Nez Perce Indian offered

traditional blessings before the opening of the Native American collection” (Clinton, November 4, 1998). The inclusion of Native American art alongside more contemporary art involves decision-making which Hillary explains and justifies through her personal story about her first date with Bill Clinton. Much like how Moore’s ‘Draped Seated Woman’ brought the Clintons together, the art in the White House brings together those who had previously been apart, whether it is offering Americans who tour the White House access to art they previously had not seen or bringing Native American history into the “only executive residence in the world that is regularly open to visitors without charge” (Clinton, January 20, 1998).

*Personal Stories as a Model for Citizenship*

In addition to using personal stories as evidence for the shortcomings of the American political system and as evidence for her own political judgments, beliefs, and actions within this system, Hillary also uses personal stories to model democratic citizenship. From her April 22, 1997 column on volunteerism to support the forthcoming Summit for America’s Future:

The first time I remember volunteering was in grade school, when my friends and I put on a neighborhood Olympics to raise money for a local charity. Not only did we have great fun working on the project, we felt a special sense of pride and accomplishment that we were doing something to help other people. My youth group at church also provided me with chances to do volunteer work. We performed chores in the community, visited nursing homes and held car washes for the church. But what I remember best is the baby sitting we did for the children of Mexican migrant workers who harvested fruits and vegetables in the fields outside of Chicago. These opportunities gave me an early taste of what volunteering can mean in one’s life. And over the years, I have seen what volunteering means in the life of our country. Whether through tutoring children, picking up litter on a highway or providing free legal counsel to a needy client, we all have a chance to help address problems in our communities and enjoy the satisfaction that comes from being good neighbors. (Clinton, April 22, 1997)



“What we may not realize is that, in the process, we are also strengthening our democracy,” she continues. “Democracy depends on citizenship. And citizenship depends on people voluntarily contributing their time and performing services that their communities and their country need” (Clinton, April 22 1997).

In this column, Hillary draws from her own childhood experiences as a way to demonstrate not only what volunteerism can do to build the character of the volunteer, but also the more widespread effects of volunteerism and service as the lifeblood of democracy. Moreover, the abstraction of “volunteerism” gains definition and specificity when she illustrates it through her own volunteerism through fundraising, performing chores, visiting the elderly, and holding car washes. Perhaps her most notable example is the anecdote of how she babysat the children of Mexican migrant workers in Chicago. This example offers a view of democracy which acknowledges the struggles of the immigrants who come to America to build a new life for their families, and demonstrates a commitment for the safety and security of children, regardless of who their parents are or where they come from. Much like her columns on health insurance, family and medical leave, and White House art, this column similarly relies on the proof of Hillary’s own experience to embody and substantiate the importance of her political arguments.

As these examples show, personal stories were a resource for Hillary Rodham Clinton in “Talking It Over.” Privately experienced past moments – whether at the bedside of her dying father or her first time breastfeeding her daughter – are displayed to the public as proofs for politically-charged endorsements of current legislation, as well as critiques of the failures within the American political system. As well, she uses the setting for a significant moment in her personal life, her first date, to describe the need for

art – a certain *kind* of art – to be displayed in the Executive Mansion. Finally, personal stories provide idealizations of democracy in action when her volunteerism as a young person exemplifies the duties and obligations of citizenship she calls for in the present day. While personal stories are more specifically related to the ethos of Hillary herself as an advocate, narratives in “Talking It Over” function as detailed expressions of the experiences of others which, in turn, function instrumentally and constitutively as proof for arguments and as arguments themselves.

### **Narratives**

Like personal stories, the presence and use of narrative within women’s autobiographical writing can be strategic and persuasive. As Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson argue, a woman’s spoken or written “life narrative cannot be reduced to or understood only as historical record” (*Reading* 10). Similarly, Martha Watson maintains that “narrating one’s life for an audience creates additional rhetorical challenges: one must select events from a lifetime and weave them into a coherent narrative; experiences that have no inherent meaning must be interpreted as part of meaningful pattern” (3-4).

In the most immediate sense, “Talking It Over” serves as a record of Hillary’s national advocacy on behalf of various subjects. The column places her in various places and spaces at the intersection of politics and policy over the eight years that her husband was president. As she notes in her first column, Hillary is concerned with writing about “the most immediate issues on people’s minds” (Clinton, July 23, 1995). National subjects were wide-ranging, including columns devoted to foster care and adoption, television programming, health insurance, breast cancer awareness, divorce, military personnel with Aids, gender stereotypes, legal aid for the poor, smoking, the single-sex

policy of NASA, education reform, vaccinations, volunteerism, literacy, welfare, voting, social security, gun control, mental illness, school violence, the minimum wage, genetic research, emerging technologies, housing vouchers, student loans, teen pregnancy, teacher pay, microcredit loans to new business owners, family planning, violence against women, and the rights of the disabled. The breadth and depth of the subjects she covers is both informative and impressive.

More than that, however, “Talking It Over” offered the first lady an opportunity to voice her opinion on these issues. Narrative devices are a key strategy through which she crafts her opinions and positions on these issues. Close attention to the narratives present in “Talking It Over” reveals that they work on two levels: First, narratives work descriptively as a form of “aesthetic rhetoric.” From this view, narrative works instrumentally to create a space for Hillary to then introduce and support a political view or action. While dramatic and powerful, the narratives are meaningless unless connected to some other purpose Hillary must then identify and explain. Second, narratives themselves function as political arguments, moral imperatives, and calls to action when the political purpose or goal is embedded within the narrative itself as an integral part of the story. Put even more simply, narratives either serve as evidence for political arguments or function as arguments themselves.

#### *Narrative as Aesthetic Rhetoric*

I met 16-year-old Lisa DelMauro the other day at Babies and Children’s Hospital in New York City. She was in a wheelchair, wrapped in bandages, having just undergone her 50<sup>th</sup> operation for a congenital birth defect known as spina bifida. Still, she was upbeat about her life and her future. Her treatments, she said, had enabled her to continue her schooling and read her favorite Nancy Drew novels. (Clinton, November 18, 1995)

In his work on narrative structure in fiction and film, Seymour Chatman termed the attempt of an author to “control or shape the reader’s (or audience’s) response as ‘aesthetic rhetoric’” (Jasinski 392; Chatman 189). Aesthetic rhetoric, in Chatman’s view, can be described in the following terms: “the end of aesthetic rhetoric is verisimilitude, the creation and maintenance and . . . the intensification of the illusion” that a narrative stirs in the mind of the reader (Chatman 189-190). As James Jasinski elaborates, the critic studying narrative form and devices pays close attention to how the narrative is a dramatic story with characters, settings, points of view, and a plot create a particular “world for the reader or audience” (392).

Narratives within “Talking It Over” work aesthetically to advance Hillary Rodham Clinton’s political arguments about many topics, including and especially health care. For example, Hillary begins her November 18, 1995 column with the above narrative about a teenager named Lisa: Lisa’s story is immediately followed by Joshua’s. “Joshua Lentin, age 6, had a different medical problem but a similar outlook: He was born with a serious heart condition and, after two heart transplants, is thrilled that he can now play roller hockey and dream about a career in the NHL” (Clinton, November 18, 1995). From here, Hillary describes other similar cases, including “a 19-month-old baby undergoing radiation treatment for abdominal cancer, a high school student who had just endured a painful bone marrow transplant, and a 4-year-old born with health problems brought on by his mother’s drug addiction” (Clinton, November 18, 1995).

The setting of this narrative is not the White House or a Congressional hearing about health care, but an actual hospital where the first lady met Lisa, Joshua, and several other sick children. The details are rich, particularly in the case of Hillary’s description of

Lisa. Readers do not just learn that the first lady “met” or “saw” a sick teenager. Rather, we learn specific details about Lisa’s appearance (she is in a wheelchair and wearing bandages), mood (upbeat in spite of her life-threatening illness), and interests (reading the popular Nancy Drew series of books) through the brief narrative Hillary provides of her interaction with Lisa.

In turn, this emotionally-charged narrative functions as an entry point into a broader argument about the “proposed cuts in Medicaid” which “threaten to compromise the care [children’s hospitals] give” (Clinton, November 18, 1995). According to Hillary, one in four children are covered through Medicaid and to cut funding would, ultimately, be detrimental to children like those she personally met. As she puts it, “children’s hospitals simply cannot exist without government support” (Clinton, November 18, 1995). To bolster this claim, she poses a number of rhetorical questions:

Why, then, as citizens or decision makers are we ready to say that only parents who can afford comprehensive insurance will be able to take care of their sick children? What about all the uninsured working parents who care just as much about their kids? What about the poor and low-income parents who, up until now, thought they could at least rely on Medicaid if their kids needed to see a doctor or to go the hospital? (Clinton, November 18, 1995)

To slash funding for Medicaid, she concludes, will help neither our children or our country. Most importantly, these abstract and unknown children become concrete and known when put with faces like that of Lisa, whose story works as evidence for the urgent need for continued federal support for children’s hospitals. Their personal stories retain a political meaning when viewed through the lens of how public policy can help or hinder their ability to receive the necessary medical treatment.

In addition to health care, another project Hillary advocated for as first lady was the Save America’s Treasures Program, which was a part of the larger White House

Millennium Council's initiatives. Before President Clinton formally announced it in his 1998 State of the Union address, Hillary Rodham Clinton previewed the "Save America's Treasures" initiative in her January 27, 1998 "Talking It Over" column. "Have you ever thought about what you'd grab first if your house were on fire?" Hillary asked her readers before reliving a famous White House fire.

As I walk through the East Room of the White House, I often remember First Lady Dolley Madison, who, when the British burned the White House in 1814, rolled up the original Declaration of Independence and Gilbert Stuart's portrait of George Washington, saving both of them for posterity. (Clinton, January 27, 1998)

"Unlike Dolley Madison," Hillary continues, "this country isn't faced with a fire that could destroy the precious symbols of our past – instead, our past is literally crumbling, chipping and disintegrating away in our libraries, museums, archives, historic sites and private holdings" (Clinton, January 27, 1998). Thus, the "Save America's Treasures" program officially "kicked off" in July 1998 when the president and first lady jointly appeared in front of the Smithsonian Institute (Clinton, June 30, 1999).

Several "Talking It Over" columns were devoted to the Save America's Treasures program, and relied heavily on aesthetic narratives in order to then make the case that various sites, landmarks, monuments, and artifacts need immediate attention, restoration, and revitalization, according to the first lady. As her January 27, 1998 column explains, some of the artifacts in desperate need of attention include "the Star Spangled Banner" ("the flag that flew over Fort McHenry and inspired Francis Scott Key to write the poem that would become our National Anthem"); founding documents like the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights faced total "deterioration" if not addressed soon; the Monroe School in Topeka, Kansas (designated landmark

representing Brown vs. Board of Education); and Thomas Edison's house, laboratory, and papers (Clinton, January 27, 1998).

One of the most memorable columns about the Save America's Treasures program, however, is Hillary's May 17, 2000 column about the restoration of Washington D.C.'s Howard Theater. Describing the deterioration of a theater which played host to music greats like Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald, Smoky Robinson, Sarah Vaughan, Gladys Knight, Sammy Davis Jr., Ray Charles, and B.B. King, Hillary writes:

Ironically, once the civil rights laws of the 1960s were passed, and African-Americans were allowed to attend Washington's downtown theaters, the audience began to fall away. The riots that followed the assassination of Dr. King struck the Shaw neighborhood particularly hard, forcing the theater's closing in 1970. In 1973, the building was added to the National Register of Historic Places. But by the 1980s, the neighborhood around the theater had disintegrated into one of the meanest parts of the city. The once-grand Howard stood dark. (Clinton, May 17, 2000)

This narrative casts the Howard Theater not as a place where musical culture was cultivated, but as the very embodiment of civil rights progress in America through its connection to the passage of civil rights laws. Yet, the irony is that this theater now stands crumbling and in great need of restoration. King's assassination, and the ensuing riots, are assigned causality for the theater's current state of dilapidation, and this in turn lends a sense of urgency to the restoration of the theater's restoration through the suggestion that, somehow, to restore the Howard Theater to its former glory is a way to right the wrong of past racism.

As Hillary goes on to explain, through the Save America's Treasures Program, the Howard Theater became the 500<sup>th</sup> site designated for funded revitalization. "When its restoration is complete," Hillary writes with satisfaction, "the Howard, with its two

movie theaters, live entertainment complex, restaurants and production center, will reflect the renaissance that is taking place across the city” (Clinton, May 17, 2000). More than that, however, the Howard comes to represent Hillary’s broader argument here and elsewhere throughout “Talking It Over” that the Save America’s Treasures program is a significant project. She puts this argument best in her May 26, 1999 column, where she argues that

historical preservation is not only about saving physical objects. It is also about saving our living heritage, our values and our culture so that we can pass them on to future generations. Just as Park Rangers are caretakers of our national parks, we are all caretakers of our history. (Clinton, May 26, 1999)

In the case of her May 17, 2000 column, the opening narrative of the rise, fall, and eventual rise again of the Howard Theater serves as proof for her argument that historical preservation is more than simply fixing up old buildings, and more broadly entails the preservation of American values and culture.

Perhaps the greatest American treasure is the White House itself. Though she only devotes a few columns to delineating the status of the White House and the need for restoration, these columns are instructive and important. Her January 20, 1998 column (notably, the column preceding the announcement of the Save America’s Treasures program) is the most important of these columns because it is where she recalls a devastating incident in the White House in order to justify and celebrate broader White House restoration projects. As she writes:

Sadly, last week, on one of the public tours, a woman pulled a can from her purse and sprayed reddish-brown paint on two busts and the wallpaper in the Blue Room. The Ceracchi busts, which were acquired by the White House in 1817, are of America Vespucci and Christopher Columbus. The good news is that, with the help of a National Gallery conservator, the paint is coming off. Unfortunately, we haven’t had as much luck with the wallpaper, and it remains to be seen whether



we will be able to replace only the damaged strips or will have to re-paper the entire room. (Clinton, January 20, 1998)

Yet, this incident underscores a more serious, far-reaching problem with the Blue Room:

When I moved here in 1993, I learned that the Blue Room needed attention. I should not have been surprised. Imagine the wear and tear of over a million visitors each year, members of the press with their heavy equipment, and the constant moving of furniture for state dinners. The draperies and upholstery in the room, last refurbished in 1972, had become soiled, worn and sun-damaged and needed to be replaced, as did the badly worn Chinese carpet. (Clinton, January 20, 1998)

This insider-view of the shocking incident in the Blue Room serves as a preface for a broader history of this part of the White House. While readers may envision, and expect that, the Executive Mansion will stand as a preserved and glorious symbol of American political history, this narrative tells a vividly different story of stained and frayed fabrics decorating the home of the president. So, over the next two years and with the help of the Committee for the Preservation of the White House (“a group of historians, curators, designers and concerned citizens”), the first lady oversaw the room’s redesign, along with various aesthetic adjustments in the East Room and the Red Room (Clinton, January 20, 1998). The narrative, which traces how the preexisting dilapidation of the White House culminated in the unfortunate incident in the Blue Room, clarifies the need for renovation and rationalizes a large-scale project to do so.

As these narratives about Lisa, the Howard Theater, and the White House show, narratives work aesthetically and instrumentally within “Talking It Over.” By beginning columns like these and others with richly described characterizations of people, places, and things, Hillary uses narratives as evidence to support her position on federal funding for hospitals, as justification for expensive specialized political projects like the “Save America’s Treasures” program, and as proof for the need to redesign the White House .

In other ways, however, Hillary uses narratives not as proofs for her arguments, but as arguments themselves.

*Narrative as Political Argumentation*

A Marine Corps sergeant I know of has a lot in common with Magic Johnson. Like Magic, he has tested positive for HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Like Magic, he has small children. And like Magic, he is still healthy and feels he has a lot to give to his career. But unlike the Los Angeles Lakers superstar, whose recent return to professional basketball after a four-year absence has been widely publicized, the Marine could be out of a job for good. (Clinton, February 13, 1996)

Chatman does not only view narratives having an aesthetic, and thus instrumental, rhetorical function. He also notes that narratives can have “ideological-rhetorical force” (198). This force works not just to describe what is there, but also works to constitute the subject(s) at hand in a particular, and perhaps even controversially situated ideological way. As Jasinski summarizes,

Whereas the instrumental function of a narrative can include efforts to solve problems, urge a thesis, or promote action, the idea of constitutive or ideological-rhetorical force refers to the way in which a narrative relates or positions itself with respect to a culture’s social world (its customs, traditions, values, shared beliefs, roles, institutions, memories, and language that become a type of “second” nature to the members of that culture. (398)

In other words, narratives which generate ideological-rhetorical force can either “reaffirm or perpetuate the status quo” or “challenge or subvert the reigning ideological beliefs and values” of a reader (398). Though narratives that work aesthetically and ideologically are by no means mutually exclusive, the distinction is useful for explaining how narratives can function rhetorically in “Talking It Over.”

One of the strongest examples of the ideological-rhetorical force of narratives can be found in Hillary’s February 13, 1996 column, where the above passage originates. In this column, Hillary drew an unusual parallel between famous athlete Magic Johnson and

a Marine Corps sergeant, both of whom had HIV, in order to draw attention to a pending piece of legislation which would dismiss military personnel with this disease. Though from separate (and, indeed, masculinized) realms of American culture – sports and the military – Hillary connects these two men through the commonalities they share: both are fathers of young children, both feel healthy, both have ambitions for the future, and most importantly, both are HIV positive.

“Thanks to a provision Congress inserted into the new defense budget,” Hillary transitions from this narrative, “service members who have tested positive for HIV must be discharged within six months, whether or not they can perform their jobs” (Clinton, February 13, 1996). The sergeant himself offered comments for the column. An Marine instructor with eleven years of service under his belt, the sergeant was “saddened and angry” to discover that he may very well lose “his home, his career and his dreams before he loses his health” because of his prognosis (Clinton, February 13, 1996). “I think it proves to everyone out there that people can live with the disease. I feel as healthy as the Marine next to me...Who’s to say they won’t find something to let me live another 10 years?” he wonders (Clinton, February 13, 1996).

Most notably, Hillary observes, many of those who would be affected negatively by this new provision have desk jobs and are nowhere near a combat position. Moreover, she argues, “discharging members of our Armed Forces who are trained and fit for duty would not only waste the government’s investment in them...[it would also be] disruptive to military programs in which they play an integral role” (Clinton, February 13, 1996). In the long run, she explains, military personnel with HIV/AIDS should be treated no differently than military personnel with those who “suffer from heart disease, asthma or

cancer”: “they can’t serve overseas, in combat or aboard ship[s] but are allowed to continue working in other jobs until they become too ill” (Clinton, February 13, 1996). The president, Hillary notes, is hard at work rejecting the inclusion of this provision into the national defense budget.

Though the narrative is couched within larger arguments about the nature of the defense budget, it functions ideologically in its own right as a political argument. To do so, the narrative relies entirely on an analogy between the experience of Magic Johnson and a previously unknown Marine Corps sergeant. This sergeant becomes known to readers through the first lady not having read about him or met him. By her account, she *knows* him and can, therefore, credibly compare him to Magic Johnson in a way which underscores the similarities of their experiences, as well as the divergences between what those experiences translate into: namely, the fact that despite both men having HIV, Magic Johnson can keep his (highly public and well paid) job in the entertainment industry and this Marine Corps sergeant may lost his job and, thus, the ability to continue supporting his family and serving our country. Even without the subsequent context in the column which elaborates on how this discrepancy came about, why it matters, and the role of public policy in fixing this discrepancy, this narrative suggests that the two men, and thus all citizens with HIV, should have the freedom to be treated fairly in their profession, no matter what it is, regardless of having HIV.

Similarly, the following passage from Hillary’s June 25, 1996 column shows how she begins by telling the story of young Melissa, the cancer patient whose parents had recently brought her to the White House to meet the president and first lady.

Not long after taking office, my husband came home from a jog early one morning to find Kenneth Weaver and his wife, Rosie, and their three children

waiting to introduce themselves. One daughter, Melissa, was in a wheelchair. Eleven years old and battling a rare form of cancer, she had come to Washington through Make-a-Wish foundation. As the President was getting ready to leave, Kenneth grabbed him by the arm. He wanted my husband to know that the first bill he had signed as President – the Family and Medical Leave Act – had made a huge difference in the Weaver family. “Mr. President, let me tell you something,” Kenneth said. “My little girl here is desperately ill. She’s probably not going to make it.” But because of the family leave law, he was able to take time off from work to be with Melissa without fear of losing his job. It was, he told the President, “the most important time I ever spent in my life.” Six days later Melissa died. (Clinton, June 25, 1996)

In this narrative, the scene of the story is the Oval Office where a little girl in a wheelchair is realizing her wish to meet the president of the United States. The president is friendly and accessible in this narrative: not seated behind a desk and dressed in a suit, but returning from a jog and close enough for Melissa’s father Kenneth to grab his arm emotionally and gratefully. The story reaches its dramatic peak when, rather than leave her readers filled with optimism and inspiration about how useful the Family and Medical Leave Act had been for Melissa’s family, we learn the devastating news that Melissa died not even a week after this meeting.

Hillary’s narrative about Melissa’s family dramatically creates a world where the Family and Medical Leave Act is necessary and important for families across the United States. At first, it might seem that this claim is noncontroversial. Yet, as the rest of the column unfolds, readers begin to see that this legislation faces challenges from opponents. As Hillary recounts, “its opponents worried that it would hurt businesses and be abused by workers” (Clinton, June 25, 1996). Yet, as she goes on to explain, the majority of people who rely on the Family and Medical Leave Act, like Melissa’s family, use it sparingly and appropriately. A recent study, she explains, has revealed that

as many as 3 million workers used the Family and Medical Leave Act during the 18 months covered in the study. Most took about 10 days off – far short of the 12-

week maximum. Eighty-four percent of the leave-takers returned to their same employers. And some 90 percent of businesses reported that complying with the law required little or no extra cost. In some cases, companies found that the policy actually helped them save money by reducing turnover and eliminating the expense of training new workers (Clinton, June 25, 1996)

Prioritizing the Family and Medical Leave Act proves not only to be *not* harmful, but actually beneficial for both workers and their places of employment. The story of Melissa, even without any further elaboration about the Family and Medical Leave Act, plausibly affirms this claim, because without this legislation, the alternative is that this young girl's father would have missed spending time with his daughter during her last days alive.

Likewise, Hillary's March 8, 2000 includes a narrative which, in and of itself, functions as an argument.

In the last two and a half years, gunmen ranging in age from 6 to 18 shot and killed 25 students and two teachers on school property, wounding another 65. No one will soon forget the scene of terrified teenagers fleeing Columbine High School last April as two classmates, who had spent months meticulously planning the carnage, killed 12 students and a beloved teacher. Or the image of middle-schoolers in Jonesboro, Ark., gunned down as they heeded a false fire alarm to leave their building. But these heinous crimes did not prepare Americans for the shooting last week of 6-year-old Kayla Rolland. Kayla was apparently shot in the chest by a 6-year-old classmate as they waited to go to the playground. Kayla's assailant had been staying with his uncle in what police suspect was a "crack house," where neighbors had reported nightly gunshots. It appears that the boy shot Kayla with a stolen gun he discovered stashed under some blankets in one of the bedrooms. (Clinton, March 8, 2000)

Kayla's story is a much-needed reminder of the failures of Congress to act swiftly and effectively, Hillary contends. A juvenile crime bill had almost passed eight months before (one which would have "mandated child safety locks, banned large ammunition clips, extended the Brady Law to violent juveniles, and required background checks for gun show sales") but it had failed and been replaced by a much "weaker bill" (Clinton, March

8, 2000). Even worse, “Republican leaders have refused to schedule a conference to discuss a compromise bill” (Clinton, March 8, 2000). In the face of such gross negligence on the part of Congressional Republicans, the first lady invites, indeed calls for, women and men alike to join her on Mother’s Day, May 14, 2000, to march in Washington in the Million Mom March when, she elaborates, “we will either celebrate the passage of sensible gun legislation, or protest Congressional inaction” (Clinton, March 8, 2000). “I hope you will join Donna [Dees-Thomases, the organizer of the march on the Mall in Washington, D.C.], the President and me, as we call on Congress to enact legislation that will take and keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children,” she concludes (Clinton, March 8, 2000).

The narrative Hillary begins this column with is powerful on its own, relying upon descriptions of schools as the scene of “terror” and “carnage” to foreground the latest story of a six-year-old girl who had died at the hands of a fellow classmate who is not just another child, but assumes the very real role of “assailant” in this narrative. The details of the narrative are crucial: the assailant was raised in an environment surrounded by drugs and gun violence. This environment, in turn, influenced the child to such an extent that he turns to violence himself, stealing a gun and shooting Kayla. The points of the narrative join to form various claims. Children surrounded by violence and the tools of violence are susceptible to enacting horrendous crimes on others, including other children, and that this is horrific and deadly. Still further, the implicit claim is that had the juvenile crime bill passed eight months earlier, Kayla might still be alive and this susceptibility is lessened. Finally, taking action through marching can serve a way to urge Congress to responsible action.

In the end, the use of narratives within “Talking It Over” serves Hillary well as a means to describe and defend various political choices she made as first lady. Narratives work aesthetically and, by extension, instrumentally as a way to introduce, clarify, and support policies and actions. Yet, narratives can also function anecdotally as arguments from example with similar purposes of supporting policies and actions like Medicaid, White House renovations, job discrimination against people who are HIV positive, family and medical leave, and gun violence in schools. As the next section explores, descriptions join narratives and personal stories as a key rhetorical strategy within “Talking It Over.”

### **Descriptions of U.S. Politics**

The way a speaker constructs arguments is intimately related to the way a speaker describes situational aspects related to those arguments. Kenneth Burke’s oft cited passage from *A Grammar of Motives* underscores the complexity of establishing a vocabulary that accounts for the persuasive nuances of any given subject.

In a rounded statement about motives, you must have some word that names the *act* (names what took place, in thought or deed), and another that names the *scene* (the background of the act, the situation in which it occurred); also, you must indicate what person or kind of person (*agent*) performed the act, what means or instruments he used (*agency*), and the *purpose*. Men may violently disagree about the purposes behind a given act, or about the character of the person who did it, or how he did it, or in what kind of situation he acted; or they may even insist upon totally different words to name the act itself. But be that as it may, any complete statement about motives will offer *some kind* of answers to these five questions: what was done (act), when or where it was done (scene), who did it (agent), how he did it (agency), and why (purpose). (992)

As Burke points out, the role of description in rhetoric is fundamental to understanding not just the motives ascribed to rhetoric, but also the inner-working and effects of that rhetoric.



In “Talking It Over,” Hillary Rodham Clinton offers descriptions of U.S. political history which enable her to then make broader arguments which are contingent on those descriptions. In two key ways, her descriptions work to establish definitively the purposes behind particular acts, events, or happenings; make connections between persons and these acts, events, or happenings; assign responsibility, blame, or praise to these persons; and simply, as Burke explains, establish “what goes with what, or what equals what or what is identified with what” (Rueckert 69). These areas are politically-motivated and related to both the past and the present; one attempts to write (and define) American political history, while the other more specifically attempts to write women as agents *into* this history. Put more succinctly, descriptions function as definitions and as revisions, both of which work as proofs for political arguments.

#### *Description as Definition*

Early in this century, the full participation in civic life that women now take for granted remained out of reach. Women were constrained in their rights to own property, testify in court, file a lawsuit and serve on a jury. By law, a woman’s husband was assumed to be the guardian of her children, and in many states, a married woman could not open a bank account. Most remarkably, women could not exercise the most fundamental symbol of citizenship – the right to vote. (Clinton, March 17, 1999)

As noted, “Talking It Over” functions as a record of Hillary’s advocacy on behalf of topics of concern nationally. At the same time, “Talking It Over” functions as a space for Hillary to recall and interpret American political history. Many of these descriptive recollections portray a particular view of American history as either living up to or failing to realize the promises of democracy. These choices for *what* is recalled, and *how* it is described, serve as proofs for a particular vision of citizenship and of America which takes further shape through the projects and initiatives Hillary is advocating on behalf of.

For example, in the above March 17, 1999 column, Hillary revisits the words of Susan B. Anthony a hundred years earlier to describe the political progress of women in all areas of life over the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Anthony's "bold vision of the future" is as follows: "The women of the 20<sup>th</sup> century will be the peer of man. In education, in art, in science, in literature; in the home, the church, the state; everywhere, she will be his acknowledged equal...All hail to the 20<sup>th</sup> century" (Clinton, March 17, 1999). From here, Hillary has described a history of America where this prophecy was realized through much difficulty, made manifest in her portrayal of the exclusion of women in civic life vis-à-vis the many rights they were denied through the law, custom, and practice; ultimately, a democratic failure at the time. It is a definition of the previous status of women of America which foregrounds Hillary's description of a current joint celebration of National Women's History Month and the Millennium Evenings, an initiative where the White House plays host to various receptions, concerts, and lectures. In this case, three feminist scholars appeared and gave talks at the White House: Alice Kessler-Harris, who gave a talk on Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Ida B. Wells; Nancy Cott, whose address historically traced the success of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the failure of the Equal Rights Amendment; and Ruth Simmons, who called for a day when women in America have "ownership of themselves" (Clinton, March 17, 1999).

Despite the progress of women in America over time, Hillary – and, the scholars at the conference – are arguing that women in America still do not enjoy full citizenship or ownership of their bodies and selves. Hillary says as much later in the column, as she mingles hope with cynicism to write that:

Every woman in this country who struggles to balance work and family, who has to decide whether the benefits of taking a promotion outweigh the costs to her

children, or who worries about how she'll pay her bills if she divorces her husband knows that our work is not done. But inspired by the memory of those who came before us, we can muster the courage to take the next step. After all, as Susan B. Anthony said in her final public speech, "Failure is impossible."  
(Clinton, March 17, 1999)

Her early descriptions of the status of women bolsters and parallels her present claim that women still face challenges when it comes to full and equal participation in American civic life, whether it be at the hands of agents like husbands, corporations, the law, or the state. A conference like the one held at the White House and featuring reminiscences of women like Anthony, Perkins Gilman, Wells, and the Equal Rights Amendment, thus, serves as a necessary and justifiable intervention for raising awareness about the continued status of women in America, both past and present.

Yet, not all of Hillary's descriptions of American politics are grounded in historical depictions. On the contrary, she also uses "Talking It Over," on occasion to define and critique President Clinton's political opponents. One of the best examples is her July 12, 2000 column, in which she draws a sharp contrast between the president's budget proposal and the response of House Republicans.

Last February, in the budget the President presented to Congress, he proposed a long-overdue, voluntary prescription drug benefit that would offer medicines to seniors at affordable prices. Last month, in the wake of the record economic numbers and a new study that showed a 10 percent increase in the cost of prescription drugs over the past year alone, the President strengthened his proposal. (Clinton, July 12, 2000)

"Meanwhile," she continues, "Republican House members, just waking up to the importance of this issue to the American people, offered their own package – a private insurance plan that even the private insurers refuse to support" (Clinton, July 12, 2000). She later refers to this counter-proposal as "nothing more than empty promises" and calls

for Congress to “meet its obligations to its constituents” (Clinton, July 12, 2000). The president’s plan, she contends, would meet these obligations and more: it would

increase payments to hospitals, teaching facilities, home health care agencies, and other providers. And it would include the Vice President’s proposal to take Medicare off-budget, so that, like Social Security, the taxes citizens pay for Medicare could never be diverted for tax cuts or other government spending. (Clinton, July 12, 2000)

“It’s time to make tough choices. It’s time to listen and to trust the American people to know what they want, what’s important, and what’s right,” she concludes (Clinton, July 12, 2000).

This sharply articulated critique makes a number of descriptive claims to create a clearly articulated binary where agents either support or fail to support the president’s budget proposal. First, she uses words like “long-overdue,” “voluntary,” “affordable,” and “obligation” to describe the president’s proposal, suggesting its relevance and urgency. At the same time, Republican members of the House of Representatives are, by her account, defined as “just waking up,” meaning they are unprepared to adequately or appropriately address this deficiency through their counter-proposal, which is critically depicted as “nothing more than empty promises.”

Of course, this description of the circumstances surrounding the president’s budget proposal may not be readily accepted by all readers due to the deliberately (and overtly) partisan tone Hillary takes. Though not always, Hillary frequently uses “Talking It Over” as a resource for directly attacking Congress as a whole and Republicans in particular. This example shows the ways that she infused ongoing controversies with her opinions through the descriptive choices she made in relaying this information to readers.

Whether identifying the gaps between American ideals and the opportunities for women to reach those ideals or describing the shortcomings of Congressional decision-making, the first lady uses her column on several occasions to criticize America and Americans for not fulfilling the promises of democracy, as she defines them. Furthermore, she offers instruction for how these promises could be fulfilled by citing political initiatives and policy as ways to intervene in cases where individuals are denied various freedoms and opportunities. As these examples show, “Talking It Over” is a place for Hillary to voice these criticisms through descriptively ascertaining practices and policies which are problematic and countering those with other, more suitable and effective practices and policies.

#### *Description as Revision*

It was Rosalynn Carter who, in 1979, first initiated the effort to establish a permanent endowment for the White House and Barbara Bush who, in 1990, created the current fund with its goal of raising \$25 million. I inherited that responsibility, and I’m proud to say that, with the help of many wonderful people, we not only have met but have now exceeded that goal. (Clinton, January 20, 1998)

As Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson explain, “autobiography has been employed by many women writers to write themselves into history” (“Introduction,” 5). Martha Watson explains this even further, writing that the history a woman writes for/about herself “as a whole must justify the telling: the author must demonstrate, either explicitly or implicitly, that her life has sufficient meaning and importance to warrant being recorded and being read” (4). In rhetorical scholarship, Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca explain how the mere *presence* of something in discourse functions argumentatively. They write that “by the very act of selecting certain elements and

presenting them to the audience, the importance and pertinence to the discussion are implied” (116).

In this case, it is Hillary’s process of “making present” other women in American political history through the very act of writing them into this history and implying the significance of their place. And, in the process, she writes *herself* with/in this history not as a spectator, but as an active participant, a revisionist move made important by the traditional absence of women in the telling of American history, as well as the notable absence of first ladies within this history. Though she pays tribute at different times to important American women like Rosa Parks, Elizabeth Glaser, and Billie Jean King, Hillary uses her column as a resource to engage in a significant project dedicated to more fully including other first ladies alongside other women within American history.

In her January 20, 1998 column on her White House restoration project, for instance, she places herself within a tradition of other first ladies like Carter and Bush who had similarly cared for the White House. These details are not insignificant. Generally speaking, Jacqueline Kennedy is primarily credited for her work on restoring the White House; yet, Hillary reminds her readers that there is a broader history of first ladies advocating on behalf of spaces and places. More importantly, White House restoration takes on a new meaning when it is not characterized as simply a project, but rather is defined as the *responsibility* of the first lady. While her role is historically undefined, this reading of history – of first lady history – defines the first lady as the responsible caretaker for the Executive Mansion.

Elsewhere in “Talking It Over,” Hillary gives a more in-depth treatment to other first ladies who she admires and finds to be deserving of fuller inclusion in American

history: Lady Bird Johnson and Eleanor Roosevelt. On March 19, 1996, she devoted an entire column to outlining the contributions of Lady Bird Johnson during her first lady tenure. Hillary vividly describes the legacy of Johnson's beautification work: "every time I see daffodils on the parkways, I think of Mrs. Johnson. Whenever I see cherry trees blossoming along the Potomac River or tulips dotting the monument grounds, I think of Mrs. Johnson too..." (Clinton, March 19, 1996). "Beautification" was, Hillary explains, Lady Bird Johnson's "special cause," and this cause was "not just about gardening and landscaping. Conservation, city planning, waste management and urban renewal were all part of her effort to encourage Americans to make their environment more pleasing to the eye and to the spirit" (Clinton, March 19, 1996). Highlighting the former first lady's extensive travel and speechmaking on behalf of beautification, Hillary quotes her as saying, "I hoped this would be a rippling wave – all this feeling and talk and work about enhancing the environment – that it would spread out across the land. Raising the level of awareness was most important" (Clinton, March 19, 1996).

In this description, Johnson's contributions are interpreted as having had a politically significant impact not only in their historic context, but also in the present day. "Beautification" is defined not merely as a cause concerned with aesthetics, but as having to do with concrete public projects: conservation, city planning, waste, and urbanization. What's more, Johnson's advocacy led to meaningful legislation – Lady Bird's Bill, or the federal highway beautification bill – which "focused on cleaning up junkyards and removing billboards along highways" (Clinton, March 19, 1996). This is a case where a past first lady's advocacy raised awareness to the extent that it directly impacted public policy. By this account, it is not only conceivable for first ladies to advocate on behalf of

politically-charged topics, but it is acceptable and beneficial for their influence to (successfully) carry over into actual policy and legislation.

Besides Lady Bird Johnson, no other first lady except Eleanor Roosevelt left so indelible a mark on American political history. Hillary wrote about Roosevelt several times, but the richest of these columns is June 21, 2000. In this column, Hillary argues for the inclusion of Val-Kill in the “Save America’s Treasures” program. She describes Hyde Park vividly and, simultaneously, justifies its need to be preserved through this description:

To walk through Val-Kill is to take a step back into Eleanor Roosevelt’s life. The furnishings reflect her personality – jelly jars side by side with priceless family heirlooms. Photographs depict a steady stream of visitors, from the 150 “neglected and abandoned boys” of the nearby Wilwyck School, to Winston Churchill, Marian Anderson, Jawaharlal Nehru and John Kennedy, who arrived in 1960 seeking her support for his presidential run... Val-Kill Cottage was the place that allowed Mrs. Roosevelt to live and work on her own terms, offering her the independence she needed to champion her beliefs and articulate her ideas. It was at Val-Kill that, as the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, she drafted large portions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and wrote many of her daily “My Day” columns. (Clinton, June 21, 2000)

Hillary writes that of all the projects included in Save America’s Treasures, restoring Val-Kill is “perhaps closest to [her] heart” because, among other things, it is “the first site dedicated solely to a First Lady” (Clinton, June 21, 2000).

It is here most clearly that readers see Hillary’s belief that first ladies engage in meaningful advocacy and deserve to be included in American history (indeed, in global history in the case of Roosevelt). After all, she writes, “imagine the loss to history – the loss to our generation and generations to come – if Val-Kill had been replaced by a strip mall, or Mrs. Roosevelt’s letters and papers had disappeared” (Clinton, June 21, 2000). While other historic artifacts like the Declaration of Independence, Old Glory, and the



Howard Theater are worthy of restoration in other columns, Hillary elevates the home of another first lady to the position of “American treasure” because, in her estimation, it is a symbol of the idea that first ladies – that *women* – can live and work on their own terms. Her description of Val-Kill creates in it a symbol of these terms.

### **Conclusion**

This reading of the “Talking It Over” columns where Hillary Rodham Clinton assumes the role of advocate when crafting and promoting arguments about national topics has attempted to identify and unpack the ways that three key rhetorical strategies common to autobiographical discourse – personal stories, narratives, and descriptions – can work simultaneously to advance these goals. Personal stories which might otherwise have a meaning that is only relevant to the author can take on a new and political meaning when used to introduce and foreground policy, as examples like Hillary’s experience as a new mother as the daughter of a dying parent demonstrate. Though she does share personal stories often, Hillary even more frequently relies of the experiences of others, from the job discrimination facing military personnel with HIV to the unspeakable horrors facing victims of school violence, to either serve as evidence for her political positions or to embody those positions through the very act of creating and telling a narrative. Finally, descriptions serve Hillary well as resources for not only writing particular versions of American history, but also for revising these versions to more fully include women.

Though significant in their own right, these rhetorical accomplishments in “Talking It Over” become even more compelling when studied on a global scale. That a first lady – or any political figure for that matter – engages in advocacy in her home

nation may, on its face, seem noncontroversial in modern times (though it is certainly not). Yet, the idea that an American first lady would claim, explicitly or implicitly, the ability to expertly speak about the history and politics of other nations is an even more uncommon practice. With few exceptions, like the precedents of Eleanor Roosevelt's human rights work and Rosalynn Carter's Latin American speaking tour, as well as the most recent examples of Laura Bush and Michelle Obama, it has historically been unusual for first ladies to take it upon themselves to, or feel prepared to, engage in global advocacy. "Talking It Over," thus, also represents a first lady's rhetorical foray into the world of global advocacy. The next chapter traces how this foray takes shape and form.

## CHAPTER SIX

### “TALKING IT OVER” AS GLOBAL ADVOCACY

While the previous chapter establishes and unpacks how “Talking It Over” functioned as a rhetorical space for Hillary Rodham Clinton to advocate on behalf of various national causes, the column also provides a rich and untapped record of the global advocacy of a United States first lady. Though Hillary Rodham Clinton was certainly not the first or only first lady to travel and speak abroad (others including Eleanor Roosevelt, Jacqueline Kennedy, Pat Nixon, Rosalynn Carter, and Nancy Reagan had previously done so), “Talking It Over” underscores the breadth and depth of Clinton’s international travel, political savvy, and rhetorical acumen during a very active period in her political career. In sum, though forty-two columns of the total number of two-hundred and ninety-one are definitively concerned with global topics, the quantity of columns should not diminish their significance in providing an American first lady with the opportunity to define and comment on various issues across the globe.

Like in her columns about national topics, Clinton employs personal stories, narratives, and descriptions as strategies which advance her political positions on global issues. In an effort to better understand how first ladies can assume the role of advocate outside of their national sphere of influence, this chapter will map out those similarities and differences. First, I consider how the use of personal stories works to create and refine the identity of global advocate for Hillary Rodham Clinton, who used her column to define, demonstrate, and testify to her advocacy across the world. Next, I explore how Hillary strategically crafts narratives designed to cast her in the role of a significant global advocate committed to promoting democratic ideals abroad. Before offering some

conclusions, I study how descriptions of international politics, events, and histories allow Hillary Rodham Clinton to both write the history of other nations through the lens of their democratic practices and progress and to write women *into* this history of democratic practices and progress.

### **Personal Stories**

At times, over the past week, as I travelled with my family in Vietnam, I was overcome with emotion. Thirty years ago, when our countries were at war, I never could have imagined I'd see Vietnamese and Americans working side by side at an excavation site, searching for the remains of an American pilot. With us at the site were the pilot's two sons, looking on and hoping that, after all these years, they would finally bring their father home. It is a moment I will never forget. I will also never forget the welcome that the Vietnamese people gave us when we arrived, stopping their bicycles and mopeds, smiling and waving as we passed by. We can never erase the past – nor will we completely erase the pain felt by so many men and women on both sides. But we can strive together to make a brighter future for all the people of Vietnam. (Clinton, November 22, 2000)

As noted in the previous chapter about Hillary Rodham Clinton's national advocacy, personal stories work on multiple levels in "Talking It Over" to lend credibility and authority to Hillary as a rhetor. Personal stories afford her the ability to self-disclose in strategically persuasive ways. Too, personal stories help to explain and justify political decision-making to readers who may find such decisions to be unusual or even controversial. In the columns where Hillary engages in global advocacy, however, personal stories have an additional purpose. Personal stories help to introduce Hillary not as a political spouse, but as an advocate for international audiences who can testify about the progress she personally witnesses and participates in when travelling to other nations. This eye-witness testimony and participation in these political events, in turn, helps her to advance political positions about various issues.

### *Personal Stories as Testimony*

In her global columns, Hillary's personal stories function as eye-witness testimony, like in her above November 22, 2000 column about a family trip to Vietnam (indeed, one of the last international trip taken by the Clintons during Bill Clinton's presidency). In this column, her personal story testifies in the first person to the possibility for U.S./Vietnamese relations to be strengthened in spite of a history of conflict. Through her story, readers learn that on this trip, she has witnessed Americans and Vietnamese not only working side by side toward a shared goal: in fact, this goal is the recovery of the remains of a lost American pilot who had fought in the Vietnam War. The fact that these two groups are working together for this purpose signifies the progress made toward achieving peace.

Furthermore, a crucial part of the story is the warm welcome Hillary and her husband received there. She is not just looking on as a spectator. Rather, she writes herself (and the president) into the story of this peace by using phrases like "I never could have imagined that I'd see Vietnamese and Americans working side by side at an excavation site, searching for the remains of an American pilot" and "it is a moment I will never forget" to set the scene. Writing in the first person, she takes a center role in the story, for her presence there and the reception to this presence bolsters the claim that U.S./Vietnamese relations not only can be strengthened, but *are* being strengthened. Binaries like "us" and "them" are replaced by "*we* can never erase the past...but *we* can strive together" (Clinton, November 22, 2000). "We" refers not just to Hillary, the president, the Americans, and the Vietnamese in this story, but *all* Americans and Vietnamese.

Yet, not all of Hillary's columns about global advocacy were set on foreign soil. Though it contained advocacy on behalf of a more globalized topic, Hillary's September 3, 1996 column was set at the White House, where she had recently met with Israeli and Arab teenagers who had been attending a camp together sponsored by a program called Seeds of Peace, which was founded by former journalist John Wallach after the World Trade Center bombing. Seeds of Peace brought 170 teenagers to the United States multiple times; first, in September 1993 to see Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin sign the peace accord, and again three years later at the time of Hillary's September 1996 column. The program, she explains, had started in 1993 and "brings together boys and girls from Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Qatar, Tunisia and Kuwait who show potential for leadership and diplomacy" (Clinton, September 3, 1996). Its purpose is multifaceted, yet clearly defined:

Seeds of Peace helps them leave the past behind and forge a vision for a peaceful future. During three weeks at camp, they share bunks and meals, play sports together and participate in other traditional camp activities. In the evenings, they hold group discussions about politics and their daily lives. Along the way, they learn the art of conflict negotiation and become more skilled at negotiating agreements. They learn empathy, respect and how to agree and disagree about topics as sensitive as who should rule Jerusalem. They also learn how to listen, even when they don't like what they hear. (Clinton, September 3, 1996)

By Hillary's account, the program is necessary and successful for fostering peace in the Middle East because it generates concord through team-building and promotes empathy, respect, and civility even amongst disagreement.

Yet, Hillary does not merely describe and promote the program, share its history, and comment on its uniqueness, necessity, and success. She also shares her private conversations with the teenagers themselves, whose stories become hers to tell the world and evidence that peace and diplomacy is possible. Lina, Yehoyada, and Sara are three

teenagers Hillary met with who discussed with her their experiences with Seeds of Peace. Yehoyada, an Israeli boy, told Hillary that the signing of the peace accord reflected his camp experience: “It was like they put into practice what we did at camp. We had the feeling that we were showing them the way” (Clinton, September 3, 1996). There were tangible results, too. Jordanian teenager Sara returned home to lead a seminar on the Holocaust to “help educate Arab youngsters about the experience of Jews in World War II,” while Yehoyada and a Palestinian boy named Laith had forged a lasting friendship, visiting the grave of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin together and calling each other during recent bus bombings in Jerusalem (Clinton, September 3, 1996). The Seeds of Peace is just one avenue to reaching harmony amongst the discordance of places like the Middle East, and “Talking It Over” documents how programs like this can help us in “overcoming stereotypes, bridging historical divides and learning to live in peace” (Clinton, September 3, 1996).

In the end, personal stories assist Hillary as she advocates on behalf of positions and programs which may or may not be supported by her readers. As these examples demonstrate, Hillary used personal stories as testimony which, in turn, served as evidence for her to articulate topics ranging from the possibility for relations between the United States and Vietnam to be strengthened to the hope that one day, the seeds of peace planted in the minds of children will grow until the Middle East is conflict-free. In her stories, Hillary herself is not just a witness to these possibilities: she is an integral part of translating these possibilities into realities.

## Narratives

Though Hillary discusses a seemingly endless supply of topics in her national columns, the combination of her high-profile preexisting work with health care reform and her consistent attentiveness to health care issues within “Talking It Over” establishes clearly that this will be the issue most associated with her advocacy in the United States. Yet, the combination of a limited number of global columns and several recurring topics within these columns reveals a consistent and particular purpose within Hillary’s column. Narratives bring this purpose into sharp focus. This purpose is the mapping of a diplomatic legacy abroad, particularly in terms of Bosnia, Northern Ireland, and Beijing. Narratives, both aesthetically and constitutively, are an integral strategy for this mapping, which makes visible Hillary’s advocacy abroad and casts her as a significant international political figure.

### *Narrative as Aesthetic Rhetoric*

For the past few months, these children have been writing down their thoughts and feelings in journals, poems and letters to Bosnian pen pals at a school in Tuzla. Most of them talk about how sad and how frightening it was when their father or mother had to leave the family to go to a place where tens of thousands of people had died in war. “For the first time in my life, I felt pure fear,” an eloquent student named Deanna Brauer wrote. “I couldn’t get past my anxiety.” Then, she and her classmates began reading letters from their Bosnian counterparts – letters describing what life is like when water and food run out, snipers are shooting around the clock and you have to flee your home and live in a bomb shelter for weeks at a time. (Clinton, March 26, 1996)

Hillary devotes a number of columns to the political turmoil happening in Bosnia.

From *Living History*:

In the former Yugoslavia, Bosnian Serbs were besieging the Muslim town of Srebrenica in a frenzy of “ethnic cleansing”...the news media were sending back horrific pictures of civilian massacres and emaciated prisoners, reminiscent of the Nazi atrocities in Europe. (169)



Several times, Hillary, the president, and Chelsea Clinton, travelled to Bosnia to represent America, and “Talking It Over” records and interprets these visits. Hillary’s March 26, 1996 column details her visit to Bosnia to meet with the troops through narrative devices which function aesthetically to generate a dramatic scene designed to simultaneously create a particular world for the reader and create a space for her to advance her arguments. She writes of travelling by helicopter to visit the soldiers at Camp Bedrock. While there, she struggled to imagine what life is like for the American men and women who have committed their life to peace efforts in the former Yugoslavia. She then recounts a related trip which took place the day before she arrived in Bosnia to visit seventh-graders at Baumholder Army Base high school in Germany (Clinton, March 26, 1996).

As the opening passage explains, the children Hillary has met are those of deployed soldiers in Bosnia. Her narrative relies on an analogy between the feelings and experiences of the children of soldiers and the feelings and experiences of Bosnian children. Both sets of children experience daily “sadness,” “fear,” and “anxiety,” whether it is the product of their parents serving in the military or the possibility that food and water will run out, that a stray bullet will take their life, or that they are physically displaced from their homes. Though their situations are different, the common thread is how the conflict can similarly affect the lives of children.

This narrative serves as evidence for Hillary’s conclusion that the United States is committed to Bosnia. As she continues in this column,

As difficult as the deployment is for American service members and their families, visiting the outposts in Bosnia leaves no doubt that their sacrifices are helping restore peace and build bridges between people. In Bosnia, our military power is enhancing our interests and upholding our moral values. Our military –

made up of men and women of all races, creeds and ethnic backgrounds – is itself an example for Bosnia of how people of different cultures can work together on a common enterprise. (Clinton, March 26, 1996)

While the military is certainly present in Bosnia and while Hillary can claim credibly that American service members and their families are making sacrifices, her claim that this presence and these sacrifices automatically translate into the restoration of peace and the building of bridges between people needs support. Her dramatic narrative about American and Bosnian children exchanging letters serves as proof for her claim that common enterprises can prevail over cultural differences.

In addition to detailing the commitment of the United States to ongoing relief efforts in Bosnia, Hillary writes a great deal about the relationship between the Clinton administration and Northern Ireland in “Talking It Over.” As with Bosnia, Hillary foregrounds the decades of conflict in Ireland that had been long at play when Bill Clinton assumed the presidency in her memoirs. “No American President has ever become involved in mediating the Irish Troubles,” Hillary writes in *Living History*, “but Bill was determined to help work toward a solution” (320). Continuing, she writes of the steadfast belief of many in the Irish government who “argued that Bill could play a role in creating an environment conducive to peace negotiations” (321).

According to “Talking It Over,” several trips to Ireland helped Bill *and* Hillary Clinton to facilitate peaceful negotiations. The consistent theme of the North Ireland columns is the need for peace to be found between divided Protestants and Catholics. Hillary’s December 9, 1995 “Talking It Over” is the first of her columns to make a connection between the United States and foreign aid to Ireland during this tumultuous period in history. She begins by relaying the story of Joyce McCartan, whose son Gary

had been violently shot to death by terrorists just shy of his eighteen birthday in his home in Belfast. Upon meeting Joyce in Belfast, Hillary writes that

Joyce refused to give in to bitterness. After Gary's death in 1987, she founded the Women's Information Drop-In Centre in a poor neighborhood in Belfast. She continues to work for peace throughout Northern Ireland, bringing Catholic and Protestant women together to share in their grief and to find ways to break the cycle of violence in their communities. (Clinton, December 9, 1995)

With other women in this organization, Joyce was continuing to creatively solve the problems which resulted from the violence, including poverty, prejudice, limited education for children, joblessness, and overall hopelessness (Clinton, December 9, 1995).

The narrative does not stop here, however. Nearly two years later, on November 4, 1997, Hillary revisits the story of Joyce, who had sadly passed away not long after the original column where readers learned about her story. In the 1997 column, Hillary makes the direct move from observer and commentator to actual advocate. She details her trip back to Northern Ireland and tells how in her travels, she met with top leaders and regular civilians, many of whom were inspiring women from opposing ideological standpoints who joined together to fight the "deep-rooted causes of violence –poverty, limited education, unemployment" (Clinton, November 4, 1997). Hillary's trip culminated when she delivered the Joyce McCartan Memorial lecture at the University of Ulster, where she interpreted, synthesized, and shared the experiences of those she had met with by assuming the role of mediator through her speechmaking. As she put it in the speech, the "issues that matter most to families – how we care for and protect our children – are the issues that unite us all" (Clinton, November 4, 1997).

The narrative works on multiple levels. First, the violent way that Gary died is offered up in direct contrast with the peaceful way that his mother Joyce translated her grief into an effort to end the unnecessary conflict and killing. Yet, at the same time, Joyce's example serves as a model for a civilized and productive response. Women like Joyce, Hillary continues, are

not high-level diplomats or professional negotiators. Nor are they elected officials. But it is clear that there would be far less hope for Northern Ireland if women like Joyce had not worked tirelessly among their friends and neighbors to knock down barriers, overcome suspicions, and defy history. (Clinton, December 9, 1995)

Joyce's founding of the Women's Information Drop-In Centre, particularly when taken alongside the dramatic story of how this organization came about to begin with, is a tangible manifestation of the necessity for (and possibilities for) people – for *women* – to work together to, as Hillary puts it, “knock down barriers, overcome suspicions, and defy history.”

As the examples of these Bosnia and Ireland columns show, narratives in the global columns can work aesthetically and, by extension, instrumentally to serve as evidence and proofs for political theses and actions. Stories about American children exchanging letters with Bosnian children or about an Irish mother who channels her grief into creating a peaceful organization bolster consequent arguments about not only the need for peace to prevail, but for the actual plausibility for peace to prevail. After all, if children whose parents are separated from their parents can appreciate the struggles of their Bosnian counterparts or if an Irish-Catholic mother can work alongside Protestant women when her own son was killed by Protestants, can others not follow these examples?

### *Narrative as Political Argumentation*

As with the nationally-focused “Talking It Over” columns which use narrative as a strategy for generating ideological-rhetorical force to constitute subjects in particular ways for argumentative purposes, several of Hillary’s global columns rely on narrative devices to advance her political positions. As a close reading of several of these columns shows, a common, overarching theme prevails: the centrality of the Clintons in facilitating peace through the promotion of democratic ideals. Two columns, one about Northern Ireland and one about Hillary’s speech in Beijing at the U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women show how this works.

In September 1998, the Clintons returned to Ireland, where Hillary describes Bill Clinton’s presence “as a tribute to the courage and determination of the people of Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic who voted to make the Good Friday peace agreement possible” (Clinton, September 2, 1998). Likewise, the president’s presence was also indicative of “his support for the rapid implementation of the agreement and [demonstrate] that the United States will continue to be deeply involved in supporting the peace process and economic development both in the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland” (Clinton, September 2, 1998).

The column does not rest here. Hillary makes an important move in how she narrates her own involvement in the transition.

While in Northern Ireland, I will have the opportunity to announce the creation of a different kind of partnership – smaller but, in many ways, just as important to the region. It’s a partnership designed to bring the children of Belfast one of the fundamentals of childhood – a safe place to play. (Clinton, September 2, 1998)

This partnership comes in the form of PlayBoard, “a group based in Northern Ireland and dedicated to improving the quality of children’s lives by providing opportunities to play”

joining together with KaBOOM!, “a \$2.3 million non-profit corporation based in Washington D.C., that brings individuals, organizations and businesses together to build safe and acceptable playgrounds in some of this country’s toughest neighborhoods” (Clinton, September 2, 1998). To her, this partnership represents the need for children to be able to “play – to explore their environment freely, without fear or prejudice” so that they can, in turn, “develop the skills to become the leaders of nations that work together so their children can play in peace” (Clinton, September 2, 1998). As shown, it is her firm belief that fostering children’s ability to grow and play directly impacts their future potential for leadership and opportunity. Championing the partnership between PlayBoard and KaBOOM! is one way to achieve this goal.

It is the way that Hillary writes herself into this narrative which is most interesting. While the president is there to deliver a speech, represent the American commitment to freedom and peace in Ireland and elsewhere, and, indeed, stand as a tribute to the courage and determination of the Irish people, Hillary elevates her own announcement of the playground initiative to the same level of importance. By her account, her rhetorical presence is “smaller but, in many ways, just as important to the region” because it signifies the ability for people to come together and work toward a common goal amidst conflict. The common link through which she makes this claim is through her use of the word “partnership.” By her telling, Bill Clinton’s rhetorical presence constitutes the peaceful partnership between the United States and Ireland, while her own rhetorical presence works in a similar fashion to more tangibly implement this partnership through a defined initiative which has the power to shape future democratically-minded generations and to ward off future violence.

While Northern Ireland, and indeed Bosnia, are elevated throughout Hillary's global columns, it is her historic speech at the Fourth World Conference on Women which she most unabashedly and definitively claims as her crowning global achievement as first lady and as an advocate. Her September 2, 1995 column was written en route to Beijing, China for the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women and is concerned with explaining what was, and was not, the purpose for this gathering. She opens the column by relating to her readers the diverse group that she is travelling with and what their purpose is for attending and participating in this historic conference.

The United States is sending a delegation of 45 men and women. I am the honorary co-chair, and I know many of the members personally. One is a former Republican governor of New Jersey. Another is an Ursuline nun. There is a nurse, a law professor and the editor in chief of Ladies Home Journal. Among the group are mothers, fathers, Democrats, Republicans, liberals and conservatives.  
(Clinton, September 2, 1995)

Though at first glance a potentially odd combination of delegates (headed by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright), Hillary goes on to explain the common purpose which brings together these diverse individuals.

What unites this group and thousands of others travelling to Beijing is a desire to focus world attention on issues that matter most to women, children and families: access to health care, education, jobs and credit, and the chance to enjoy basic legal and human rights and participate fully in the political life of one's country.  
(Clinton, September 2, 1995)

This purpose will be realized through the conference, which Hillary must take pause to clarify to the readers that the critics of the conference are wrongly motivated in their criticism. As she says to this end, "It saddens me that a historic event like this is being misconstrued by a small but vocal group of critics trying to spread the notion that the U.N. gathering is really the work of radicals and atheists bent on destroying our families" (Clinton, September 2, 1995). To combat this view, she explains how, instead, the

delegation is “a broad-based, family-oriented group committed to the mainstream agenda of the conference” (Clinton, September 2, 1995). This clarification is important, because Hillary’s appearance at the conference generated a great deal of controversy; thus, she used “Talking It Over” to directly respond to these criticisms.

Hillary’s speech in Beijing is widely regarded the touchstone of her rhetorical accomplishments as first lady. Her column the following week, September 9, details her remarks there. She summarized the essence of her address: “As an American, life, liberty and the pursuing of happiness are my birthrights, and they are the birthrights of all Americans. The rights we take for granted are fought for and died for around the world” (Clinton, September 9, 1995). Yet, others do not so freely enjoy these basic rights. “In some countries,” she tells her readers, “citizens are not allowed to vote, speak their minds, assemble freely or exercise their faith without fear of persecution, arrest or even torture” (Clinton, September 9, 1995). “These are,” she concludes, “what we commonly think of as violations of human rights” (Clinton, September 9, 1995).

After defining the state of affairs for her audience, Hillary recalls her speech, where she outlined various instances of injustice that she characterizes as violations of human rights, including denying babies food or even life simply because they are girls; selling women and girls into a life of slavery and prostitution; burning women alive because their dowries are too insufficient; raping women in wartime; abusing women and subjecting them to violence in their own homes; subjecting women to genital mutilation; and denying women access or opportunity to plan their families and use birth control in the process (Clinton, September 9, 1995). Her impassioned speech shines through her column, which serves as a place for her to relay her speech in Beijing, and build on this



description in later columns. Above all, she writes in this column that she hopes that “by encouraging people to take notice of these issues, it will help lead us to a world in which every woman and girl is given the respect and dignity she deserves” (Clinton, September 9, 1995).

Most notably, Hillary later uses her column to constitute the viability and longevity of the Beijing vision not just in terms of local, national, and global action, but also in terms of policy, legislation, and practices. In other words, she creates a causal relationship between the conference’s vision in general and her central role in articulating this vision to create a link between the message of “women’s rights are human rights” and specific, necessary outcomes. The best example of how she does this can be found in her second to last “Talking It Over” column ever, which she reserves as a space for underscoring to her readers that Beijing is, in her mind, her most significant rhetorical contribution as an advocate. In this column, Hillary demonstrates most artfully the sustainability of the Beijing vision as a reality by richly narrating the lives of Indian women who are emerging business owners in a post-Beijing world.

The Women’s Bank occupies a one-room building in western India. The teller’s counter is an old kitchen table covered with cloth. Bank clerks record all transactions by hand, on yellowed sheets that resemble worn-out telephone books. When I visited in 1995, I saw poor women who had walked 12 to 15 hours from their villages to take out loans – some as small as \$1 – to invest in dairy cows, plows or goods that could be sold at market. The most vivid image that has stayed with me from that trip happened there. Although the women in that room were from rural areas with little contact outside their communities, and although most of them certainly didn’t speak English, they all stood together and sang as one, “We Shall Overcome.” (Clinton, December 20, 2000)

In this narrative, women with access to only primitive means are nonetheless assuming the role of hardworking, independent, and innovative businesswomen in nations like India. Loans provide them with an entry point into their country’s economy,

which they in turn take advantage of by starting small businesses with the potential to thrive and give back to that economy. More than that, however, is the connection Hillary makes between Indian women who, likely, have little to no working knowledge of the American Civil Rights Movement, yet unite to sing (in a foreign language) a song which by its very definition is a form of non-violent protest of the political, social, and economic status of the disenfranchised and marginalized. It is unclear whether or not the song's presence in this narrative signifies that these women *shall* overcome or *have* overcome (or, perhaps, a combination of the two), or what precisely it is that they are overcoming. Nevertheless, the visual image of these women joining together to sing this song serves as a proof that the message of Beijing has not only visibly informed the advancement of women across the world, but that the United States of America has historically modeled this progress for other nations *so much so* that even the farthest reaches of the world know and are inspired by the example of America's democratic development.

As these examples show, narratives in "Talking It Over" most clearly establish that Bosnia, Northern Ireland, and Beijing topically comprise the global legacy Hillary wishes to leave for her years as first lady. Whether speaking and writing on behalf of political subjects, travelling and representing the United States abroad, or championing legislation and policies that will help to foster harmony and opportunity for men, women, and children, Hillary uses "Talking It Over" to record and interpret her global legacy as an advocate. A key rhetorical strategy she employs to accomplish this is narrative, which allows her to tell the stories of others through her own eyes and to both explain and justify beliefs, decision-making, recommendations, and action. As has likely become

evident, these beliefs, decisions, recommendations, and actions take root in democratic ideals. The next section analyzes how democratic ideals simultaneously take shape through strategically crafted descriptions of the history and politics of other nations.

### **Descriptions of Global Politics**

As she does in the columns about national issues, Hillary strategically uses descriptions of persons and events in order to advance her arguments. Yet, “Talking It Over” is also the location of a more ambitious undertaking. A close reading of several of Hillary’s global columns reveals similar functions of writing (and defining) the histories of other nations through the lens of democracy, as well as a more purposeful attempt to revise these histories to more fully include women as advocates into this history. In other words, descriptions function similarly in the global columns as definitions and revisions which, in turn, work as proofs for her political arguments.

#### *Description as Definition*

When Alexis de Tocqueville came to the United States in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, he observed that volunteer organizations, philanthropic associations and community groups had already become a hallmark of American citizenship and a distinctive part of our national life. I thought about de Tocqueville’s reflections on American democracy during my recent trip to Central Europe and the Baltic region. All of the countries I visited spent decades under communist rule. But today, they are newly independent. Their people are embracing democratic reforms and free-market policies, and seek to regain their place in the Western democratic family. (Clinton, July 9, 1996)

The theme of writing the history of other nations vis-à-vis the successes and failures of these nations to achieve democratic progress dominates Hillary’s descriptions of other nations in her column. One of her earlier columns lays out this task for future columns, as well as explicitly making this a primary aim of placing democratic ideals front and center when describing international matters. In her July 9, 1996 column, where

the above passage originates from, Hillary describes her latest trip through Central Europe and the Baltic through the lens of democratic progress. She then elaborates on this description by providing evidence of these democratic reforms and policies, as well as detailing the implications of these reforms and policies:

There were many hopeful signs of democracy at work in the seven countries I visited. Free and fair elections are becoming the rule. Privatization is underway in most places. And with few exceptions, citizens can voice their beliefs without fear of government retribution. All of these developments bode well for a reunited, democratic Europe. (Clinton, July 9, 1996)

“But,” she concludes, “democracy is not just about institutions; it’s also about democratic values becoming part of people’s hearts, minds and everyday lives” (Clinton, July 9, 1996).

The idea that democracy takes root in institutions and lives, in professional ventures and in personal endeavors, is both implicitly and explicitly woven into Hillary’s descriptions of the progress, as well as the failures to progress, in countries like those which she mentions in this column, including Estonia, Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Romania. These descriptions, in turn, serve to define the scene of Hillary’s advocacy. The citation of de Tocqueville’s observations bolsters her claim that there exists a widely accepted view of the United States as possessing “distinct” markers for democratic citizenship: volunteerism, philanthropy, and community organizing.

In addition, she lends visibility to the ways that these democratic ideals are evident in the values of people’s hearts, minds, and lives. For instance, her visit to Estonia took her to a new health clinic – the first ever in the country – designed to offer services to women. Likewise, she met volunteers working hard in Hungary to help gypsies more fully participate in civic life by overcoming barriers related to education,

employment, and political participation (Clinton, July 9, 1996). These examples briefly capture the ways that women and other marginalized people are beginning to enjoy democratic freedoms. Yet, these freedoms, by her definition, are not just democratic freedoms. They are, in the words of de Tocqueville, a *distinctly American* kind of democratic freedom. By drawing from de Tocqueville's past description of America, Hillary defines the progress of other nations in democratic terms in such a way that she connects this progress to the democratic example of the United States.

In other columns, Hillary defines the progress of other nations in democratic terms and in a particular way which assigns praise to the United States. On March 25, 1997, Hillary writes about a trip through Africa during the Holy Week. Here, she praises the democratic transformation that has taken place, and indeed continues to take place, there:

One cannot spend time in South Africa without be inspired by the democratic awakening that is taking place there. Yet, as Americans know from our own history, building and sustaining a democracy is a complicated business. It takes patience, courage and – most difficult of all – a spirit of tolerance and unity that often conflicts with human nature and local history in many parts of the world. (Clinton, March 25, 1997)

The work is ongoing and, of course, has more far-reaching implications, she argues. "We all have a stake in supporting South Africa's work of nation-building," she writes (Clinton, March 25, 1997). "What happens in South Africa has implications for all of us around the globe who love freedom and democracy. Not only are the South African people seeking their own destinies and creating a new nation. They are helping to shape the course of human history," she concludes in this column (Clinton, March 25, 1997).

In this description, democracy is "awakening," suggesting that is a living and breathing entity which can be captured and observed. She draws a comparison between

this awakening in South Africa and the history of democratic awakening in the United States, suggesting that the qualities which inhabited Americans during our own awakening -- patience, courage and a spirit of tolerance and unity – will serve South Africans well during their own democratic transformation. She, and de Tocqueville, are positioned to thus define the terms of this transformation.

A final example of Clinton’s strategic use of description to advance democratic ideals can be found in her October 6, 1999 column about a week-long trip through Slovakia, Italy, and Iceland which ultimately culminated in a trip to Poland, which she describes as a shining example of a country which “chose democracy”:

Choosing the path of democracy, free markets and freedom required vision, courage and moral leadership. Ten years ago [with the fall of the Berlin Wall], it was not an easy choice. But I have visited many of these countries, and I have seen firsthand that it was the right choice. Nowhere are the possibilities more evident than in Poland...Poland stands as a testament to the fact that democratic and free market reforms – when decisively and thoroughly implemented – do work. (Clinton, October 6, 1999)

This description of Poland is closely related to, if not contingent upon, the support and example of the United States as a democratically-minded world leader committed to supporting and facilitating the democratic transformations of other nations. As she elaborates further into the column:

The path is long, but the United States is committed to standing by as a strong and supportive partner along the way – building democracy, vibrant free markets and a healthy civil society. For democracy will survive only when governments are accountable to the public, and free markets will thrive only when every hard-working citizen enjoys the benefits. (Clinton, October 6, 1999)

The fact that Poland “chose” correctly has resulted in its newly acquired status as a “testament,” as she describes it, that democracy works when purposefully and completely

applied. Hillary has “seen firsthand” the fruits of democracy in Poland, which in turn characterizes her as a credible and knowledgeable advocate for democratic ideals abroad.

While Hillary writes about a number of nations, these three columns about the Baltic, South Africa, and Poland are three of the clearest and most consistent reflections of her firm belief that for nations to progress in terms of the economy, health care, education, equality between citizens, and more, democracy must take root in their political systems. By her definition, democracy must be chosen as the best possible alternative to overcoming more constricting and ineffective political systems. Above all, the successes and failures in a nation’s history should be measured in terms of their adherence to democratic principles and values.

#### *Description as Revision*

The significant role of women in the democratization of nations is recognizable, but not always recognized, throughout history. In “Talking It Over,” Hillary seeks to rectify this gap by using her column as a resource for writing women more fully into a global history of democratization. The women she identifies and praises in her column range from the famous to the obscure. For instance, she writes that women played a crucial role in the peace efforts in Northern Ireland. In the same column where Hillary told the story of Joyce McCartan, the Irish mother who lost her son to terrorists, Hillary describes a history of democratic progress that could not have happened were it not for the sacrifices and activism of the women of Ireland:

Women were and are a driving force behind peace in Northern Ireland. What unites them is their knowledge that, no matter their backgrounds and beliefs, they share the same tragedies: the loss of loved ones to bombs, to assassinations and to random gunfire, and the painful task of preserving families in the midst of poverty and political unrest. Women are dropping ancient grudges that have caused so much pain and terror. They are finding ways to make their faith a source of

strength, not division. Mothers are integrating schools and summer camps, bringing together Protestant and Catholic children for the first time and refusing to pass on old traditions of hate, fear and mistrust. Women in organizations like the one Joyce McCartan founded are working to solve problems that have caused many young people to resort to violence – poverty, prejudice, limited education, joblessness and hopelessness. (Clinton, December 9, 1995)

She makes similar connections between entrepreneurship, the success of the economy, and the women of Central America (particularly Mexico) in another column where she describes how after meeting with countless women who had taken out micro-loans and created businesses to sell hand-made goods like ceramics, hammocks, and clothing. Their efforts, Hillary argues, do not merely reflect opportunities for giving people – especially other women – “a chance to enjoy the products they create and becoming better integrated into the society and economy of Mexico” (Clinton, May 13, 1997). Too, these efforts lead to “economic participation, which...ensures for countless poor men and women around the world...and is a human right essential to the success of any democracy” (Clinton, May 13, 1997). In short, without women, Hillary argues, democracies cannot flourish. “Talking It Over” is, on one hand, a resource for describing and demonstrating this argument.

In addition to writing unknown women into history, however, Hillary focuses on well-known women in her column, drawing out and focusing on the activist features she believes to be their legacy and revising commonly held views of this legacy, whether it be about the woman herself or a situation involving the woman. While of course referring to their more well-known contributions, Hillary also describes their behind-the-scenes work of high-profile women like Princess Diana and Mother Teresa.

As occasions present themselves, Hillary frequently uses “Talking It Over” as a resource for fashioning eulogies to world leaders and national figures who had either



passed away or whose life's work was especially meaningful to her and to others. Sometimes the emphasis on advocacy is brief, though notable. For instance, on September 2, 1997, Hillary used "Talking It Over" to deliver a touching eulogy to Princess Diana, who had died the previous weekend. She describes their first meeting in 1994 at a ceremony commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day and another meeting a year earlier at the White House. On this trip to Washington, Diana had spoken passionately about upcoming trips to Angola and Bosnia, as well as her "campaign to ban anti-personnel land mines" (Clinton, September 2, 1997). Though celebrity was a clear aspect of the princess's life (indeed, Hillary opens the column by stating that "before long, Princess Diana will enter into legend"), Hillary uses her eulogy as a resource for focusing entirely on Diana's activist work generally, but her Bosnian campaign to ban anti-personnel land mines in particular. This is unglamorous activism, and relates to a subject – military practices – that women are not usually associated with. Briefly, though importantly, this eulogy serves to define Diana's character and legacy in political terms, (re)orienting readers to a view of her not as a royal, but as an international activist.

The very next week, Hillary found herself again writing a eulogy: this time, for Mother Teresa, an activist who essentially needs no introduction. Hillary's description of Mother Teresa's immeasurable contributions is anecdotal and focuses on one key issue: abortion. At the National Prayer Breakfast in February 1994, Mother Teresa delivered impassioned remarks about abortion. Hillary first describes what happened during the speech and behind-the-scenes after the speech, then describes the series of events that led to her own political collaboration with Mother Teresa.

She spoke without notes, calling on all of us to care for the poor and defenseless in society and making a plea against abortion. After her speech, Bill and I sat

together with Mother Teresa on folding chairs in the work space behind the curtain at the back of the stage. She took my hands in both of hers and told me she had been praying for me and my husband and for the work we were trying to do, especially in trying to provide health care to the poor. We also discussed abortion. Though we disagreed respectfully about birth control and whether abortion should be legal, we agreed that adoption should be promoted. We talked about doing more to make adoption a realistic option for pregnant women who do not want to keep their children – and to make adoption easier for qualified adults who want to provide a child with a permanent, loving home. (Clinton, September 9, 1997)

But the conversation did not stop there.

Then, Mother Teresa asked me to help her open a shelter in Washington, D.C., for infants and young children awaiting adoption or placement with foster families. I said I would, though I had no idea how. I did, however, have the feeling that keeping my promise to Mother Teresa would involve a fair amount of hard work. (Clinton, September 9, 1997)

Hillary then describes the year-and-a-half of (often difficult) work that it took, including setting up a “coalition of community leaders and government representatives” in order to make the Mother Teresa Home for Infant Children in Washington D.C. the reality that it was when opened on June 19, 1995 (Clinton, September 9, 1997).

This eulogy serves an important revisionist purpose. As previously noted, this particular column was singled out and generated criticism for offering a disingenuous, romanticized view of what was described by others as something quite different. Recall journalist Daniel Seligman’s critical reading of this particular column. Seligman says the eulogy

even manages to put a sentimental, syrupy spin on one of the ghastliest moments of the Clinton presidency – the February 1994 Prayer Breakfast in Washington, at which Mother Teresa made an impassioned speech against abortion, causing the crowd to rise in thunderous applause while Bill reached uneasily for a glass of water and Hillary sat there stone-faced and obviously enraged. (Seligman)

“Alas the human dimension gets lost when she recounts the episode in a column that forgets to mention the author’s pro-choice position,” Seligman concluded in his *Fortune Magazine* article.

Yet, Seligman’s reading fails to notice how Hillary divulges not only that she and Mother Teresa (respectfully) disagreed about abortion, but that they civilly and productively discussed this disagreement behind-the-scenes after the speech. Instead, they negotiated this disagreement by finding a point of agreement which related to abortion: adoption. More than that, this agreement was channeled into a newly created shelter in Washington D.C., which challenges the reading that the column was merely a “sentimental, syrupy” spin on a “ghastly” public political moment. This description frames Hillary not as a stone-faced, pro-abortion figurehead concerned with her political image, but rather portrays her as a pro-adoption advocate who collaborated with another beloved advocate, Mother Teresa, who *asked* Hillary for help to open up a children’s shelter on American soil. The shelter stands, now, as a tribute to the joint-efforts of the two advocates.

“Talking It Over” is the site of Hillary writing, and rewriting, women’s advocacy into history. Though women like Princess Diana and Mother Teresa were hardly unknown to Hillary’s readers, both at home and abroad, Hillary measured their life’s work in terms of very specific initiatives which she herself advocated. In the case of Princess Diana, Hillary narrowed in on her support to ban anti-personnel land mines, an ongoing project Diana was working with and one which coincided with Hillary’s own advocacy about achieving peace in Bosnia. In the case of Mother Teresa, Hillary focused her eulogy entirely on not just celebrating Mother Teresa’s life’s work, but in also

portraying a world where women who disagree politically can find common ground and channel this consensus into productive advocacy.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has examined how Hillary Rodham Clinton used personal stories of her own experiences as an observer of and a participant in history, narratives of conditions, events, and the lives of others, and descriptions of the state of affairs and activist encounters to serve as proof for her arguments in “Talking It Over.”

First, Hillary uses personal stories to present herself to domestic and international audiences not only as the American first lady, but also as an advocate for a host of issues. She uses these stories and experiences as evidence to, among other things, champion the prospect for the United States and Vietnam to continue to reconcile and enjoy a fruitful relationship and to articulate the possibility for peace in the Middle East. Her testimony supports her arguments and conclusions, and allows her to write herself into the rhetorical legacy she seeks to leave through “Talking It Over.”

In addition, Hillary uses narrative as a rhetorical strategy designed to narrow in on the history she hoped to record for both the Clinton Administration at large and her own role within the administration as first lady. Of the utmost importance in these columns is Clinton’s purpose of highlighting Bosnia and Ireland as two nations that the United States was unequivocally committed to supporting, as demonstrated by the frequency and passion with which she wrote about these countries. Moreover, the clear legacy Clinton maps for herself is not only her famous call to action that “Women’s Rights are Human Rights” in Beijing, but also all of the projects and initiatives that resulted from the overall conference message.

Finally, descriptions in “Talking It Over” allow Clinton to place “democracy” at the center of any history of a nation’s political, social, and economic progress. Furthermore, women are integral for this kind of political transformation to take place and thrive. Whether they are Irish mothers, British royalty, or Roman Catholic nuns, Clinton places them all in the same company and writes them, and herself as an eye-witness and participant in their advocacy, into a global history of democracy.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSION

On January 3, 2013, Nancy Dillon of the *New York Daily News* wrote an article about the latest film screenplay buzzing around Hollywood. “Rodham,” an ambitious treatment of Hillary Rodham Clinton’s life in the years between her graduation from Yale Law School and her move to Arkansas to marry Bill Clinton, is the brainchild of Young II Kim, a thirty-nine year old writer from New Jersey. Kim’s screenplay “chronicles Clinton as a twentysomething Washington lawyer torn between her career and an ambitious boyfriend who would later become President” (Dillon). While the courtship between Bill Clinton and Hillary Rodham takes center stage in the screenplay, Kim’s motivation for spearheading this project is more than simply telling the story of how Hillary Rodham became Hillary Rodham Clinton.

As Kim explains, he was initially drawn to portray Hillary’s life after learning about “her work on civil rights way before anyone applauded her” (Dillon). More than that, Kim noticed how “lots of people have no idea she worked on a Black Panthers trial as a Yale Law student and took a decidedly unglamorous job at the Children’s Defense Fund” right after she graduated (Dillon). Perhaps Kim put it best when he stated: “I think if you strip away all the polarizing politics, at her core she’s still that person who genuinely cares for people without a voice. I wanted to capture the moment before she loses that innocence” (Dillon). Kim’s project, should it be realized as he hopes, makes an uncommon move in its portrayal of Hillary because it focuses on a period in her life that has frequently been overlooked.

In a similar fashion, this dissertation has portrayed a commonly overlooked aspect of Hillary Rodham Clinton’s life and work through closely reading her syndicated

newspaper column “Talking It Over.” While past readings of this column have consistently dismissed it as either an incidental part of her first ladyship or a rhetorical failure in her first lady performance, I have reevaluated this column to study how it (re)presents Hillary’s advocacy on both a national and a global scale. I began by looking at the history of first ladies, rhetoric, and advocacy, so as to establish a theoretical foundation and vocabulary for how this advocacy historically taken shape and why it matters. In an effort to situate her within this history, while also taking note of her distinct training and experience, I then offered a history of Hillary Rodham Clinton’s pre-White House advocacy, tracing her early ideological formations to her education at Wellesley College and Yale University to her work as an activist lawyer and first lady of Arkansas. By arguing that there is a “Hillary problem” in rhetorical studies, I have made the case that our scholarship does not portray Hillary’s advocacy in terms of either the broader history of first ladies assuming the role of advocate *or* her own unique background as an activist and a lawyer. Instead, we have focused on four themes – partnership, polarization, image-work and restoration, and political ambition – which, while necessary and instructive, limit our overall understanding of Hillary’s advocacy as a first lady.

Finally, to better understand *what* “Talking It Over” did to advance Hillary’s advocacy, I have read the opinion column format as a form of autobiographical discourse. This reading shows how Hillary heavily relies upon three complimentary rhetorical strategies common to autobiographical discourse – personal stories, narratives, and descriptions – to bolster her political arguments and, indeed, to function as political arguments themselves at times. Hillary’s experiences, her first-person telling of the experiences of others, and the way that she describes the world around her become the

tools through which she builds her arguments about topics ranging from job discrimination facing those diagnosed with HIV to displaying Native American art in the White House to the possibility for achieving peace in places like Bosnia, Ireland, and the Middle East.

### **Limitations of Study and Suggestions for Future Research**

Although my reading offers a correction to the Hillary problem, there are limitations to stressing autobiography as political rhetoric. First, my reading relies on my foregrounding of the Hillary problem. Put differently, the very problem I am offering a correction to is, at the same time, central to and necessary for making sense of this frame. Thus, while articulating this problem is an important and essential step in moving forward in our understanding of Hillary Rodham Clinton as an advocate and rhetor, I acknowledge my reliance on the problem itself to work toward the solution. Future work with not only “Talking It Over,” but also Hillary’s first lady rhetoric in general can and should find inventive ways to move beyond serving as a counter-portrayal of Hillary’s advocacy. So as to better understand its reach and scope, this future work should present this rhetoric in other terms, such as its reception, the ways it compares and contrasts to other first lady rhetorical projects, or the ways that it compares and contrasts to the rhetoric of female political candidates.

At the same time, while I have written about Hillary’s national and global accomplishments, and presented these accomplishments from the view of how *she* has written about them, it is important to also acknowledge the vulnerabilities of this view of her rhetoric. While the way that Hillary defines and explains various projects, policies, and initiatives frames them in terms of the positive outcomes they would – or did –



generate, she generally does not account for some of the important questions raised by these goals and the processes associated with how they will be implemented. In other words, Hillary sometimes fails to acknowledge or even dismisses real concerns that certain of her topics raise. A good example of this is how, when writing about family and medical leave, Hillary argues that because one family appropriately used the benefits of family and medical leave, that all others will follow suit and use family and medical leave benefits sparingly and appropriately. Another example is Hillary's description of the "Seeds of Peace" program, through which she argues that this program has the potential and power to have large-scale effects on peace in the Middle East. While my reading is more concerned with *how* she crafts arguments about topics like these, it is important nonetheless to acknowledge that while persuasive, these kinds of claims are vulnerable to criticism. Future work on this column should continue to value Hillary's advocacy, but should also deal more explicitly with assessing and judging the vulnerabilities of this advocacy.

Finally, my rhetorical approach to "Talking It Over" has been a close reading of how Hillary Rodham Clinton employs key rhetorical strategies in a way which lends itself to a reading of the autobiographical nature of political advocacy. Though there are two-hundred and ninety-one columns available, I narrowed in on approximately thirty columns in my analysis. There is ample opportunity for gleaning valuable insights about political rhetoric from studying the column further. Inventing additional approaches to studying this rhetoric would likely produce valuable scholarly insights into the form and content of political advocacy, and would be a next step in furthering this project.

## The Legacy of “Talking It Over”

This dissertation has been an exercise in textual recovery concerned with the recovery of a significant rhetorical accomplishment by first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton. I have attempted to intervene on the absence of this accomplishment in the literature about Hillary’s rhetoric during these years, as well as to reorient our scholarly view of her away from questions which focus less on the substance of her rhetoric and more on the rhetoric *about* her. Though important progress continues in the area of more fully including women into our rhetorical canons and classrooms, there is still much work to be done to this end, especially when it comes to first ladies. “Talking It Over” serves as an important contribution to our understanding of how women rhetors can discover and invent rhetorical resources to advance their political arguments. As both a means to advocate and a form of advocacy in and of itself, “Talking It Over” is a rich example of the possibilities for first ladies to develop and exercise their voice not only within a national sphere of influence, but also in an era of increasing globalization.

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APPENDIX 1: "TALKING IT OVER" COLUMNS FROM CREATORS SYNDICATE

<b>Year</b>	<b>Subject(s)</b>
<b>1995</b>	
July 23	Why write "Talking It Over"
July 30	Adoption
August 5	Working mothers
August 12	Educational television programming for children
August 19	First family's vacation
August 26	<i>Missing from the archives of Creators Syndicate</i>
September 2	U.N. Fourth World Conference and Women's Rights
September 9	U.N. Fourth World Conference and Women's Rights
September 16	Chelsea Clinton's first day of 11 <sup>th</sup> grade; trip to Mongolia
September 23	Controversy about Calvin Klein advertisements
September 30	Health insurance and hospital stays for new mothers
October 7	Twentieth anniversary of the Clintons
October 14	Celebration of Eleanor Roosevelt's first ladyship
October 21	Breast Cancer Awareness Month and the importance of mammograms
October 28	Letters from readers of the column
November 4	The United Nations and UNICEF
November 11	Eulogy for Yitzhak Rabin, Prime Minister of Israel
November 18	Federal funding for children's hospitals
November 25	Trip to South Asia with Chelsea Clinton
December 2	Decorating the White House for Christmas
December 9	Trip to Belfast, Ireland; women fighting for peace
December 16	Wives of military personnel
December 23	Christmas Traditions and Secret Santa programs
December 30	New Year's Resolutions
<b>1996</b>	
January 6	The development of children; "It Takes a Village"
January 13	Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s legacy
January 20	Whitewater scandal
January 27	Divorce and the responsibilities of marriage and family life
February 3	United States commitment to Bosnia, Catholic Relief Services, and International Orthodox Christian Charities
February 10	Christopher Reeves, the crusade for health care reform, and why the Kennedy-Kassebaum Bill should pass
February 13	Defending military personnel with HIV/AIDS
February 20	First White House Islamic Holiday
February 27	Issues facing young girls: body image, vocational choices, and homemaking
March 5	Whitewater investigation closes
March 12	Gender stereotypes
March 19	Lady Bird Johnson and Beautification
March 26	Visiting troops in Bosnia

April 2	Tour of Bosnia, Turkey, and Greece
April 9	Eulogy for those who died in the crash of Air Force T43
April 16	Opening of Baseball Season and the Chicago Cubs
April 23	Hillary's work as a young lawyer and the importance of legal aid and clinics
April 30	10 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Chernobyl Disaster
May 7	Mother's Day (author: Bill Clinton)
May 14	Adoption, the Family and Medical Leave Act, and the Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994
May 21	Funding for the National Endowment for the Arts
May 28	Message to the Class of 1996
June 4	Irish President Mary Robinson's visit to the White House
June 11	Celebrating Father's Day; President Clinton and Vice President Gore's launch of the Fatherhood Initiative
June 18	Youth Programs for children and the importance of curfews
June 25	Family Leave Law and the Family and Medical Leave Act
July 2	The Fourth of July and the Tour of Central Europe and the Baltic
July 9	The Importance of Democracy and the Tour of Central Europe and the Baltic
July 16	Children smoking and proposed legislation to limit advertisements and billboards about smoking
July 23	Americans participating in the Olympics
July 30	Bombing in Centennial Park at the Olympics in Atlanta, Georgia
August 6	The positive effects of Title IX and the Americans with Disabilities Act
August 13	Clinton family Vacation at Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks
August 21	Chicago Hosting the Democratic National Convention
August 28	Hillary Rodham Clinton's speech at the Democratic National Convention
September 3	Seeds of Peace program for Arab and Israeli children
September 10	Winners of the Presidential Medal of Freedom
September 17	United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Lessons Without Border; U.S. aid abroad
September 24	Fashion Targets Breast Cancer Campaign
October 1	Legacy of the U.N. Fourth World Conference
October 8	NASA eliminating single-sex policy
October 15	Answering questions about Socks, the White House cat
October 22	"Superman" cartoon for children in Bosnia; UNICEF
October 29	Diversifying art in the White House
November 5	President Clinton's 1996 campaign stops
November 12	Clinton trip to Little Rock on Election Day
November 19	Trip to Australia and the progress of Australia in terms of suffrage, health care, and domestic violence
November 26	Trip to Thailand, Thai Women of Tomorrow, and ending child prostitution

December 3	Trip to Bolivia and the Sixth World Conference of Wives and Heads of State and Government of the Americas; “For the Good of Health” program in Bolivia
December 10	Tour of the White House, including the Lincoln Bedroom, War Room, Oval Office, Queen’s Bedroom, Treaty Room, Yellow Oval Room, and Family Quarters
December 17	Adoption, the “Faces of Adoption” website, and the National Adoption Center and Children Awaiting Parents
December 25	<i>November 26, 1996 article is listed here on the Creators Syndicate website instead of the December 25 article</i>
December 31	Clinton’s spend New Year’s in Hilton Head, South Carolina
<b>1997</b>	
January 7	Taking care of Gulf War veterans
January 14	Hillary’s plans for the next four years
January 21	Inauguration Day 1996
January 28	Family Planning and the bombing of the D.C. Planned Parenthood Building
February 4	Loans for women business owners and the Women’s Self-Employment Project
February 11	White House Luncheon for women who combine family and work
February 18	Renaissances in Washington D.C. and Chicago
February 25	Tour of Prague, American culture, and Creative America by the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities
March 4	Elizabeth Glaser, AIDS, and the Pediatric Aids Foundation
March 11	The Single Parent Scholarship Fund
March 18	Trip to Africa with Chelsea Clinton and the relationship between the United States and Africa
March 25	Holy Week Trip through South Africa
April 2	Trip to Africa continued
April 8	Children need attention from parents
April 15	White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning
April 22	Summit for America’s Future and the importance of volunteerism
May 6	Mother’s Day Tribute to Dorothy Rodham
May 13	Trip to Mexico with President Clinton and the importance of small business loans for women
May 20	Uninsured children and \$5 million from the balanced budget
May 27	Trip to the Netherlands and the 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Marshall Plan
June 3	Chelsea Clinton’s graduation from high school
June 10	President Clinton’s commencement address at Chelsea’s graduation and the importance of fathers in their children’s lives
June 17	Celebrating good public schools in Washington D.C.
June 24	Adoption 2002 report on helping families adopt
July 1	Fourth of July and the need to strengthen food-safety protections
July 8	First pictures from Mars and collaboration with Russia’s space program

July 15	Trip to Austria and the “Vital Voices: Women in Democracy” conference
July 22	Importance of accessible immunizations
July 29	“My Best Friend’s Wedding” and smoking in films
August 5	President Clinton signs the balanced budget
August 12	FDA regulations for testing medications given to children
August 19	125 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of Yellowstone National Park
August 26	Playing games on family vacations
September 2	Eulogy for Princess Diana
September 9	Eulogy for Mother Teresa
September 18	Taking Chelsea Clinton to Stanford University
September 23	Remembering the Little Rock Nine
September 30	Heritage Award Honorees at the White House
October 7	Diseases threatening children
October 14	Trip to Panama, Brazil, and Venezuela and the Seventh Annual Conference of Spouses of Heads of State and Governments of the Americas
October 21	White House Conference on Child Care
October 28	Surprise birthday party for Hillary Rodham Clinton
November 4	North Ireland Peace Talks
November 11	Clarifying emergency landing in Kazakhstan
November 18	President signs the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997
November 25	Celebrating Thanksgiving and Trip to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Russia, and the Ukraine
December 2	White House prepares for Christmas
December 9	Explaining the message of “Women’s Rights are Human Rights”
December 16	Getting Buddy and Socks: The White House Dog and Cat
December 23	Clinton family plans for Christmas at the White House
December 30	Clinton family plans for New Years
<b>1998</b>	
January 6	Quality care for children
January 13	Anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday, celebration of civil rights leaders, the Corporation for National Service, Ameri-Corps, and the Peace-Corps
January 20	The Committee for the Preservation of the White House and the White House Endowment Fund
January 27	President Clinton’s “State of the Union” address and the White House Millennium Council’s “Save America’s Treasures” program
February 10	Home-Visitation Programs and the Early Learning Fund
February 17	First cybercast from the White House, preparing for the millennium, and the “Save America’s Treasures” program
February 24	Children’s health care, Virginia’s Medicaid program, and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
March 3	The importance of reading aloud to children and the America Reads Challenge

March 10	Anniversary of the U.N. Fourth World Conference and International Women's Day Celebrations at the White House
March 17	Recruitment of young people for national service: Habitat for Humanity, Americorps, FEMA, the Red Cross, and the National Service Corps
March 24	1996 kidnapping of Ugandan Angelina Acheng's daughter, the impact of armed conflict on children, the Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, UNICEF, World Vision, Save the Children, and the Concerned Parent's Association
April 1	Trip to Africa with President Clinton and the progress of African women
April 8	March 25 <sup>th</sup> school shooting and school violence
April 15	Trip to Ireland and the support of peace between Catholics and Protestants
April 22	Child care, child care legislation, and the White House Conference on Child Care
April 29	National Volunteer Week
May 6	Proposed bankruptcy reform legislation in the House of Representatives
May 13	Trip to Geneva for the 50 <sup>th</sup> birthday of the World Health Organization and the need to address HIV/AIDS
May 20	Congressional legislation for school vouchers
May 27	Renovation of Chicago's Du Sable High School
June 1	Eulogy for Barry Goldwater
June 3	Decline of welfare under President Clinton's leadership
June 10	"Sesame Street" promoting awareness about children's asthma
June 17	Trip to Monocacy Aqueduct in Ohio and renewing America's Treasures
June 24	Need for tobacco legislation and failure of Republican senators to vote for this legislation
July 1	Trip to Shanghai and the literacy of Chinese women
July 8	200 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Marine Band
July 15	President and first lady kick off "Save America's Treasures" program in Fort McHenry and Seneca Falls
July 22	Importance of Congress passing the Patient's Bill of Rights
July 29	Creation of a Cancer Awareness Stamp and breast cancer, colon cancer, prostate cancer, and children's cancer
August 5	5 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of President Clinton signing the Family and Medical Leave Act
August 12	Oklahoma City Bombing and the importance of diplomacy abroad
August 19	Natural disasters, FEMA, and preventative measures
August 26	White House Fellows: Colin Powell, Henry Cisneros, and Doris Kearns Goodwin
September 2	Trip with President Clinton to Russia and Northern Ireland and the KaBOOM! program to create safe playgrounds in Ireland



September 9	National School Modernization Day and the need for building renovations and new technology
September 16	Sargent Shriver and the Peace Corps
September 23	Foster care, adoption, and the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997
September 30	Bankruptcy reform in Congress
October 7	Problems when children are incarcerated with adults
October 14	Poverty and the Earned Income Tax Credit passed by Congress
October 21	The Patient's Bill of Rights not passed and the failures of Congress
October 28	The importance of voting
November 4	Twentieth Century American Sculpture at the White House
November 11	Tipper Gore's trip to Honduras and Nicaragua and U.S. disaster relief in Central America
November 18	After school programs for children
November 25	Adoption Day and the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997
December 2	Letters to Buddy and Socks and publishing "Dear Socks, Dear Buddy" by Hillary Rodham Clinton
December 9	Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
December 16	President Clinton's trip to Israel and Gaza and the approach of Hanukkah, Christmas, and Ramadan
December 23	"The Stuff of the Presidency": The Family and Medical Leave Act, the Patients' Bill of Rights, and the Brady Bill
December 30	"Save America's Treasures" and the White House Millennium Council initiatives for the New Year
1999	
January 6	Long-term care for the elderly and the National Family Caregiver Support Program
January 13	Finding a cure for epilepsy and "Epilepsy: A Report to the Nation"
January 20	Social Security Reform, the Family and Medical Leave Act, and the Patient's Bill of Rights
January 27	Celebrating the Millennium at the White House
February 3	The issues of the proposed presidential budget: foster care, asthma, children's hospitals, and mentoring
February 10	Eulogy for the King of Jordan, the U.N. Conference in the Netherlands, and the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy
February 16	Announcement of Hillary Rodham Clinton's campaign for Congress
February 17	Social security
February 24	Health insurance for children, the Children's Health Insurance Program, and the Insure Kids Now campaign
March 3	The arts in education and the Lessons from School Districts That Value Arts Education Report
March 10	Women pioneers in sports and Title IX
March 17	National Women's History Month and the Equal Rights Amendment
March 24	Trip to Tunisia and Cairo, 20 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

March 31	Trip to Morocco and the need for peace in Albania
April 7	The conditions under Milosevic in Albania and a call for contributions to USAID RELIEF
April 14	The life of Elie Wiesel
April 21	Teacher of the Year Andy Baumgartner, the Educate America Act, and the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act
April 28	White House Conference on School Safety at the White House and the Brady Law
May 5	Refugees in Kosovo and Hillary Rodham Clinton's trip to New Jersey
May 12	Youth Gun Crime Enforcement Act proposed
May 19	Trip to Macedonia and the conditions of Kosovo's refugees in camps
May 26	Preserving national landmarks and the "Save America's Treasures" program
June 2	Products marketed to children and the Mothers Against Violence in America
June 9	Mental illness, Tipper Gore's advocacy, and the White House Conference on Mental Health
June 16	The legacy of Rosa Parks
June 23	Trip to Macedonia and the status of Kosovo refugees
June 30	The Fourth of July, the "Save America's Treasures" program, and the re-encasement of the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and Declaration of Independence
July 7	Emergence of new markets
July 14	America Women's Soccer Team wins the World Cup and Title IX
July 21	Eulogy for John F. Kennedy, Jr.
July 28	Americans with Disabilities Act
July 29	National Breast Cancer Coalition and the National Action Plan on Breast Cancer
August 4	White House Convening on Hispanic Children and Youth
August 11	Effectiveness of the Legal Services Corporation
August 18	Students return to Columbine, children and violence, and legislation about gun safety
August 25	Food stamps and the Welfare-to-Work Partnership
August 30	Hillary Rodham Clinton speaks at the World Economic Forum in Switzerland
September 1	What President Clinton's proposed budget will accomplish
September 8	AIDS in Africa and the upcoming U.N. Conference on Children Orphaned by AIDS
September 15	End of Congressional fiscal year and the need for important bills to be passed: Social Security, AmeriCorps, Patient's Bill of Rights, and Head Start
September 22	White House plans for the Millennium: Communities, Trails, Evenings, Projects, and Conferences
September 29	Foster care and adoption and the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997

October 6	Fall of the Berlin Wall, Democracy, and Free Market reforms
October 13	Genetic Research and Information Technology in the New Millennium
October 20	White House celebration of the 5 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of AmeriCorps
October 27	White House Conference on Philanthropy
November 3	Eulogy for John Chafee
November 10	Controlling terrorism and the spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction
November 17	Trip with President Clinton to Istanbul and Turkey
November 24	Celebrating Thanksgiving, Republicans trying to deny the “Head Start” program to help children, and Congressional failure to pass the Patient’s Bill of Rights
December 1	Children’s health care and the Children’s Hospitals Education and Research Act
December 8	White House volunteers for Christmas
December 15	“Millennium Green” project to preserve the planet
December 22	“My History is Your History” project to promote family history
December 29	White House Millennium Council and the Mars Millennium Project
<b>2000</b>	
January 5	President Clinton’s “Prayer for the New Millennium”
January 12	Housing vouchers and the importance of safe and affordable housing
January 19	Sex trafficking and the Worker Exploitation Task Force
January 26	Student loans, grants, and scholarships for college and the proposal of a “New Opportunity Agenda” to expand tax credits
February 2	President calling on Congress to pass comprehensive child care initiative
February 9	Drug coverage for the elderly and Medicare
February 16	International women travelling to Washington D.C. for “Vital Voices”
February 23	Announcement of the D.C. Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy
March 1	The importance of teachers and the Troops to Teachers program
March 8	Violence in schools and the call to join Hillary Rodham Clinton in the Million Mom March on Mother’s Day
March 15	Need for fathers to pay child support
March 22	Children taking Ritalin, Tipper Gore as President Clinton’s Mental Health Policy Advisor, and the upcoming conferences on mental health and behavioral disorders in the summer of 2000
March 29	Threat of smoking to children
April 5	Microcredit loans and projects and the White House Conference on Philanthropy
April 12	Family planning at home and abroad, World Health Day at the White House, and the United Nations Family Planning Fund
April 19	Earth Day, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Clear Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, and the Lands Legacy Initiative by President Clinton
April 26	National Arbor Day
May 3	White House Conference on Teenagers and the importance of social and intellectual development of teenagers

May 10	Death of children at the hands of firearms and the Million Moms March
May 17	The restoration of the Howard Theater and the “Save America’s Treasures” program
May 24	Memorial Day and the National Moment of Remembrance
May 31	National Trails Day
June 7	Assessing the progress since the U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women and the President’s Interagency Council for Women
June 14	The Violence Against Women Act and the George Washington University Law School’s domestic Violence Advocacy project
June 21	Eleanor Roosevelt’s Val-Kill and the “Save America’s Treasures” program
June 28	White House Conference on Hispanic Children and Youth and the White House Strategy Session on Improving Hispanic Student Achievement
July 5	Fourth of July and celebrating America’s scientific discoveries
July 12	President Clinton announces \$211 billion budget surplus and Congress must vote to pay down the national debt, strengthen Medicare, and strengthen prescription drug benefits to senior citizens
July 19	Tour of Ellis Island and 41 other sites to be restored through the “Save America’s Treasures” program
July 26	10 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act
August 2	Importance of screening newborns for hearing
August 9	Republican Convention and the shortcomings of the “Republican Plan”
August 16	2000 Democratic Convention and the endorsement of the Gore/Lieberman ticket
August 23	Building a SuAnne Big Crow Boys and Girls Club Youth Opportunity and Wellness Center, the New Markets Initiative Tour, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s office of Native American Programs
August 30	Congress should pass proposals to improve the quality of schools, specifically GEAR UP – Early Intervention and College Preparation Services
September 6	Congress is back in session, needs to finish work on 13 spending bills including health care and prescription medication coverage for seniors and others lacking coverage
September 13	Television advertisements and teenage violence
September 20	Use of prescription drugs by children and the National Action Agenda
September 27	Importance of Congress reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act
October 4	Success of AmeriCorps and its endorsements from various Republican leaders
October 11	Congress passed the Microenterprise for Self-Reliance Act
October 18	Sex Trafficking in Mexico, the United States, and the Ukraine and the President’s Interagency Council for Women
October 25	Failures and successes of the 106 <sup>th</sup> Congress related to legislation about sex trafficking, violence against women, health care, and adoption

November 1	Lack of youth voting, the history of voting from 1960 to 1996, and the National Voter Registration Act
November 8	Election Day and Hillary Rodham Clinton's experience of running for Congress
November 15	Questions about who won the 2000 presidential election and the 200 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the White House with the Carters, Fords, Bushes, and Lady Bird Johnson
November 22	Trip to Vietnam with President Clinton and Chelsea Clinton, struggles of Vietnamese women to reach gender equality, and loan programs to help this goal
November 29	2000 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the White House and Hillary Rodham Clinton's new book "An Invitation to the White House: At Home with History"
December 6	Orientation week for new members of Congress and the issues facing Congress for the upcoming year, including labor, health care, child development, finance reform, and hate crimes
December 13	Final trip to Ireland with President Clinton and Chelsea Clinton and the Vital Voices Democracy Initiative
December 20	The legacy of the U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women: Interagency Council on Women, Vital Voices Democracy Initiative, and Vital Voices Global Partnership
December 27	Christmas at the White House and celebrating "An Invitation to the White House: At Home with History"

## APPENDIX 2: "TALKING IT OVER" (JULY 23, 1995)

EDITORS NOTE: The following column is the first syndicated column written by Hillary Clinton for Creators Syndicate. It was originally released on July 23, 1995. All subsequent columns are arranged beginning with those filed most recently (in 2000 just before Mrs. Clinton joined the Senate) and ending with her first columns written in 1995.  
-- CREATORS SYNDICATE

On a recent trip to Arkansas, I had a sudden impulse to drive. We were staying at my mother's house in Little Rock and I needed to run some errands. So, on a quiet Friday afternoon, I jumped behind the wheel of a car and, much to the discomfort of my Secret Service detail, drove myself around town. For several hours, I enjoyed a marvelous sensation of personal freedom.

For me this brief taste of everyday life has come to represent the odd duality of my role as First Lady. On the one hand, I feel privileged to meet people and go places totally out of reach for most men and women. On the other hand, experiences that millions of Americans take for granted have become extraordinary for me.

A few months back, for instance, I was browsing through a museum in Washington. There I was, one of the most recognizable women in America, thinking I could somehow blend anonymously into the artwork.

Suddenly, a woman came up to me. "You sure look like Hillary Clinton," she said.

"So I'm told," I answered.

The truth is that sometimes it is hard even for me to recognize the Hillary Clinton that other people see. Like millions of women across our country, I find that my life consists of different, and sometimes paradoxical, parts. Often those parts are reduced to a snapshot of one moment in my day, when in fact I wake up every morning trying to figure out how to mesh my responsibilities to my family, my public duties and the friend who might be stopping by for dinner.

No doubt the same is true for many people, whether they are beauticians, bankers, teachers or truck drivers. It is just that the complexity of my role is played out in public.

Whatever minor inconveniences my situation presents, I wouldn't trade it for the world. A few years ago, I could never have imagined the range of activities that are part of my life today, such as defending public television, planning state dinners and visiting the CIA with the President.

I have also met a lot of interesting people. Some are famous, like Lady Bird Johnson, Nelson Mandela and Mother Teresa. But most are men and women we never hear

about who wake up in the morning, do the best they can, and contribute more to their families and communities than most of the celebrities and public figures whose names regularly appear on the evening news.

It is the unforgettable faces, heroic life stories, historic events, pressing issues and comedic moments that have most defined my time in the White House. Now I will have the opportunity to share these experiences and observations directly with newspaper readers everywhere.

I recently accepted an offer first made two years ago to write a column about my life as First Lady. My hope is that this weekly column will talk about the most immediate issues on people's minds -- the funny, the sad, the inspiring and the momentous -- and give people a view of events they might not otherwise have a chance to see.

Every year, I receive hundreds of thousands of letters asking about everything from Socks' feeding schedule to Medicare benefits for mammograms, from the financial pressures affecting working families to my recent trip to South Asia. I have been told that for every person who writes me, there are thousands and maybe millions of others with the same question or concern.

Some people may wonder whether I am looking to Eleanor Roosevelt for my inspiration. In thinking about this column, I re-read the column that Mrs. Roosevelt wrote nearly every day for the better part of three decades. She called her column "My Day" and covered subjects as varied as her annual picnic for disadvantaged boys, the meaning of religion in our lives and the fuss over a new bob in her hair. Sounds familiar!

My hope is that this column, like hers, will prompt all of us to think more about the human dimension of our lives. In some small way, I hope it will help bridge the gaps in our society so that we can reach beyond stereotypes and caricatures -- and respect one another for the unique contributions each of us makes to our country.

My wish too is that it will provide information about problems facing us that people can use to help decide what they think should be done. Mostly, though, this column will give me the chance to talk things over in the hope that some of you will join the conversation.

So, let's talk again next week.

### APPENDIX 3: "TALKING IT OVER" (SEPTEMBER 2, 1995)

As you read this column, I am travelling to Beijing for the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women.

The United States is sending a delegation of 45 men and women. I am the honorary co-chair, and I know many of our members personally. One is a former Republican governor of New Jersey. Another is an Ursuline nun. There is a nurse, a law professor and the editor in chief of Ladies Home Journal. Among the group are mothers, fathers, Democrats, Republicans, liberals and conservatives.

What unites this group and thousands of others traveling to Beijing is a desire to focus world attention on issues that matter most to women, children and families: access to health care, education, jobs and credit, and the chance to enjoy basic legal and human rights and participate fully in the political life of one's country.

Our ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, is the head of our delegation. A distinguished scholar, public servant and mother of three daughters, she knows more than most about the meaning of freedom and democracy. She and her family were forced to flee both Hitler and Stalin.

Tom Kean, the president of Drew University, is a delegation vice chair. I first met him when he was governor of New Jersey and my husband was governor of Arkansas. Although he is a Republican and my husband is a Democrat, they joined forces to improve education for America's children.

The women's conference is about making the world a better place by helping women live up to their God-given potential at home, in school, on the job, in their communities and as mothers, wives, learners, workers and citizens.

It is also a celebration of families, the bedrock of any society.

Families are undermined when women and children lack the opportunities they need to thrive. In some places around the world, for example, girls are still valued so little that they are left to die at birth, denied health care and education, or sold into prostitution by their families.

Figuring out ways to remedy these wrongs and provide women opportunities to lead healthy and productive lives will be the key issue for 50,000 women and men who gather in China this week.

It saddens me that a historic event like this is being misconstrued by a small but vocal group of critics trying to spread the notion that the U.N. gathering is really the work of radicals and atheists bent on destroying our families.

The composition of our delegation refutes that charge.



It is a broad-based, family-oriented group committed to the mainstream agenda of the conference.

The deputy chair of our delegation, Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky, is one of America's most devoted moms. A former television news correspondent and member of Congress, she and her husband are raising 11 children -- two are adopted and three are refugees from Asia -- in their home in Pennsylvania. "I don't get involved with things that don't celebrate the family," she said recently.

Even if you agree with me that the conference is a good thing, you may be asking yourself why Americans should care about it.

After all, don't American women have more political freedom and economic opportunities than women anywhere else in the world?

There are several reasons why we should care. First, the conference represents a rare opportunity to educate world leaders about the challenges women confront in trying to improve their own lives and the lives of their families.

Improving opportunities for women everywhere is very much in our self-interest. When other countries become more democratic and all citizens more prosperous, our future brightens too.

Second, the meeting will give voice to women all over the world, including American women who are trying to raise children on jobs that pay \$4.25 an hour, can't afford health insurance or child care, or are bumping up against a glass ceiling at work.

Third, the gathering will help convey the silent terror endured by millions of women victimized by violence, including violence in their own homes.

Concerns about education, health care, the minimum wage and domestic violence often are written off as "women's issues" unrelated to pressing economic and political challenges.

In fact, these "women's issues" are crucial to the progress of families everywhere.

If women and girls don't flourish, families won't flourish. And if families don't flourish, communities and nations won't flourish.

The United States has long played a leading role in protecting the human rights of all citizens and affording women new opportunities to contribute to the economic lives of their families and the civic life of their communities.

For that reason, the voices of American women must be heard. And they will be heard.

Along with our delegation, thousands of women from the United States are traveling to Beijing, many at their own expense.

A group of CPAs from Virginia is making the trip. So are school principals from Maryland, women business owners from Florida, optometrists from California and YWCA leaders from across the country.

Even representatives of the Girl Scouts of America are traveling halfway around the world to take part.

Indeed, the future of all girls is what this conference is about.

APPENDIX 4: "TALKING IT OVER" (SEPTEMBER 9, 1995)

BEIJING — "Go to China and stand up for American values."

An American veteran of World War II said these words to me as I was leaving the V-J Day observances in Hawaii last weekend to go to Beijing for the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women.

A few days later, as I stood before the conference delegates preparing to give a keynote address, the veteran's words came back to me.

Looking out at the sea of faces representing nearly every country in the world, I appreciated even more the privilege of living in a free society.

As an American, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are my birthrights, and they are the birthrights of all Americans. The rights we take for granted are fought for and died for around the world.

In some countries, citizens are not allowed to vote, speak their minds, assemble freely or exercise their faith without fear of persecution, arrest or even torture.

These are what we commonly think of as violations of human rights.

But, as the women's conference taught us, it is also a violation of human rights when, in countries around the world, women and girls are valued less, fed less, fed last, overworked, underpaid, not schooled and beaten up.

If one message rang clear from the conference, it is that women's rights are human rights. And human rights are women's rights.

As I said to the delegates:

It is a violation of human rights when babies are denied food, or drowned, or suffocated, or their spines broken simply because they are born girls.

It is a violation of human rights when women and girls are sold into the slavery of prostitution, sometimes by their own brothers and fathers.

It is a violation of human rights when women are doused with gasoline, set on fire and burned to death because their marriage dowries are deemed too small.

It is a violation of human rights when individual women are raped in their own communities and when thousands of women are subjected to rape as a tactic or prize of war.

It is a violation of human rights when a leading cause of death worldwide among women ages 14 to 44 is the violence they are subjected to in their own homes.

It is a violation of human rights when young girls are brutalized by the painful and degrading practice of genital mutilation, which happens to millions of women in Africa.

It is a violation of human rights when women are denied the right to plan their own families, and that includes being forced to have abortions or being sterilized against their will.

Today, women bear the brunt of human rights violations around the world.

As long as those violations persist — and discrimination and inequities remain commonplace — a peaceful and prosperous life is sadly beyond our reach.

One reason we haven't progressed further is that so many women have been afraid to speak up and speak out. As I said to the conference delegates, it is time to break the silence so that women everywhere have a greater say in the future we share.

As different as we may be, there is more that unites than divides us. The conference proved that.

I am grateful that on behalf of our country I had the opportunity to attend this conference with men and women from all over the world who are committed to speaking out and taking action against abuses and injustices that fly in the face of human rights.

If we take bold steps to better the lives of women, we will be taking bold steps to better the lives of children and families too.

Families rely on mothers and wives for emotional support and care. Families rely on women for labor in the home. And increasingly, families rely on women for income needed to raise healthy children and care for other relatives.

The women's conference by itself won't change any lives. But I hope that, by encouraging people to take notice of these issues, it will help lead us to a world in which every woman and girl is given the respect and dignity she deserves.

## APPENDIX 5: "TALKING IT OVER" (SEPTEMBER 30, 1995)

Before my daughter was born, I did everything I could think of to prepare for the arrival of my new baby.

I asked my doctor hundreds of questions. I read every book I could get my hands on. And my husband and I went together to childbirth classes.

Even so, I was in for some surprises.

I remember lying in bed a few days after Chelsea's birth, when I was still getting accustomed to breast-feeding. Suddenly, I noticed foam in her nose. Afraid that she was convulsing, I pushed every call button within reach.

When the nurse arrived, she assured me that I was simply holding the baby at an awkward angle, making it difficult for her to swallow the milk she took in.

That wasn't the only time nurses came to my rescue during my stay at the hospital. They taught me to bathe and feed my daughter, and also gave me a chance to recover from the emotional and physical toll of a Caesarean section.

Nowadays, experiences like mine are far more common in countries like Australia, Germany, Japan, Ireland and France than here in the United States.

As insurance companies look for ways to cut costs, new mothers routinely are rushed out of the hospital 24 hours after an uncomplicated birth and three days after a Caesarean.

I have one friend who was pregnant with twins and began hemorrhaging during labor. She had to undergo an emergency Caesarean under full anesthesia. After the delivery, she was severely anemic and was placed in intensive care.

Even so, based on a "checklist" of medical factors, her insurance company said it would not pay for more than three days in the hospital. In the end, the company did cover a longer stay, but only because her doctor spent hours on the phone arguing that it was medically unsafe to send her home.

Unfortunately, some doctors won't take on such battles because they fear being dropped by the managed care companies with which they do business.

Another friend's wife was covered for seven days in the hospital after a complicated childbirth. But the insurance company wouldn't cover the child after three days, making it impossible for the mother to nurse the baby and much more difficult for mother and child to bond.

When my friend was told the child was considered independent of its mother, he asked, "Do you expect the baby to walk down to the parking lot and drive himself home?"

Insurance companies insist that limiting a baby's time in the hospital is not only a money-saver, but it also reduces exposure to hospital germs.

Most experts agree there is little medical risk to the majority of new mothers and babies discharged in the first 24 hours.

But what happens if the baby develops an infection or other complication like jaundice that only becomes apparent on the second or third day after birth? What if the new mother has difficulty learning to breast-feed properly, which could result in dehydration or other serious problems for her baby?

Insurance companies say most new mothers are entitled to home visits by a nurse who can help spot problems after they leave the hospital.

But the reality is that many insurance companies only cover one home visit per patient; others simply provide for a phone consultation with a nurse in the days after childbirth. And cases have been reported in which the nurse or home visitor simply didn't have time to show up or didn't even know the baby had been born.

A retired transit worker in New Jersey, Dominick A. Ruggiero Jr., told this story to the New Jersey legislature earlier this year:

His niece had an uneventful pregnancy and childbirth and was discharged after 28 hours. At home, however, her baby, Michelina, suddenly took a turn for the worse. A nurse was supposed to visit the home on the second day but never came. When the family called, they were told the visiting nurse wasn't aware the baby had been born.

Several times, the family called the pediatrician, who said the baby had a mild case of jaundice and did not need to be examined.

The baby died from a treatable infection when she was 2 days old.

Thanks in part to Ruggiero's testimony, New Jersey now has a law that will make sure that insurance covers mothers for a minimum of 48 hours in the hospital after uncomplicated deliveries and 96 hours following Caesarean deliveries. Maryland passed similar legislation last spring, and Congress is now considering a bill.

Although a handful of critics has suggested that this is another example of government intrusion into the health care system, I think that protecting the health of new mothers and infants is a clear case of where government safeguards are needed.

No government employee should ever decide whether an infant has jaundice or a new mother is anemic. But at the same time, no insurance company accountant should make the final judgment about what is medically best for newborns and their mothers.

That decision should be left to doctors, nurses and mothers themselves.

## APPENDIX 6: “TALKING IT OVER” (NOVEMBER 18, 1995)

I met 16-year-old Lisa DelMauro the other day at Babies and Children's Hospital in New York City. She was in a wheelchair, wrapped in bandages, having just undergone her 50th operation for a congenital birth defect known as spina bifida.

Still, she was upbeat about her life and her future. Her treatments, she said, had enabled her to continue her schooling and read her favorite Nancy Drew novels.

Joshua Lentin, age 6, had a different medical problem but a similar outlook: He was born with a serious heart condition and, after two heart transplants, is thrilled that he can now play roller hockey and dream about a career in the NHL.

These and the other brave children I met — a 19-month-old baby undergoing radiation treatment for abdominal cancer, a high school student who had just endured a painful bone marrow transplant, and a 4-year-old born with health problems brought on by his mother's drug addiction — are among thousands of children treated each day for illnesses and injuries at children's hospitals around our country.

Unlike adult hospitals, children's hospitals specialize in diagnosing and treating children. They train pediatricians who become experts in children's care. They conduct innovative research in the causes and cures for childhood diseases. And they provide millions of dollars in free care to needy children.

Today, the average children's hospital relies on Medicaid for 46 cents out of every dollar it uses to function. This long-standing federal commitment is one important reason that children's hospitals offer the unique and vital services they do.

That is why I am worried about the future of children's hospitals — worried because proposed cuts in Medicaid threaten to compromise the care they give.

These cuts will hurt children's hospitals because Medicaid is the primary source of health care coverage for nearly one in four children in America — and one in three children under age 3. And contrary to what many people think, more than half of the children covered by Medicaid have parents working at low-wage jobs, not receiving welfare checks.

Medicaid is also the main source of health care coverage for millions of children like Lisa, Joshua and the others I met in New York who are disabled or who suffer from chronic illnesses — the kinds of illnesses that regular health insurance will not cover and that adult hospitals cannot always treat.

Children's hospitals simply cannot exist without government support.

For more than a decade, I was fortunate enough to serve on the board of Arkansas Children's Hospital, chairing the annual telethon and raising money for a newborn intensive care nursery.

Recently, I met a group of generous men and women who give and raise money for some of the largest children's hospitals in our country. While I applaud these private efforts, I know that the generosity of individuals alone cannot fill the gap projected by the proposed \$186 billion cut in Medicaid.

Every parent knows from personal experience what it is like when a child is sick. Nothing else in the world matters. Will your son or daughter get better? Is the illness something that will pass, or is it life-threatening? You just want your child to get the treatment she needs.

Sometimes, though, when it comes time to make decisions that affect all of America's children, good parental instincts retreat.

As parents, would we ever say that one of our own children with a serious illness or chronic medical condition did not deserve the best available treatment? Of course not. We would make the sacrifices necessary to help our child get well.

Why, then, as citizens or decision makers are we ready to say that only parents who can afford comprehensive insurance will be able to take care of their sick children? What about all the uninsured working parents who care just as much about their kids? What about the poor and low-income parents who, up until now, thought they could at least rely on Medicaid if their kids needed to see a doctor or go to the hospital?

Even if you don't know a soul who has relied on Medicaid for health coverage, and even if your child has never been seriously ill, remember that children's hospitals are there if, heaven forbid, any of our children need them.

Cutting back on our commitment to children's hospitals will not help America's children. It won't help our country, either.



## APPENDIX 7: "TALKING IT OVER" (DECEMBER 9, 1995)

Joyce McCartan's youngest son, Gary, was shot to death by terrorists in his Belfast home just one month before his 18th birthday.

His mother had already lost other loved ones to the violent conflict between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland. She buried her "baby" in the new suit he had planned to wear at his wedding.

Joyce refused to give in to bitterness. After Gary's death in 1987, she founded the Women's Information Drop-In Centre in a poor neighborhood in Belfast. She continues to work for peace throughout Northern Ireland, bringing Catholic and Protestant women together to share their grief and to find ways to break the cycle of violence in their communities.

I met Joyce during a trip to Belfast with my husband last week. The President went there and to Dublin and London to convey American support for the peace brought to Northern Ireland when Catholic and Protestant leaders agreed to a cease-fire after 25 years of violence and death.

At a small fish and chips restaurant run by members of Joyce's community organization, I met with seven women united in their commitment to honor the memories of the more than 3,200 men, women and children who have died during "the Troubles."

They told me about their hopes and efforts for a lasting and just peace. They believe it can bring economic prosperity and social progress to both Catholic and Protestant communities.

The women I met are not high-level diplomats or professional negotiators. Nor are they elected officials. But it is clear that there would be far less hope for Northern Ireland if women like Joyce had not worked tirelessly among their friends and neighbors to knock down barriers, overcome suspicions and defy history.

Women were and are a driving force behind peace in Northern Ireland.

What unites them is their knowledge that, no matter their background or beliefs, they share the same tragedies: the loss of loved ones to bombs, to assassinations and to random gunfire, and the painful task of preserving families in the midst of poverty and political unrest.

Women are dropping ancient grudges that have caused so much pain and terror.

They are finding ways to make their faith a source of strength, not division. Mothers are integrating schools and summer camps, bringing together Protestant and Catholic children for the first time and refusing to pass on old traditions of hate, fear and mistrust.

Women in organizations like the one Joyce McCartan founded are working to solve the problems that have caused many young people to resort to violence — poverty, prejudice, limited education, joblessness and hopelessness.

They have created job training programs for young men and women who do not plan to go to college, counseled families, worked on ways to raise women's self-confidence and civic participation, and helped each other launch small businesses in Belfast's poorest neighborhoods.

"We have worked together over the years from both sides of the community. Nothing separates us," Joyce said.

On the same day that I met these remarkable women, my husband spoke at the Mackie plant in Belfast where Catholic and Protestant workers enter through separate doors but work side by side. Two children, one Catholic and one Protestant, introduced him.

"My first daddy died in the Troubles," said 9-year-old Catherine Hamill. "It was the saddest day of my life. I still think of him. Now it is nice and peaceful. I like having peace and quiet for a change, instead of people shooting and killing. My Christmas wish is that peace and love will last in Ireland forever."

That should be our hope not just for Ireland but for the Middle East, Bosnia, Haiti and the streets in America — anywhere children are at risk of losing their innocence and lives because of violence and hatred. If Joyce McCartan and Catherine Hamill can avoid hatred and bitterness, why can't all of us open our own hearts now and in the days and months ahead?

## APPENDIX 8: "TALKING IT OVER" (FEBRUARY 13, 1996)

A Marine Corps sergeant I know of has a lot in common with Magic Johnson. Like Magic, he has tested positive for HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Like Magic, he has small children. And like Magic, he is still healthy and feels he has a lot to give to his career.

But unlike the Los Angeles Lakers superstar, whose recent return to professional basketball after a four-year absence has been widely publicized, the Marine could be out of a job for good.

Thanks to a provision Congress inserted into the new defense budget, service members who have tested positive for HIV must be discharged within six months, whether or not they can perform their jobs. The recent news that boxer Tommy Morrison has tested positive for HIV raises serious questions about certain occupations where regular exposure to blood occurs. Precautions do need to be taken to ensure that healthy people are not endangered. But the military personnel who could lose their jobs are not boxers — they're not even in combat. In fact, many of them work behind desks.

That Marine, for example, is an instructor who has served for 11 years, first in the infantry and then training raw recruits for combat. He says his career in the military is the fulfillment of a lifelong dream: "I'm serving my country, which since I was a child was something I always wanted to do."

Now he's in danger of losing his home, his career and his dreams before he loses his health. If Congress' new policy is not repealed, he, his wife and their young children will have to move in with his parents. He will have to find a new job. "It would throw our world into chaos," he said.

Mostly, he is saddened and angry that some politicians cling to outdated and prejudiced assumptions about people with HIV, even as Magic Johnson proves them wrong. When Magic first tried to make a comeback in the NBA after announcing that he had tested positive for HIV, a number of players scorned him and said they didn't want to get near him on the court.

This time, he was welcomed back.

"I think it proves to everyone out there that people can live with the disease," the Marine sergeant said. "I feel I'm just as healthy as the Marine next to me. ... Who's to say they won't find something to let me live another 10 years?"

More than a thousand other military men and women are affected by this new policy. Half of them are married. Many have children to support. They include Gulf War veterans and others who have served in combat and as military engineers, lawyers, secretaries and computer programmers. On average, they have devoted 10 years of their lives to the military.

There is no justification, military or otherwise, for singling out one group for such unfair treatment. Just last week, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense characterized the policy as "unwarranted and unwise."

Discharging members of our Armed Forces who are trained and fit for duty would not only waste the government's investment in them, they said, it would "be disruptive to military programs in which they play an integral role."

Up until now, the military has treated HIV-positive service members the same way it treats people who suffer from heart disease, asthma or cancer. They can't serve overseas, in combat or aboard ship but are allowed to continue working in other jobs until they become too ill.

That will still be the case if the President and the military leaders have their way. The President signed the defense budget when Congress passed it because it contained funding vital to our national defense and to the quality of life of our men and women in uniform. But he is working hard to repeal the HIV provision.

Last week, based on the statement issued by the Joint Chiefs, the President said he believes the HIV provision is unconstitutional, and the Justice Department said it will not defend it in the almost certain event of a court challenge. He is also making sure that if any military personnel are discharged, they will receive the full benefits they would be entitled to if discharged for other medical reasons.

"I feel like I've served my country faithfully for all this time," the Marine instructor said. "I've stuck with it through thick and thin."

## APPENDIX 9: "TALKING IT OVER" (MARCH 19, 1996)

It's impossible to be in Washington in the spring without thinking of Lady Bird Johnson.

Every time I see daffodils on the parkways, I think of Mrs. Johnson. Whenever I see cherry trees blossoming along the Potomac River or tulips dotting the monument grounds, I think of Mrs. Johnson too.

I think of her because, more than anyone else, Lady Bird Johnson was responsible for planting hundreds of thousands of flowers and trees in our nation's capital and inspiring millions of Americans to do the same in their communities.

Now that I find myself in the role she filled so gracefully three decades ago, my admiration for her only grows.

When I talked to Mrs. Johnson recently, she told me about her love of nature and the environment and her belief that our natural surroundings play an important role in our lives.

Flowers, she said, kept her company as a girl growing up with few playmates in the East Texas countryside.

"To walk through the woods and see the understory of dogwood, it was like fairyland," she said. "To see the first violet — it was big news for me."

Thirty years ago, during President Johnson's administration, Mrs. Johnson decided to share her love of nature with the nation. "Beautification," as it was called, became her special cause.

Parks, town squares, playgrounds and even highways across the country came alive with newly planted trees and flowers. Garden clubs enjoyed new clout. Litter became a national enemy.

As Mrs. Johnson explains it, beautification was not just about gardening and landscaping. Conservation, city planning, waste management and urban renewal were all part of her effort to encourage Americans to make their environment more pleasing to the eye and to the spirit.

Mrs. Johnson traveled across the country, giving speeches, visiting local beautification projects and touring national parks.

"I hoped this would be a rippling wave — all this feeling and talk and work about enhancing the environment — that it would spread out across the land," she said. "Raising the level of awareness was most important."

The federal highway beautification bill, which focused on cleaning up junkyards and removing billboards along highways, was so strongly identified with her efforts that it was nicknamed "Lady Bird's bill."

President Johnson made no bones about who was the driving force behind it.

When he signed the measure, he handed the pen to the First Lady.

Transforming the nation's capital was one of her most energetic campaigns. When she first arrived in Washington, she remembers, the city's landscape was "pretty bare." There were "a few shrubs here and there, a few random tufts of grass, a sagging bench."

Through her Committee for a More Beautiful Capital, Mrs. Johnson worked with philanthropists and the Park Service to re-landscape, plant trees and flowers, and clean up parks, streets, schools and other public areas.

Mrs. Johnson wasn't only interested in beautifying the tourist spots but also the depressed inner city. The committee's motto was: "Plant masses of flowers where the masses pass."

"You want (flowers) to be seen and enjoyed. You want them to be used, to give pleasure," Mrs. Johnson said. "I hoped to add color to the city."

In all, nearly 2 million daffodil bulbs, 83,000 flowering plants, 50,000 shrubs, 137,000 annuals and 25,000 trees were planted in Washington. Ten thousand azaleas lined Pennsylvania Avenue. Mrs. Johnson planted a new group of cherry-blossom trees, a gift from the Japanese Embassy.

At the White House, she always enjoyed looking at the trees that different Presidents had planted on the grounds, especially the Andrew Jackson Magnolia that she could see from the second-floor Truman Balcony.

"I did so want to plant one that was a resident of our own part of Texas for Lyndon to name," she said. "The live oak doesn't grow that far north, so I chose a willow oak and planted it right close to Lyndon's office."

Mrs. Johnson has lived in the Texas hill country for many years now, but she says she still misses spring in Washington.

"It is just a great long symphony. The progress of spring always just lifted me a good bit. At the first faint green of the willows along the Potomac ... you knew it was not fall," she said. "Then pretty soon, there'd be that graceful yellow forsythia in people's yards. I miss it. It was a sort of a signature of Washington. It was a story that never grew old, and I loved every chapter."

Now 83, her passion for beautification has never waned. She founded the National Wildflower Research Center in Austin, which, she says, is "my last hurrah." And she

continues to encourage Americans to do more to protect and enhance the natural environment we all share.

"It is joy giving," she said. "One can think of it as an inheritance for your children and grandchildren and the future of our nation.

"It's a plus for your town, a plus for your heart. It's just a good thing to do."

## APPENDIX 10: "TALKING IT OVER" (MARCH 26, 1996)

Camp Bedrock is an appropriately named U.S. Army outpost south of Tuzla in Bosnia. Before I arrived there by helicopter earlier this week to see some of our troops, I had a hard time imagining what life must be like for the American men and women serving as part of the NATO peacekeeping effort in the former Yugoslavia.

Then, I visited the soldiers.

Never mind that the camp is surrounded by rock and mud and the weather has been cold, foggy and rainy almost every day. Never mind that breakfast, lunch and dinner often come in plastic packages. And never mind that "home" is a makeshift green tent pitched on a hilltop thousands of miles from family and friends.

The 20,000 American troops in Bosnia seem to understand the larger purpose of their being there. Nearly every soldier I met — from officers to enlistees to the men and women I visited in Camp Bedrock's MASH unit — told me that serving in Bosnia for a few months has made them appreciate how important their mission is.

As one artillery officer who patrols the Bosnian countryside explained to me, "When we came here more than two months ago, we never saw kids anywhere. The schools were empty. Now the schools are full, and we see kids playing outside."

Children do seem to offer the best reminder of why the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia is so important, not just for the Bosnian people but for Americans too.

The day before I left for Bosnia I met a group of American seventh-graders at the Baumholder Army Base high school in Germany. Many of their parents have been deployed in Bosnia at outposts like Camp Bedrock and Camp Alicia, the two remote areas I visited.

For the past few months, these children have been writing down their thoughts and feelings in journals, poems and letters to Bosnian pen pals at a school in Tuzla. Most of them talk about how sad and frightening it was when their father or mother had to leave the family to go to a place where tens of thousands of people had died in war.

"For the first time in my life, I felt pure fear," an eloquent student named Deanna Brauer wrote.

"I couldn't get past my anxiety."

Then, she and her classmates began reading letters from their Bosnian counterparts — letters describing what life is like when water and food run out, snipers are shooting around the clock and you have to flee your home and live in a bomb shelter for weeks at a time.



Letter after letter thanked the Americans for "sending" their parents to help bring peace to Bosnia.

"It was then that everything became clear to me," Deanna's journal said. "My dad was desperately needed by someone else. Though the fear still lingered, I was out of the dark. I understood why he had to leave."

As difficult as the deployment is for American service members and their families, visiting the outposts in Bosnia leaves no doubt that their sacrifices are helping restore peace and build bridges between people. In Bosnia, our military power is enhancing our interests and upholding our moral values. Our military — made up of men and women of all races, creeds and ethnic backgrounds — is itself an example for Bosnia of how people of different cultures can work together on a common enterprise.

I was glad to see that many of our troops recognize the profound impact they are having. They told me that they are not just rebuilding a country in Bosnia, they are helping rebuild the human spirit.

"Before we came, it was hard to fathom what was going on here," said a lieutenant I met at Camp Alicia, a U.S. Army outpost near the front line of some of the war's worst fighting. "Then, you go out in the villages and see all the damage. You see roofs blown off of houses. You see whole neighborhoods that were completely bombed out. You see people who had to survive for years with hardly any food to eat or water to drink.

"But now, wherever we go, the kids seem happy. They wave at us and smile. To me, that's reason enough to be here."

## APPENDIX 11: “TALKING IT OVER” (JUNE 25, 1996)

Not long after taking office, my husband came home from a jog early one morning to find Kenneth Weaver, his wife, Rosie, and their three children waiting to introduce themselves. One daughter, Melissa, was in a wheelchair. Eleven years old and battling a rare form of cancer, she had come to Washington through the Make-a-Wish foundation.

As the President was getting ready to leave, Kenneth grabbed him by the arm. He wanted my husband to know that the first bill he had signed as President — the Family and Medical Leave Act — had made a huge difference to the Weaver family.

"Mr. President, let me tell you something," Kenneth said. "My little girl here is desperately ill. She's probably not going to make it." But because of the family leave law, he was able to take time off from work to be with Melissa without fear of losing his job. It was, he told the President, "the most important time I ever spent in my life."

Six days later, Melissa died.

The Family and Medical Leave Act requires companies with 50 or more workers to grant up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-guaranteed leave to employees who need the time to care for children, spouses or parents with serious health conditions. It also grants time off for workers who are ill themselves and for parents who have just given birth to a new baby or adopted a child. In short, the law helps American workers avoid making an impossible choice between livelihood and parenthood.

When family leave became law in August of 1993, its opponents worried that it would hurt businesses and be abused by workers. But a recently released study conducted by a bipartisan commission has shown that those fears were unfounded.

As many as 3 million workers used the Family and Medical Leave Act during the 18 months covered in the study. Most took about 10 days off — far short of the 12-week maximum. Eighty-four percent of the leave-takers returned to their same employers. And some 90 percent of businesses reported that complying with the law required little or no extra cost.

In some cases, companies found that the policy actually helped them save money by reducing turnover and eliminating the expense of training new workers.

"If the ethical obligation we all have as employers isn't reason enough to support these types of leaves, the financial impact certainly is," Terri Wolfe, human resources director at Patagonia, a large clothing manufacturer, told the bipartisan commission. "The choice to implement family and medical leave policies is a matter of priorities."

Taking care of and spending time with a loved one who is seriously ill is an emotionally wrenching and physically draining process. I know from my own experience.

When my father fell ill just after we moved into the White House, I flew back to Little Rock and spent more than two weeks at his bedside. My father, mother, brothers and I spent hours reminiscing about the old days in our home on Wisner Street in Park Ridge, Ill. We laughed about our vacations to Pennsylvania and my brothers' childhood hijinks. We talked of Chelsea and our hopes for her. Although we didn't — and couldn't — say it in so many words, those weeks helped us strengthen our bonds of affection, respect and love. I'll always be grateful that I could be with my father before he died.

I was lucky because I didn't have to make a choice between family and work. I was no longer working as a lawyer, and my husband was President. I was able to give my family all the time and attention they needed.

The same should be true for all Americans.

This week, at Vice President and Mrs. Gore's annual family conference in Nashville — which this year focused on balancing the pressures of family and work responsibilities — the President announced several new initiatives to make America's workplaces even more "family friendly." He hopes to expand family leave to allow for 24 hours of unpaid time off each year so that parents can attend parent-teacher conferences and take children or elderly relatives to the doctor. And he wants to change labor laws to give workers the option of taking their overtime pay in time off from work.

We should all consider the family leave law a positive first step in our effort to strengthen families in America. We need to find other ways of giving American workers more flexibility to care for their children and their parents without hurting their employers' bottom lines.

The President never forgot his meeting with Kenneth Weaver and his daughter Melissa. They are a reminder of the difference one law can make in the lives of our children and families.

## APPENDIX 12: “TALKING IT OVER” (JULY 9, 1996)

When Alexis de Tocqueville came to the United States in the early 19th century, he observed that volunteer organizations, philanthropic associations and community groups had already become a hallmark of American citizenship and a distinctive part of our national life.

I thought about de Tocqueville's reflections on American democracy during my recent trip to Central Europe and the Baltic region. All of the countries I visited spent decades under communist rule. But today, they are newly independent. Their people are embracing democratic reforms and free-market policies, and seeking to regain their place in the Western democratic family.

There were many hopeful signs of democracy at work in the seven countries I visited. Free and fair elections are becoming the rule. Privatization is underway in most places. And with few exceptions, citizens can voice their beliefs without fear of government retribution.

All of these developments bode well for a reunited, democratic Europe. But democracy is not just about institutions; it's also about democratic values becoming part of people's hearts, minds and everyday lives.

That's why I was so encouraged to see the same phenomenon at work in Central Europe that de Tocqueville discovered in America more than a century ago: a sense of civic responsibility that encourages people to get together at the grass-roots level to solve problems and shape their own destinies.

In Estonia, I visited a local clinic that is the first in the country to offer a broad range of health services for women. I also had the chance to meet with representatives of non-governmental organizations involved in promoting civic education — not just teaching children the values and lessons of democracy but teaching teachers, business people, elected officials and ordinary men and women who are the lead actors in any free society.

In Hungary, I met with representatives of an organization that is helping the Roma — or gypsy — community overcome obstacles to education, employment and political participation.

In Slovakia, caring and involved men and women told me of their efforts to encourage citizen groups and volunteer activities in the face of government resistance.

In the Czech Republic, Poland and Romania, I met with volunteers and organizations working to safeguard the environment, promote the full participation of women in society, establish a free and independent press, and create a climate in which small businesses can flourish.

In many cases, America and Americans — in government, the private sector and non-governmental groups — are supporting these local efforts financially and with people on the ground.

What we are working for is much more than just tangible results. Through these partnerships, we are creating an ethos of responsibility, caring and initiative that is essential to democracy's survival and success. In short, we are creating an alliance of democratic values — an alliance based on the shared belief that no democracy can thrive without an engaged, informed and vigilant citizenry.

This is important because whether we live in new democracies or old ones, we face unavoidable challenges in the 21st century: the challenge of keeping the peace in a world where ancient hatreds are slow to die and new ones are too easily born; the challenge of giving all citizens the chance to fulfill their God-given potential and participate fully in the life of their countries.

These challenges are compounded because of the historical moment in which we live. It is a time of rapid economic change, increasing global competition and scarcer resources — a time when families in every country are burdened by the pressures of the mass media and consumer culture; when the gap between rich and poor is growing wider; when personal identity and work are tied to globalization and high technology; when women continue to be relegated to the margins of society in too many countries; when ethnic pride and national citizenship are too often viewed as mutually exclusive.

Democracy gives us the capacity to cope with these challenges. But democracy can only flourish in the post-Cold War era if we are able to convey the values underlying it — the values of opportunity, responsibility, community and respect for human dignity.

What I saw in Central Europe and the Baltic region was democracy being built from the ground up. What a promising sign that is for the future of Europe — and for nations and people everywhere who care about freedom and democracy.

## APPENDIX 13: "TALKING IT OVER" (SEPTEMBER 3, 1996)

Lina is a 14-year-old Palestinian girl who lives in the town of Jenin on the West Bank. Until a few weeks ago, the only Israelis she had ever come in contact with were soldiers who patrolled the area around the city. Meeting a teen-ager from Israel, much less making friends with one, was unthinkable.

But after spending three weeks in the United States with other Arab and Israeli teen-agers at a camp in the Maine woods, Lina says her outlook about Israel and Jews has changed. One of 170 Arab and Jewish boys and girls selected to participate in a program called Seeds of Peace, Lina will return to the Middle East this month with a greater understanding of the world she lives in — and the people she lives with.

"They're not just soldiers," she says of her Israeli counterparts. "They are human beings just like us. They have hearts, and they feel, and they don't like the situation either."

I've met with the boys and girls participating in Seeds of Peace several times since the program began in 1993. The first time they came to the White House was to witness Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin sign the peace accord in September 1993. They came again this week — after meeting with senators and with Secretary of State Warren Christopher — infused with hope about the prospects for peace in the Middle East.

Now 3 years old, Seeds of Peace brings together boys and girls from Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Qatar, Tunisia and Kuwait who show potential for leadership and diplomacy.

Most of the Arab children have never spent time with Jews. Most of the Israelis have never spent time with Arabs. In fact, some have lost family members and friends to the violence in the Middle East.

Seeds of Peace helps them leave the past behind and forge a vision for a peaceful future.

During three weeks at camp, they share bunks and meals, play sports together and participate in other traditional camp activities. In the evenings, they hold group discussions about politics and their daily lives. Along the way, they learn the art of conflict resolution and become more skilled at negotiating agreements.

They learn empathy, respect and how to agree to disagree about topics as sensitive as who should rule Jerusalem. They also learn how to listen, even when they don't like what they hear.

Seeds of Peace was the brainchild of John Wallach, a former journalist, in response to the World Trade Center bombing. "Treaties that are signed are just pieces of paper unless the peace is real in people's hearts," he says.

One of the first boys to participate, an Israeli named Yehoyada, said the camp experience was a perfect warmup for watching the signing of the historic peace accord in September 1993.

"It was like they put into practice what we did in camp," he says. "We had the feeling that we were showing them the way."

As Wallach hoped, Seeds of Peace has had a lasting effect on the children who participate.

Yehoyada, now 17, has visited friends in Egypt and Jordan. He also has remained friendly with Laith, a Palestinian boy he met through Seeds of Peace. Despite recent setbacks in the peace process — and the wariness of some family members — they have stayed in touch over the past three years. The two boys visited Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's grave together. This spring, Laith called Yehoyada after each of the bus bombings in Jerusalem to offer his condolences. "It makes you feel there is still hope," Yehoyada said.

A 16-year-old Jordanian girl named Sara found the program just as enlightening. When she returned to Jordan after participating last year, she led a seminar on the Holocaust to help educate Arab youngsters about the experience of Jews in World War II.

Each time I meet young people like Lina, Yehoyada and Sara, I am reminded that we adults have a lot to learn from them when it comes to overcoming stereotypes, bridging historical divides and learning to live in peace. Children often are our best ambassadors. They are our Seeds of Peace.

#### APPENDIX 14: "TALKING IT OVER" (MARCH 25, 1997)

I've been traveling in Africa throughout this Holy Week, when Christians all over the world celebrate the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. One of my favorite preachers, Tony Campolo, in a sermon titled "Sunday's Coming," makes the point that no matter how grim or hopeless life may appear, just as it did that first Good Friday, there is no permanent place for despair because Easter Sunday will dawn, bringing with it the hope of new life.

One does not have to be a Christian to appreciate the Easter message. People of all faiths — and those of none — need to believe that "Sunday's coming." Because if they do, they can change the world around them. That is what's happening right now in South Africa.

The peaceful transformation in South Africa is rooted in the Easter message of forgiveness and reconciliation. One key element of the nation's transition to democracy after four decades of apartheid is the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission headed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

When I visited members of the commission during my recent trip to South Africa, I was struck by how, in the most ordinary of conference rooms, people are undertaking the most extraordinary of efforts. They are working to complete their nation's healing after generations of injustice, inequality and brutality. And they are seeing to it that South Africans fully understand their past so that they may create a future in which every citizen has the opportunity to live up to his or her God-given promise.

One cannot spend time in South Africa without being inspired by the democratic awakening that is taking place there. Yet, as Americans know from our own history, building and sustaining a democracy is a complicated business. It takes patience, courage and — most difficult of all — a spirit of tolerance and unity that often conflicts with human nature and local history in many parts of the world.

The commission, appointed by President Nelson Mandela, is asking those who committed hate crimes during apartheid to come forward and confess. In return for telling the truth, they are given amnesty from prosecution.

It's a controversial undertaking but one that reflects the spirit of Mandela, Tutu and other anti-apartheid leaders. They believe that South Africa cannot move forward to true democracy and equality for all citizens without a spirit of forgiveness. They also know that forgiving has a prerequisite: knowing the truth.

As one witness before the commission put it: "I want to forgive, but I need to know who and what to forgive."

This is no easy task for all those whose loved ones died in the struggle for freedom.



The loss of any life is painful, but it is more painful still if it results from what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. called "the stale bread of hatred." For most of us mere mortals, forgiveness is often harder to summon than a desire to settle scores.

Yet, I met people during my stay in South Africa who are doing just that. Some of them are famous, like President Mandela, who took me on a tour of the tiny prison cell he occupied for many years on Robben Island. If ever a person had grounds for bitterness, it is he. But as he showed me the cell block and described the unjust conditions he endured, he also explained that imprisonment provided him time for reflection and learning. For him, Robben Island is not just a symbol of infamy; it is a testament to the triumph of the human heart and the human spirit's capacity for progress.

Others working for reconciliation in South Africa are less well known than President Mandela but equally critical to building a new democracy. At a ceremony I attended with Archbishop Tutu honoring those who had died, I saw the faces of women who listened in silence as the names of their sons, brothers, uncles and fathers were read aloud. I saw the tears in their eyes as a tree was planted in remembrance of their families' sacrifices. But I also saw the bravery in their hearts as they sought to help their country conquer decades of hate.

These women weren't denying the past or forgetting the bloody markers on the road to freedom. Nor were they choosing to erase painful memories of a child or relative who died.

They simply were turning their rage to more positive ends. They were sending a message that it is time to acknowledge history, no matter how tragic, and to arm children with the knowledge they need to build a peaceful, free and democratic South Africa.

As I watched them, I could only think of the progress that could be made if the same spirit of forgiveness echoed around the world — in the streets of Belfast, the killing fields of Burundi and the countryside of Bosnia.

We all have a stake in supporting South Africa's work of nation-building. What happens in South Africa has implications for all of us around the globe who love freedom and democracy. Not only are the South African people seeking their own destinies and creating a new nation. They are helping to shape the course of human history.

Most of all, South Africans are teaching the world the lesson of this Holy Week, when we all celebrate the passage from loss and despair to hope and redemption. I hope the lesson of Good Friday and Easter lasts us all through the year and beyond as old hatreds yield to the promise of new and peaceful beginnings.

## APPENDIX 15: "TALKING IT OVER" (APRIL 22, 1997)

The first time I remember volunteering was in grade school, when my friends and I put on a neighborhood Olympics to raise money for a local charity. Not only did we have great fun working on the project, we felt a special sense of pride and accomplishment that we were doing something to help other people.

My youth group at church also provided me with chances to do volunteer work. We performed chores in the community, visited nursing homes and held car washes for the church. But what I remember best is the baby sitting we did for the children of Mexican migrant workers who harvested fruits and vegetables in the fields outside of Chicago.

These opportunities gave me an early taste of what volunteering can mean in one's life. And over the years, I have seen what volunteering means in the life of our country. Whether through tutoring children, picking up litter on a highway or providing free legal counsel to a needy client, we all have a chance to help address problems in our communities and enjoy the satisfaction that comes from being good neighbors.

What we may not realize is that, in the process, we are also strengthening our democracy. Democracy depends on citizenship. And citizenship depends on people voluntarily contributing their time and performing services that their communities and their country need.

As the French visitor Alexis de Tocqueville observed more than 150 years ago, the greatest strength of America rests on individual and collective efforts to improve our communities and our nation. Citizen service is vital to fulfilling the ideals of our democracy. Yet today, at a time when our country faces economic and social challenges of a newly competitive world, we see a decline in volunteer activity, a drop-off in voting and other indications that Americans are no longer as eager or as willing to do their part to promote the common good.

This is a disturbing trend and one that speaks volumes about how we view ourselves as Americans. And it's one reason that the President has called for the three-day Summit for America's Future, which will consider ways to renew the spirit of service across our country.

On Sunday in Philadelphia, the President and I will join former Presidents Bush and Carter, along with summit co-chairs Gen. Colin Powell, Henry Cisneros and Lynda Johnson Robb, to kick off the summit. For three days, educators, business leaders, community organizers and volunteers will discuss the importance of volunteer activity and focus on just how we can meet the special needs of children and families.

Today, as children and families cope with stresses as varied as poverty, poor health, the lure of tobacco and drugs, and competition for jobs, it is no surprise that so many young people have lost faith in themselves and hope in their futures.

We owe it to them to feel a greater stake in their lives and what they have to offer to their country.

At the summit, we will ask all Americans to pledge their best efforts to ensure that we meet the needs of every child with recommendations about what each of us can do. None of this will require a lot of money or an advanced degree but simply time and a commitment to serving our nation's children. Here's what the summit will ask:

First, that we make sure that every child has an ongoing relationship with a caring adult, whether it's a mentor, tutor or coach.

Second, that we work hard to provide safe places for children to learn and grow — from schools to libraries to after-school programs to recreational centers that can offer safe havens for boys and girls who need positive outlets for their creativity and energy.

Third, that we promote healthy lifestyles for our children from the earliest years on. This should not be left solely to health professionals. Any of us can volunteer to help immunize children, for example, or spend time with young mothers and fathers who need guidance about the responsibilities of parenthood.

Fourth, that we provide young people with marketable skills through effective education and training. Business leaders have a special role to play here. I have seen examples of businesses around the country that have adopted schools, offered jobs to high school students and prepared young men and women for the workplace through experiences such as summer internships.

And fifth, that we expand opportunities for children of all ages to give back to their own communities and learn what it means to do something for someone else.

As Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Everybody can be great because everybody can serve."

These are ambitious, and necessary, goals. But none of them will matter to our children or our country if our work stops after three days of meetings in Philadelphia. All of us — parents, teachers, business executives, religious leaders, politicians, grass-roots advocates and, most important, young people themselves — need to do our part, day in and day out across America.

So let's use this summit to recognize our own duties and obligations to one another by making the time to serve our communities. Whether we are teaching a child to read, organizing a neighborhood crime watch, helping out at a hospital or serving our fellow citizens in any other way, we can make a difference. Through actions large and small, we can build a true community and fulfill the greatest responsibility of citizenship.

## APPENDIX 16: “TALKING IT OVER” (SEPTEMBER 2, 1997)

Before long, Princess Diana will enter into legend. Millions of words will be written about her, but the woman I knew was much more than a fashion plate, an icon or even a princess. She was a person who, like so many of us, worked to raise her children, shape her identity and use her own special gifts to make a difference in the world. Since her tragic death last weekend, I've been thinking about what she meant to me and to all of us.

I first met Diana at official ceremonies commemorating the 50th anniversary of D-Day in June 1994. Shortly afterward, she told a mutual friend that she wanted to talk with me. I was eager to get to know the woman behind the dazzling smile. But, given our busy schedules, it took months to arrange a meeting. We finally got together in October of that year for a luncheon in her honor at the British Embassy in Washington. During the meal, we sat near one another — and at a table with Colin Powell and Prince Bandar, the Saudi Ambassador. They are both charmers who could take anyone's mind off her troubles. Diana bantered throughout the lunch, and then, after bidding goodbye to the other guests, we met privately.

We talked of the challenges of public life and the struggle to protect our children from the scrutiny of the world. She told me of her new hopes and plans for using her position to focus attention on the needs of suffering people. Although she seemed vulnerable and unsure about the direction her life was taking, I sensed in her a reservoir of resilience and determination that would help her take charge of her own life and help others, despite great obstacles.

Over the next few years, we stayed in touch. I saw Diana for the last time in June of this year, when she was visiting Washington to highlight her campaign to ban anti-personnel land mines. Over tea in the Map Room of the White House, she spoke passionately about her recent trip to Angola and her upcoming one to Bosnia. We shared our thoughts about the progress being made worldwide in the fight against AIDS, and I described my impressions of the efforts to end forced prostitution in Thailand, a place she planned to visit in November.

I kidded her that the upcoming auction of her gowns for charity was the smartest closet-cleaning strategy ever devised.

And we talked, as always, about our children. She brought me up to date on her sons William and Harry — how quickly they were growing and how she was working to provide them with childhoods as normal as possible. She asked me about Chelsea's college plans and wanted to know more about the American University system.

Our time together passed too quickly. We walked out into the ground floor corridor, sometimes called the Hall of First Ladies, where I introduced her to the excited teenage daughter of a family staying with us. A White House photographer took our picture standing in front of the portrait of one of my predecessors from more than a century ago, Frances Cleveland. Like Diana, she was a young bride who quickly found herself

drawing on her own reserves of grace and poise as she became the obsession of a national media that tracked her every move. I will always be struck by the poignancy of that photograph.

Diana and I hugged goodbye. I watched her walk away a more outwardly confident and effective young woman than the one I had met three years before. I was impressed by her courage and persistence in getting up and going on whenever life knocked her to the mat. And I was delighted that she appeared happier and more at peace with herself.

I will miss seeing her, miss hearing the pride in her voice as she talked of her sons, miss listening to her accounts of the people she tried to help, and miss watching her build a life of integrity on her own terms.

I am reminded of what she once said about the "disease" of not being loved. What she meant was that the absence of love could make anyone less than fully human. I hope all who mourn her passing will honor her memory by reaching out and bringing love and comfort to all who suffer. Few, if any of us, will ever look as beautiful on the outside as she did, but all of us can strive to develop that inner beauty of the heart and soul that she valued and understood was more lasting and important.

## APPENDIX 17: "TALKING IT OVER" (SEPTEMBER 9, 1997)

In the short span of a week, the world lost two remarkable people: Princess Diana and Mother Teresa. Though separated by a multitude of differences, these two women were united by their desire to help others. As I flew to London to attend Diana's funeral, I thought of the pictures I had seen of the two of them together. Like so many others, I was left to wonder what we were going to do to keep the spirit of service they embodied alive.

Long before I ever met Mother Teresa, I knew of her work and mission to bring love and comfort to the poor and afflicted in India and around the world.

Still, nothing I had heard or read about her prepared me for the diminutive, determined and joyful woman I met at the National Prayer Breakfast in February 1994. Bill and I greeted her before the program started, and when she asked if she could see us privately afterward, we quickly agreed.

Standing on a step so she could see over the podium, Mother Teresa mesmerized an audience packed into the largest ballroom in Washington. She spoke without notes, calling on all of us to care for the poor and defenseless in society and making a plea against abortion.

After her speech, Bill and I sat together with Mother Teresa on folding chairs in the work space behind the curtain at the back of the stage. She took my hand in both of hers and told me she had been praying for me and my husband and for the work we were trying to do, especially in trying to provide health care to the poor. We also discussed abortion. Though we disagreed respectfully about birth control and whether abortion should be legal, we agreed that adoption should be promoted. We talked about doing more to make adoption a realistic option for pregnant women who do not want to keep their children — and to make adoption easier for qualified adults who want to provide a child with a permanent, loving home.

Then, Mother Teresa asked me to help her open a shelter in Washington, D.C., for infants and young children awaiting adoption or placement with foster families. I said I would, though I had no idea how. I did, however, have the feeling that keeping my promise to Mother Teresa would involve a fair amount of hard work.

To find a way through the complicated legal and regulatory issues that surround opening such a home in the District of Columbia, I set up a coalition of community leaders and government representatives.

The process took a year and a half. Over that time, I had the joy of corresponding with Mother Teresa. Letters would arrive, written in her own hand, telling me where she had been and what she had been doing, and asking, of course, how we were coming with the house for children — "the gift of love," she called it. At the top of each letter was an inscription: "As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren. You did it to me."

I saw that Scriptural lesson in action when Chelsea and I traveled to India the following year. In New Delhi, we visited a home for children run by the Missionaries of Charity — the order Mother Teresa founded in 1950. The building we walked through was crowded with cribs holding babies. As I examined the surroundings, I thought about the struggle I was having back in Washington trying to fulfill my promise to open a home for babies there. There is no way the New Delhi home could have passed muster with the regulators in D.C., but the crowded rooms contained something no regulation could ever provide: enormous love for children who had been left to fend for themselves.

The next time I saw Mother Teresa was back in Washington for the long-awaited opening of the Mother Teresa Home for Infant Children on June 19, 1995. Before the ceremony, Mother Teresa and I toured the home with the Sisters who would staff it. We were delighted by the sunny rooms filled with bassinets, changing tables and rockers. Before we went outside to cut the ribbon, she said to me: "This is a gift of love, but I've been told I cannot give the gift of peace because I don't give peace to anyone." What she meant, I believe, is that her work compelled her to "disturb the peace," to upset the complacency of the comfortable to help the poor.

From the moment she received a calling from God "to serve Him among the poorest of the poor" to the moment she passed away at 87, Mother Teresa gave selfless service, love and, yes, peace to countless others. It is in honor of her memory and her work that I will travel to Calcutta on behalf of the President to attend her funeral on Saturday. It is only fitting that people of different faiths from all over the world will come together to express their sorrow at her loss — and to be reminded, once again, that feeding a child, healing a wound and caring for the dying ultimately help repair the human spirit.

## APPENDIX 18: “TALKING IT OVER” (NOVEMBER 4, 1997)

Two years ago, during a visit with Bill to Northern Ireland, I shared a pot of tea with Joyce McCartan. A Belfast mother who had lost her youngest son and more than a dozen relatives to sectarian fighting, Joyce was determined to bring Protestant and Catholic women together to work for peace and a better future for their children. At the end of our visit, Joyce gave me the teapot we used because I was impressed by how it had kept our tea so warm.

Not long after we met, Joyce passed away. Last week, I took that teapot, which I use every day in the private kitchen at the White House, back to Northern Ireland when I delivered the inaugural Joyce McCartan Memorial Lecture at the University of Ulster. I took it with me to remind the women of Northern Ireland that the issues all women discuss over a pot of tea and the issues that matter most to families — how we care for and protect our children — are the issues that unite us all. Joyce liked to call herself “a family feminist” because strengthening families was at the root of her efforts.

I have been privileged to travel widely on behalf of our nation. In these travels, I have had the opportunity to meet many of the world's leaders. Yet it's often in small groups — sitting around a kitchen table, sipping tea with women like Joyce, sharing concerns and talking about our families — that I've learned the most valuable lessons. And one of those lessons is that an extraordinary power is unleashed when ordinary women reach out to their neighbors and find common ground — when they begin working together to lift up themselves, their families and their communities.

In Northern Ireland, countless women like Joyce McCartan have endured the loss of loved ones to the Troubles — and then moved on, refusing to give in to bitterness or dwell in the past. Joyce started the Women's Information Drop-In Center, a safe place where women of all backgrounds and beliefs could come together. Other community organizations, like the National Women's Council of Ireland, are working toward the same end.

These straightforward efforts to share grief across sectarian lines have blossomed into dynamic alliances to end poverty and violence.

When the women of Northern Ireland have come together, they have spoken out and demanded political action — to advance not the interests of individual groups but the issues that affect all the people of Northern Ireland: health care, education, job training and peace. These women recognize that while the violence that plagues Northern Ireland has ancient roots, it is fueled, in large measure, by a lack of economic and educational opportunity.

On this visit, I saw how peace can and must be Northern Ireland's destiny I had the chance to see many of the same women I met two years ago. Though they may attend different churches on Sunday, they all say the same silent prayer for a child to return home safely from school or for a husband to make it back safely from work. Though they



belong to different religions, seven days a week, their families struggle with the same deep-rooted causes of violence — poverty, limited education, unemployment. For the women I met with, love of family and hope for the future run deeper than calls to hatred.

I felt this same commitment when I met with a group of young people. We gathered in Belfast's beautiful new Waterfront Hall, a state-of-the-art cultural center that had been built by Protestants and Catholics alike. They had come together for a province-wide forum to discuss ways to empower young people. For them, widening the circle of economic and educational opportunity was the key to peace and stability. As one young woman said, her generation was determined that their children would not have to "grow up in an environment where you were afraid to walk on the wrong side of the street."

Joyce McCartan, I imagine, would feel warmly about those words. After all, it was courageous souls like her who showed the young people in the audience the way toward a better, more peaceful future. To be sure, no one should have any illusions about how hard the road to peace will be. But as I told people in Dublin, Belfast and London, my husband is committed to standing by those who take risks for peace. Joyce McCartan was a risk taker. So are the men and women gathered around the table at the peace talks today. I hope they are not only talking about serious political issues but also sharing quiet asides about their lives and relearning how much they have in common. And I hope they are doing so over a cup of tea.

## APPENDIX 19: “TALKING IT OVER” (JANUARY 20, 1998)

The White House is the only executive residence in the world that is regularly open to visitors without charge. More than 1.5 million come through each year, and the President and I are committed to keeping it open.

Sadly, last week, on one of the public tours, a woman pulled a can from her purse and sprayed reddish-brown paint on two busts and the wallpaper in the Blue Room. The Ceracchi busts, which were acquired by the White House in 1817, are of Amerigo Vespucci and Christopher Columbus. The good news is that, with the help of a National Gallery conservator, the paint is coming off.

Unfortunately, we haven't had as much luck with the wallpaper, and it remains to be seen whether we will be able to replace only the damaged strips or will have to re-paper the entire room. Those of you who have visited the White House — or seen one of the televised tours — probably remember the Blue Room, the oval centerpiece of the main floor and one of my favorite places in the White House.

When I moved here in 1993, I learned that the Blue Room needed attention. I should not have been surprised. Imagine the wear and tear of over a million visitors each year, members of the press with their heavy equipment, and the constant moving of furniture for state dinners. The draperies and upholstery in the room, last refurbished in 1972, had become soiled, worn and sun-damaged and needed to be replaced, as did the badly worn Chinese carpet.

Over the course of the next two years, I met with the Committee for the Preservation of the White House, a group of historians, curators, designers and concerned citizens, to review, discuss and choose fabric samples and textures. You can imagine how nervous I felt about making final decisions on such a public and important room. But I've been delighted with the outcome. The walls are now papered with a rich chamois-colored design from the early 19th century, an excellent backdrop for the historical portraits of some of our early presidents. Bold borders pick up the blue-and-gold silk of the new upholstery and curtains.

None of this could have been accomplished without the help of the White House Endowment Fund, a non-profit charitable organization created to provide permanent support for the White House collections of fine art and furnishings and to preserve the historical character of the public rooms.

Congress appropriates funds for the daily operation and maintenance of the White House. But until the creation of the Endowment Fund, refurbishing projects and acquisitions were paid for primarily by appeals for private contributions.

It was Rosalynn Carter who, in 1979, first initiated the effort to establish a permanent endowment for the White House and Barbara Bush who, in 1990, created the current fund with its goal of raising \$25 million. I inherited that responsibility, and I'm proud to say

that, with the help of many wonderful people, we not only have met but have now exceeded that goal.

This week, the President and I hosted a dinner to thank the members of the Endowment Fund's Board, including former and current chairs Dottie Craig and Nancy "Bitsy" Folger. They, along with all the men and women — and even children — who have contributed to the fund have made a gift to America's future. And what better gift than the assurance that the beauty and history of the White House will be preserved and carried with us as we enter the next century?

It is hard to think of a building that has touched more of America's history. Every President, with the exception of George Washington — who chose the location and approved the design — has lived in the White House. Since John Adams moved in on Nov. 1, 1800, there has been no issue of importance to our republic that has not been considered, discussed, debated or resolved under its roof. I think of President Lincoln struggling to find ways to hold the Union together, Eleanor Roosevelt reporting back to her husband on what she saw in her travels around the country, President Kennedy playing with his children, my husband deliberating over crucial issues from Iraq to Bosnia to balancing the budget.

To date, in addition to the refurbishment of the Blue Room, earnings from the Endowment Fund have paid for marble restoration and carpeting in the East Room, new rugs in the Red Room and the acquisition of important works of art.

The White House is America's home — a living museum. Though the President and I are privileged to live here, we know that we are short-term tenants. Now, with the help of the White House Endowment Fund, we will leave confident that future visitors will be able to experience the same pride that the President and I feel every day in these magnificent rooms.

## APPENDIX 20: “TALKING IT OVER” (JANUARY 27, 1998)

As I write this, my husband is working hard on the State of the Union message that he will deliver tonight. Yesterday, we both attended a child-care event here at the White House, after which I flew to New York to visit a wonderful after-school program and speak at a dinner honoring the U.S. Committee for UNICEF.

People ask me how we've managed to stay focused on our work this week while the White House grounds have been overrun by members of the press chasing one rumor after another. Let me try to explain.

First, we've been here before. Political opponents of my husband have tried, since the day he announced his candidacy for President, to defeat him with false accusations, rumor and innuendo. Experience has taught us both that with patience and faith, the truth will prevail.

Second, the White House has been overwhelmed by expressions of encouragement and support, each of which makes it easier to persevere.

And, finally, my husband was elected to be President of the United States. That's more than a full-time job, one which takes every ounce of concentration and energy he has to give. He cannot afford to be distracted by constant firestorms of allegations if he is to do the job he was sent to do.

The State of the Union address is one of the most important of the year, laying out, as it does, the President's vision for the direction of the nation. Contained in his speech are ideas and programs that will serve this country well into the next century. I was so pleased that the President chose this important address to highlight a project that's very important to me — Saving America's Treasures. That is what I had planned to write about this week and what I want to turn my attention to now.

Have you ever thought about what you'd grab first if your house were on fire? After making sure your family and pets were safe, most of you would probably want to save those items that are irreplaceable symbols of your family's history: photographs and old movies, yearbooks, precious nursery-school era artwork, baseball cards, your grandmother's love letters.

As I walk through the East Room of the White House, I often remember First Lady Dolly Madison, who, when the British burned the White House in 1814, rolled up the original Declaration of Independence and Gilbert Stuart's portrait of George Washington, saving them both for posterity.

Unlike Dolly Madison, this country isn't faced with a fire that could destroy the precious symbols of our past — instead, our past is literally crumbling, chipping and disintegrating away in our libraries, museums, archives, historic sites and private holdings.

We are confronted by a truly urgent need to save the documents, artifacts, buildings and sites that tell our history and preserve our identity as Americans.

The Star Spangled Banner, the flag that flew over Fort McHenry and inspired Francis Scott Key to write the poem that would become our National Anthem, is in serious need of restoration. The Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights must be re-encased soon or will face deterioration.

The Monroe School in Topeka, Kan., which was desegregated by the landmark Supreme Court decision *Brown vs. Board of Education*, stands as one of the true monuments of the Civil Rights movement. But it is in such disrepair that it's unsuitable to tell the remarkable story that changed our nation.

Many of our prehistoric sites — like Mesa Verde, Colo., and Chaco Canyon, N.M. — need preservation to stabilize their ancient structures. And, according to the National Park Service, not only are Thomas Edison's house and laboratory in "dire" condition, but papers belonging to the father of modern science — including his letters and lab notes — are in need of cataloguing and proper storage.

Some 80 million brittle books in libraries and other collections need to be preserved through repair and microfilming, including 12 million that the National Endowment for the Humanities calls "unique and endangered."

As with the treasures in our own homes, these precious places and things — along with millions more tucked away in communities all across the nation — comprise the collective memory of America. We cannot save everything, but at the same time, we cannot allow this heritage — these symbols that bind us together — to be lost.

In celebration of the millennium, the White House is leading a national effort to showcase the achievements and events that define us as a nation. The White House Millennium Council, which I lead, will provide every American with opportunities to learn our history, preserve our cultural heritage and give permanent gifts to the future.

As part of the celebration, the President included in his State of the Union address a national initiative called "Save America's Treasures," which will direct public and private funding to our nation's most urgent preservation needs as identified by federal and state agencies.

I hope each of you will participate in this unique opportunity to save our historical and cultural legacy so that we can take it with us into the next millennium. Perhaps there's a monument in your town square covered in graffiti, a cemetery overgrown with weeds, a historic building threatened by development, a library lacking in resources, a piece of art tucked away, historic photographs yellowing in a county clerk's file cabinet.

This initiative gives every American, from the kindergarten class to the corporate board, the opportunity to be part of our Millennium celebration.

The President has asked each of us to make a gift to the future. I can't think of a better gift than Saving America's Treasures.

## APPENDIX 21: "TALKING IT OVER" (SEPTEMBER 2, 1998)

This week, my husband and I are traveling to Russia and Northern Ireland. In light of Russia's political and economic crisis, many have wondered whether now is the appropriate time for the President to make this trip.

Actually, a visit by the American President may carry particular significance for the Russian people now as they confront the difficult challenges ahead. The United States has an enormous stake in Russia's future, and as Russia struggles to build democracy and economic reform, we must remain engaged and demonstrate our support of its effort.

In addition, there are important foreign policy and security challenges facing the global community in which Russia must play a key role. And the Russian people must know that, in times of difficulty, the United States will not turn its back on them.

Likewise, in the face of the recent violence in Northern Ireland, the President's visit stands as a tribute to the courage and determination of the people of Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic who voted to make the Good Friday peace agreement possible. The President's presence also signals his support for the rapid implementation of the agreement and demonstrates that the United States will continue to be deeply involved in supporting the peace process and economic development both in the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland.

While in Northern Ireland, I will have the opportunity to announce the creation of a different kind of partnership — smaller but, in many ways, just as important to the future of the region. It's a partnership designed to bring the children of Belfast one of the fundamentals of childhood — a safe place to play.

This new partnership will join together PlayBoard, a group based in Northern Ireland and dedicated to improving the quality of children's lives by providing opportunities to play, with KaBOOM!, a \$2.3 million non-profit corporation based in Washington, D.C., that brings individuals, organizations and businesses together to build safe and accessible playgrounds in some of this country's toughest neighborhoods. Their goal is to build 1,000 playgrounds in the United States by the end of the year 2000.

Darell Hammond, the CEO of KaBOOM!, explains why he thinks playgrounds are so important: "At KaBOOM!, we believe in play because it is the 'work' of children.

When we take away opportunities for children to test their physical skills, develop self-esteem and interact constructively with their peers, we effectively make these children 'unemployed.' By building playgrounds, we invest in our children and the safety of the communities on which our businesses depend."

Sadly, millions of the world's children don't have safe places to play. Instead, they play in the streets or other dangerous places that are often littered with garbage, broken glass,

abandoned cars and discarded drug paraphernalia. In some parts of the world, the dangers include even bombs, snipers and land mines.

For eight years, PlayBoard has studied the impact of violence and sectarianism on the children of Northern Ireland, where 70 percent of 9- to 11-year-olds have witnessed a bombing or shooting and where children as young as 3 manifest sectarian hatred when they play.

PlayBoard's Chief Executive, Antoinette McKeown, says, "Our goal is to create an environment to bring out children's natural instinct to play freely — to work out their negative experiences through play and to find a way of exploring their own true identities. We hope to rid our children of stereotyping and name calling."

Now, with the support of its American partner, KaBOOM!, PlayBoard hopes to create a unique new play space in the middle of Belfast. As Antoinette describes it, "It won't be a traditional playground with swings and roundabouts. It's intended to be an environmental haven with a series of natural challenges designed by children themselves." For many of Belfast's children, this play space will give them their first opportunity to play with children of other faiths.

In exchange, PlayBoard will work with KaBOOM! to share what it's learned about the value of therapeutic play with communities in this country. The two groups also hope to host an international conference next year on the value of play.

Darell and Antoinette know that KaBOOM! and PlayBoard are not only building safe places for children to play. They are also building community spirit and pride, bringing people together, breaking down barriers and inspiring hope.

The partnership between KaBOOM! and PlayBoard reminds us that what the children of Northern Ireland need is not so different from what the children of our inner cities need — or for that matter what children everywhere need. They need to play — to explore their environments freely, without fear or prejudice. Only then will they develop the skills to become the leaders of nations that work together so their children can play in peace.



## APPENDIX 22: "TALKING IT OVER" (NOVEMBER 4, 1998)

It was British sculptor Henry Moore's "Draped Seated Woman" that first brought Bill and me together. After standing in line to register for school classes one afternoon, we found ourselves in front of the Yale University Art Gallery, which had a Mark Rothko exhibit inside and works by Moore in the sculpture garden. A labor dispute had closed the museum's doors, but Bill managed to get the two of us in by offering to pick up trash. This was our first date.

I have always loved sculpture and, shortly after Bill's first inauguration, started thinking about bringing favorite American pieces to the White House.

With the help of a friend, designer Kaki Hockersmith, and J. Carter Brown, the former Director of the National Gallery of Art the idea for an outdoor sculpture garden that featured works by contemporary American artists began to take shape. The plan was approved by an enthusiastic Committee for the Preservation of the White House and overseen by the White House Curators.

It was easy to pick the perfect location — the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden, named for the First Lady who believed so strongly that art should be a part of everyone's life. When I first moved to the White House, I spent a lot of time in this peaceful refuge, which appears to have been designed with sculpture in mind.

Museums in Nebraska, Texas, New York and Arkansas organized the first four exhibits, intended to highlight sculpture from public museums representing different regions of the country. The fifth, planned by the National Gallery's Director, Rusty Powell, featured some of the magnificent works found in museums here in Washington. And the sixth celebrated the rich diversity of Native American sculptors, whose art I have admired for years.

Over 6 million visitors to the White House have walked past the Sculpture Garden since October 1994, when the first exhibit opened. Included among the American masterpieces in that group were George Segal's "Walking Man" and Alexander Calder's "Five Rudders."

Subsequently, tour participants have enjoyed works by Georgia O'Keeffe, Willem de Kooning, Roy Lichtenstein, Isamu Noguchi and Allan Houser.

Among my favorites of the 83 pieces that have been shown at the White House are those that incorporate movement.

During the second exhibit, Bill and I would often just sit and watch George Rickey's "Two Lines Oblique, Atlanta," a 35-foot stainless steel sculpture that quivered slowly in the wind. And I found myself repeatedly reaching out to touch Harry Bertoina's "Tonal Sculpture," just to hear the lovely sounds it would send floating over the garden.

I will never forget the clear November morning when Phil Minthorn, a Nez Perce Indian offered traditional blessings before the opening of the Native American collection.

This week's unveiling of the seventh exhibit, which was organized by the Brooklyn Museum of Art, marks a departure. Subtitled "Inspired by Rodin," this group of 12 sculptures includes three pieces by the French master.

Often called "the father of modern sculpture," Auguste Rodin worked in Paris in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. But his influence on American artists has been dramatic and can be seen in several of the works included in this group, among them de Kooning's "Clamdigger," Segal's "Girl Standing in Nature" and Noguchi's "Woman."

Although dozens of museums have been involved in choosing and lending appropriate pieces for the exhibition, none of them could have undertaken the expense of mounting such a series alone. For that, we turned to one of this country's most important arts patrons, Iris Cantor, who, along with her late husband, B. Gerard Cantor, and the Cantor Foundation, agreed not only to underwrite the expense of the exhibits but also to loan the two centerpieces of the current show — castings of Rodin's "The Three Shades" and "The Thinker," who appears to contemplate the other pieces in a most inscrutable and dramatic fashion.

The outpouring of appreciation for each of these exhibits has been overwhelming. Visitors often tell our tour guides how much it means to them to be able to view these provocative sculptures while waiting in line to see the White House.

One of my great pleasures living in this wonderful house is to be able to wander among the sculptures in the garden and know that so many others have shared the experience as well.

Visitors to the White House can see "Twentieth Century American Sculpture at the White House: Inspired by Rodin" through September 1999. If you stop by the White House web site ([www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)), you can take a virtual tour of the series.

## APPENDIX 23: "TALKING IT OVER" (MARCH 17, 1999)

In 1900, near the end of a lifetime spent fighting for women's rights, Susan B. Anthony described her bold vision for the future: "The woman of the 20th century will be the peer of man. In education, in art, in science, in literature; in the home, the church, the state; everywhere, she will be his acknowledged equal. ... All hail to the 20th century."

How prophetic these words sound today.

Early in this century, the full participation in civic life that women now take for granted remained out of reach. Women were constrained in their rights to own property, testify in court, file a lawsuit and serve on a jury. By law, a woman's husband was assumed to be the guardian of her children, and in many states, a married woman could not open a bank account. Most remarkably, women could not exercise the most fundamental symbol of citizenship — the right to vote.

My own mother was born before women could exercise this basic privilege. Yet, now, it's all too easy to take for granted how far we've come. Many of us forget what life was like before the invention of the vacuum cleaner, the dishwasher and frozen food. From winning the right to vote to gaining access to the halls of academia, corporate boardrooms and playing fields, our lives have changed in ways that even Susan B. Anthony could never have imagined.

As we move into the next century and the next stage of our journey toward full participation in public life, we who remember the struggle that our mothers and grandmothers — and even some of our fathers and grandfathers — undertook to secure the rights women enjoy today must cherish and preserve these memories for the generations that will follow.

The President and I have invited all Americans to join us in "honoring our past and imagining our future" as the turning of the millennium approaches. This week, as part of our celebration of National Women's History Month and our series of Millennium Evenings at the White House, we honored the contributions of women in the last century and imagined the changes that lie ahead.

We were joined by three distinguished feminist scholars.

Historian Alice Kessler-Harris talked about women as volunteers and reformers — a role that grew out of their exclusion from formal citizenship rights. Women like pioneer feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman and anti-lynching crusader Ida B. Wells Barnett stepped beyond their households to bring social justice to the disadvantaged. Spurred by examples such as these, millions of women organized anonymously to promote change and build social institutions around issues they cared about, including public safety, health and education.

Professor Kessler-Harris ended on a cautionary note, wondering who will become volunteers and social activists as women move in even greater numbers into the workplace. "This is an important moment," she noted, "to reflect on how we can sustain the values and the visions that have motivated women's citizenship over the past century, use them to strengthen democracy in the United States and extend the boundaries of social justice for us all."

Yale historian Nancy Cott took us on a tour of the struggle for political rights from the days when female waitresses weren't allowed to work at night through the battle to win the vote and the effort to pass the Equal Rights Amendment. She, too, reminded us that knowing about our past can help us imagine a day when we will enjoy even more inclusive rights.

Finally, Smith College President Ruth Simmons used one phrase to sum up the dramatic changes that have taken place in the lives of women in the last 100 years. She said, "Today, they are able to choose their path." She went on to predict: "Women of the next century will be molders of their future and proprietors of their fate. Provided that society continues to protect that freedom, women will have that most precious thing — ownership of themselves."

Every woman in this country who struggles to balance work and family, who has to decide whether the benefits of taking a promotion outweigh the costs to her children, or who worries about how she'll pay her bills if she divorces her husband knows that our work is not done. But inspired by the memory of those who came before us, we can muster the courage to take the next step. After all, as Susan B. Anthony said in her final public speech, "Failure is impossible."

## APPENDIX 24: "TALKING IT OVER" (MAY 26, 1999)

Last week, I became an honorary Park Ranger. How proud I was to join the ranks of "the green and the gray," the dedicated men and women who care for this country's most important historical and natural wonders.

The occasion was a visit to the Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado, the last stop on my Southwest Treasures Tour — a four-day visit to some of that region's natural, scientific, historical and artistic treasures.

Mesa Verde encompasses 4,000 archeological sites, including 600 cliff dwellings — the greatest concentration of pre-Columbian cliff dwellings in the world.

As I visited the largest, called Cliff Palace, I tried to imagine what it must have been like more than a hundred years ago when the first non-native people happened on the unexpected site — an alcove concealing more than 100 rooms. What they discovered was the remains of a rich and complex culture that once included thousands of people who thrived on farming, weaving and baking. Today, that culture is preserved in the spiritual life, weaving and pottery of the 24 Native American tribes that trace their ancestors to Mesa Verde.

But Mesa Verde itself is in danger of being lost to erosion, exposure and the impact of millions of visitors, and if it disappears, it will take a piece of the nation's collective memory with it. That's why it's so important for Americans to protect such treasures for future generations.

In Colorado, I met a very special group of preservationists who are doing just that. For three years, the third graders of the Foothills Elementary School in Boulder, Colo., have raised money to help save Mesa Verde by doing extra chores and selling "Adopt a Ruin" calendars they make themselves.

One of the students explained why this project is so important to her: "I think 'Adopt a Ruin' is a good idea because in 40 years my kids will probably want to see the ruins, so I want to save the ruins," she wrote. "So far, I have raised \$15. ... The best part of this is when I grow up, I think it will be great to see the expression on my kids' faces."

No one could have captured the reason for preserving Mesa Verde — and all of America's cultural, historical and natural treasures — better than this third-grader.

It is this very spirit that the President and I hoped would take hold of the country's imagination when we created the White House Millennium Council — choosing as our theme "Honor the Past — Imagine the Future" — and when we launched the Save America's Treasures program.

Over the course of the past year, I have been privileged to travel around the country, visiting some of our most precious landmarks. And I have watched with incredible pride

as a network of private and public individuals and groups — from the third graders at Foothills Elementary to the National Trust for Historic Preservation and corporate donors like Polo Ralph Lauren, General Electric and American Express — has mobilized to ensure that these chapters of our history are never forgotten.

We launched the first "Save America's Treasures" tour last summer in front of the Star-Spangled Banner in Washington. Since then, I've visited a number of sites — Louis Armstrong's house in Queens, N.Y., the Conservatory of Flowers in San Francisco, Calif., and many more

At every stop, I've witnessed a celebration, not just of a prized local treasure but of our democracy, our citizenship and the richness of the American mind and spirit. On last week's tour, though, there was even more, reminding me of the diverse cultural heritage that is the heart and soul of our nation.

At the Grand Canyon, I announced new public support for a portion of the Grand Canyon Greenway, a 73-mile network of trails that will bring walkers, hikers and those in wheelchairs closer to the wonders of the Grand Canyon. In Flagstaff, Ariz., I was awestruck by the sight of Mars through a 100-year-old telescope at the Lowell Observatory.

In New Mexico, I visited the Palace of the Governors — the oldest public building in the United States. I traveled to Albuquerque, where people have come together to adopt the Southwest Pieta sculpture, teaching their children about art, preservation and their very rich cultural heritage in the process. And, at the Pueblo of Acoma in the midst of a vital Native American community, I toured one of the oldest churches still standing on American soil.

What I have learned in the last year is that historical preservation is not only about saving physical objects. It is also about saving our living heritage, our values and our culture so that we can pass them on to future generations. Just as Park Rangers are caretakers of our national parks, we are all caretakers of our history.

## APPENDIX 25: “TALKING IT OVER” (OCTOBER 6, 1999)

Ten years ago, in the heart of Europe, the unimaginable happened. Where once the Berlin Wall divided East from West, families were restored. Where once tanks crushed the hopes of thousands, workers and students gathered freely, demonstrating without fear. Newspapers that once printed only lies, boldly reported the truth. Dissidents, once led away in handcuffs, became presidents of free republics.

Ten years ago, we shared in the celebration. But when the celebration ended — when the television crews packed up their cameras and the world's attention turned to other events — the story did not end. In fact, for the people of Central and Eastern Europe, Russia, the Baltics and Central Asia, the real story was just beginning. For they faced a future of grim choices and frightening challenges.

How would these nations find the will to endure massive layoffs and triple-digit inflation on the path to free markets? How could they overcome decades of repression, dictatorship and mistrust to build democracies that served all their citizens? How could the principles of democracy take root in societies where ethnic tensions, once suppressed by the iron hand of Communism, were re-emerging?

Choosing the path of democracy, free markets and freedom required vision, courage and moral leadership. Ten years ago, it was not an easy choice. But I have visited many of these countries, and I have seen firsthand that it was the right choice.

Nowhere are the possibilities more evident than in Poland, the first stop on a week-long trip this week that is also taking me to Slovakia, Italy and Iceland.

Poland stands as a testament to the fact that democratic and free market reforms — when decisively and thoroughly implemented — do work. It's been three years since I last came to Warsaw, and just driving around town, I can see many signs of growth and change. New businesses and shopping centers are flourishing. New cars crowd once empty streets. Cell phones ring in cafes, parks and on sidewalks, signaling that a new middle class — the backbone of any democracy — is emerging.

This morning, I met with a remarkable group of women entrepreneurs who, with the support of a USAID small-business assistance project and a non-governmental organization called the Association of Women Entrepreneurs, have created thriving companies that not only offer much-needed services and products to their communities, but also employ hundreds of workers.

Wieslawa Ewa Plucinska arrived in Warsaw with one suitcase and no money.

Today, she runs Poland's second largest management counseling firm. Irena Szonomicka-Orfinger launched her cosmetics business 16 years ago with one worker. Today, she employs 250, and her products are sold in more than 13,000 retail outlets in Poland, and more around the world. Maria Sobiech's factory, which employs 100 in

the manufacture of women's business apparel, said to me, "We are the opportunity." Indeed they are, and their success sends a message of hope and optimism to women — and men — all over Eastern Europe.

But the progress I've witnessed on this trip has not been limited to the commercial. New local governments are taking shape and becoming stronger every day. Dozens of newspapers, magazines and radio stations are reporting the news, openly praising and disagreeing with the nation's leaders. And where the Warsaw Ghetto once stood, Jewish life is thriving again.

In 1996, I visited the Lauder-Morasha School, which was housed in one of the few buildings remaining from the infamous ghetto. Founded two years earlier with 18 students, the school now enrolls 165, and is housed in a bright and spacious new building. As I listened to the children singing and visited the classrooms where they busily studied Hebrew and English, history and math, I was filled with hope.

I know that the past decade has been difficult. And for too many, the path of reform has not yet led to greater freedom or greater prosperity. But just as reform is working in Poland, reform will work for the rest of the region as well.

The path is long, but the United States is committed to standing by as a strong and supportive partner along the way — building democracy, vibrant free markets and a healthy civil society. For democracy will survive only when governments are accountable to the public, and free markets will thrive only when every hard-working citizen enjoys the benefits.

The people I met today are the opportunity. They are the future. And the future is in good hands.



## APPENDIX 26: "TALKING IT OVER" (MARCH 8, 2000)

How many more children will die at the hands of classmates before we say, "Enough"? How many more funerals will we watch? How many more troubled young people will be led away in handcuffs — children one minute, murderers the next — until Congress takes steps to end this epidemic?

In the last two and a half years, gunmen ranging in age from 6 to 18 shot and killed 25 students and two teachers on school property, wounding another 65. No one will soon forget the scene of terrified teenagers fleeing Columbine High School last April as two classmates, who had spent months meticulously planning the carnage, killed 12 students and a beloved teacher. Or the image of middle-schoolers in Jonesboro, Ark., gunned down as they heeded a false fire alarm to leave their building

But these heinous crimes did not prepare Americans for the shooting last week of 6-year-old Kayla Rolland. Kayla was apparently shot in the chest by a 6-year-old classmate as they waited to go to the playground. Kayla's assailant had been staying with his uncle in what police suspect was a "crack house," where neighbors had reported nightly gunshots. It appears that the boy shot Kayla with a stolen gun he discovered stashed under some blankets in one of the bedrooms.

Upon hearing news of the tragic shooting, the President echoed the sentiments of many Americans: "How did that child get that gun?" and "If we have the technology today to put in these child safety locks, why don't we do it?"

This week, he convened a meeting of Congressional leaders to break the logjam and urge them to pass common-sense gun legislation by April 20, the anniversary of the Columbine shootings.

Eight months ago, after the Vice President cast the tie-breaking vote, the Senate passed a juvenile crime bill that would have mandated child safety locks, banned large ammunition clips, extended the Brady Law to violent juveniles, and required background checks for gun show sales. If the Senate's bill had made it to the President's desk, Kayla Rolland might be alive today. Unfortunately, the Senate bill never even made it to a conference committee meeting.

The House passed a much weaker bill, and to this day, Republican leaders have refused to schedule a conference to discuss a compromise bill.

This unconscionable failure to act is attributable to the National Rifle Association's influence and threats to target and defeat members of Congress who support any gun laws.

While Congress fails to act, gunfire continues to take the lives of a dozen American children every day — over 3,000 children dead since Columbine. It is time for Congress to put America's children above the influence of the NRA — to reject their hateful

tactics, and pass the common-sense gun laws contained in the pending juvenile crime bill. In addition, the President has asked for support to develop smart guns that can only be fired by the adults who own them; to require new handgun buyers to first get a photo license showing that they have passed the Brady background check and a gun safety course; to hire 1,000 new gun prosecutors; and to hold adults responsible when they allow children access to guns.

In a country of 270 million people, where it is estimated that there are 200 to 250 million handguns, we know that no law can stop every act of gun violence. But as the Brady Law has proven, laws can make a difference. Brady background checks have blocked gun purchases by 500,000 felons, fugitives and stalkers. And gun crime is down by more than 35 percent since 1993.

There is something that you, too, can do: On Mothers' Day — May 14 — you can join me in Washington for the Million Mom March, when we will either celebrate the passage of sensible gun legislation, or protest Congressional inaction.

The inspiration for the Million Mom March came to Donna Dees-Thomases last August as she was watching the news of the Granada Hills Jewish community center camp shooting. She remembers her response that day: "The images of terrified children being led in a line from the carnage that had just taken place inside were too much to bear. They looked bewildered, confused and scared to death." One week later, Donna applied for a permit to march on the Mall in Washington, D.C.

Donna is calling on mothers, grandmothers, stepmothers, godmothers, foster mothers, future mothers, and all others willing to be "honorary mothers" to become part of her crusade.

I hope you will join Donna, the President and me, as we call on Congress to enact legislation that will take and keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children.

Nothing less than the lives of our children is at stake.

## APPENDIX 27: "TALKING IT OVER" (MAY 17, 2000)

It was August of 1910. Furniture store owner Benjamin Benedict, frustrated that black residents of Washington, D.C., were barred from the city's segregated theaters, determined to build a cultural palace in the heart of one of the most vibrant black neighborhoods. Upon completion, the 1,500-seat Howard became the first large theater for African Americans in the United States.

The Howard Theater sits in a part of the nation's capital known as Shaw. Once called the "Black Broadway" because of its profusion of theaters, dance halls and artistic energy, the Shaw neighborhood was a major contributor to the Harlem Renaissance.

Washington, D.C., native Duke Ellington, when he wasn't playing the Howard, hung out at Frank Holliday's pool room next door. President Franklin Roosevelt and his wife, Eleanor, were frequent audience members.

In addition to Ellington, the list of artists who performed over the decades included another Washington native, Pearl Bailey, as well as Billie Holiday, Sarah Vaughan, Sammy Davis Jr., Jackie "Moms" Mabley, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald, Charlie Parker, Ray Charles, B.B. King, Dick Gregory, Sidney Poitier, and the Supremes — who made their first stage appearance at the Howard. On the roster of other Motown greats were the Platters, Gladys Knight and the Pips, James Brown, the Temptations, and Smoky Robinson and the Miracles. The Howard was not only a grand symbol of black pride and equality, it was also a destination for black audiences, and an important base for black performers.

Ironically, once the civil rights laws of the 1960s were passed, and African Americans were allowed to attend Washington's downtown theaters, the audience began to fall away. The riots that followed the assassination of Dr. King struck the Shaw neighborhood particularly hard, forcing the theater's closing in 1970. In 1973, the building was added to the National Register of Historic Places. But by the 1980s, the neighborhood around the theater had disintegrated into one of the meanest parts of the city. The once-grand Howard stood dark.

If the Howard Theater is left to disintegrate, an important piece of America's history will crumble with it. For although the Howard was an African-American theater first, its history tells the story of a time when Jewish, Latin, Eastern European and other minority groups were also banned from playing in "whites-only" theaters. The Howard stage welcomed all performers — it was an oasis of diversity and integration, where performers of diverse backgrounds could celebrate and share their talents.

Walking into the lobby of the Howard evokes an era gone by.

Schoolchildren can read the history of the period in their schoolbooks. Civil rights leaders can evoke the spirit of the times in lectures and speeches. But nothing conveys

the soul of the Shaw neighborhood, and the theater that was its heart, like walking into the Howard itself.

Over the course of the last several years, local preservation groups have undertaken efforts to save the Howard — with little success. The building stands as a stark reminder of the darkest days of the nation's capital — windows boarded, and doors sealed.

In 1998, in his State of the Union address, the President announced his intention to create "a public-private partnership to advance our arts and humanities, and to celebrate the millennium by saving America's treasures, great and small." To focus public attention on the need to save threatened national treasures, the White House Millennium Council and the National Trust for Historic Preservation joined forces to designate sites like the Howard and its neighbor, the Dunbar Theater, as Save America's Treasures "official projects."

In addition to the national recognition that "official projects" receive, they are eligible for matching grants to assist in the conservation, rehabilitation and ongoing care of these precious sites. In many cases, preservationists and activists across the country struggled for years to raise the funds to restore beloved local treasures like the Howard, often without success. I am pleased that the heightened profile of the sites that have won official designation, many of which I have visited over the course of the last two years, has helped community groups generate significant new sources of funding.

This week, the Howard and the Dunbar, which was built in 1921 and named after this country's first critically acclaimed African-American poet, Paul Laurence Dunbar, received designation as official Save America's Treasures projects. The Howard won the special distinction of becoming the 500th official site.

When its restoration is complete, the Howard, with its two movie theaters, live entertainment complex, restaurants and production center, will reflect the renaissance that is taking place across the city.

It is one thing to read about the Harlem Renaissance and the great black performers in history books. It is quite another to see it, walk through it, and experience it firsthand. Historic structures, original documents, works of art and authentic artifacts inspire us as nothing else can.

As we continue to celebrate the millennium year, the hundreds of Save America's Treasures projects will stand as gifts to the future, shining jewels that honor our past and preserve our identity as a community and as a nation.

## APPENDIX 28: "TALKING IT OVER" (JUNE 21, 2000)

This past Saturday, I took a step back in time, reacquainting myself with an old friend. At the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site in Hyde Park, N.Y., I had the pleasure of naming Mrs. Roosevelt's cottage, Val-Kill, an official Save America's Treasures project.

Val-Kill is one of a collection of buildings nestled in a 180-acre area that was originally part of the vast Roosevelt family estate. It was Franklin Roosevelt who, in 1924, suggested that Eleanor build a fieldstone cottage on the site so that she and her friends could enjoy a permanent year-round retreat.

Sharing FDR's concern about the exodus of rural New Yorkers to large cities in search of jobs, Mrs. Roosevelt believed that if farm workers learned manufacturing skills in addition to agriculture, they could rely on a second source of income when farming was not profitable. So, a year after the Stone Cottage was completed, Eleanor and three friends constructed a second, larger building to house Val-Kill Industries.

For 10 years, local men and women worked in the Val-Kill factory, turning out replicas of Early American furniture, pewter pieces and weavings. A novel undertaking, the factory attracted considerable attention, including a story in the New York Times under this forward-thinking headline: "Woman-Run Factory ... A Feminine Industrial Success."

In 1936, Val-Kill Industries — business down after the Depression — closed, and Mrs. Roosevelt began to stay in the cottage herself. After the death of her husband in 1945, it became her permanent home.

To walk through Val-Kill today is to take a step back into Eleanor Roosevelt's life. The furnishings reflect her personality — jelly jars side by side with priceless family heirlooms. Photographs depict a steady stream of visitors, from the 150 "neglected and abandoned boys" of the nearby Wilwyck School, to Winston Churchill, Marian Anderson, Jawaharlal Nehru and John Kennedy, who arrived in 1960 seeking her support for his presidential run.

"My mother-in-law once remarked that I like to 'keep a hotel,'" she explained. "And I probably still do. There usually seem to be plenty of guests, and they may include almost anyone from the Emperor of Ethiopia to my newest great-grandchild. Sometimes, there are so many guests that they arrive by busload — perhaps a group of college students from various foreign countries ... or perhaps a crowd of 75 or so employees of the United Nations who have been invited for a picnic."

Val-Kill Cottage was the place that allowed Mrs. Roosevelt to live and work on her own terms, offering her the independence she needed to champion her beliefs and articulate her ideas. It was at Val-Kill that, as the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, she drafted large portions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and wrote many of her daily "My Day" columns.

History professor Allida Black is editor of the Eleanor Roosevelt Papers at George Washington University, where she is assembling, organizing, annotating and publishing the vast collection of columns, letters, articles and interviews that have been scattered around the world until now. Professor Black says of Val-Kill: "It was a place vibrant with commitment to social justice and spirited debate. It was *the* place reflective of Eleanor Roosevelt's spirit and democratic vision."

After Mrs. Roosevelt's death in 1962, the cottage was divided into four rental units, and in 1970, along with the surrounding property and buildings, it was sold. But concerned citizens rallied in opposition when the owner announced plans to demolish the house and develop the property. The citizens won out, and in 1977, the property became the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, the first such site dedicated solely to a First Lady.

Imagine the loss to history — the loss to our generation and generations to come — if Val-Kill had been replaced by a strip mall, or Mrs. Roosevelt's letters and papers had disappeared. More and more, the woman Harry Truman called the "First Lady of the World" is taking her place in history. But there is no better way to know her than to walk through the rooms where she herself said, "I used to find myself and grow." And there is no better way to understand her influence on democracy and freedom around the world than to preserve and publish her papers.

Of all the wonderful projects that the White House Millennium Council has organized to celebrate the new millennium, Save America's Treasures is perhaps closest to my heart. For without the publicity and matching federal and private funds that official Treasures projects receive, many of our national treasures — like Val-Kill and the Eleanor Roosevelt papers — would be gone forever. Now, thanks in part to the generous contributions of many women inspired by Eleanor Roosevelt's example, this important site will be preserved and protected, as will the ideals that she stood for.

Eleanor Roosevelt once wrote that universal human rights begin "in small places, close to home." Indeed, it was in her home — a converted furniture factory — that she found the strength and the energy to champion her belief in the fundamental dignity and worthiness of mankind.

I hope one day you will have the opportunity to visit Val-Kill, where you'll find Mrs. Roosevelt's strength and energy alive, and maybe even a little contagious.

## APPENDIX 29: “TALKING IT OVER” (JULY 12, 2000)

Last month, the President announced that, at \$211 billion, our budget surplus this year will be the largest in history. Over the next 10 years, the surplus — after protecting Medicare and Social Security — will reach almost \$1.5 trillion, exceeding even our own projections of just four months ago.

Our booming economy did not occur by accident or coincidence. Rather, it came about because we maintained much-needed fiscal discipline, while expanding trade and investments in our people and our future. If we are to continue to enjoy these good times, we must not abandon the path that brought us to this place. We must instead identify and invest in our most pressing priorities.

Among these priorities is providing affordable and dependable medical care to the elderly and disabled — just what, 35 years ago, the Medicare system was created to do. But over the course of these last three decades, the face of medicine has changed, nowhere more than in the use and availability of prescription drugs.

Last February, in the budget the President presented to Congress, he proposed a long-overdue, voluntary prescription drug benefit that would offer medicines to seniors at affordable prices. Last month, in the wake of the record economic numbers and a new study that showed a 10 percent increase in the cost of prescription drugs over the past year alone, the President strengthened his proposal.

Meanwhile, Republican House members, just waking up to the importance of this issue to the American people, offered their own package — a private insurance plan that even the private insurers refuse to support.

Under the President's plan, all beneficiaries would be guaranteed a defined, accessible, stable benefit for the same premium — no matter where they live. Medicare would subsidize beneficiaries directly and pay for prescription drug costs the way it pays for any other benefit. For a monthly premium of \$25, seniors would enjoy a zero deductible, a 50 percent discount on the cost of their medicines, and a guarantee that annual out-of-pocket costs would not exceed \$4,000. In addition, all medically necessary drugs and access to local pharmacies would be ensured, giving seniors the peace of mind that comes from knowing that they can get the treatments they need where and when they need them.

In contrast, under the Republican plan, private insurers would determine deductibles, copays and benefit limits, with room to manipulate the system in ways that could leave the oldest and most disabled essentially uncovered.

Moreover, private plans could limit access to pharmacists and needed medications. Although premiums and benefits would vary from plan to plan, sponsors estimate the average premium at \$37 per month, over 40 percent higher than the President's.

The President recognizes that providing a voluntary prescription drug benefit is only one of the challenges that he must face if the Medicare system is to remain healthy for generations to come. Accordingly, his plan would also increase payments to hospitals, teaching facilities, home health care agencies, and other providers. And it would include the Vice President's proposal to take Medicare off-budget, so that, like Social Security, the taxes citizens pay for Medicare could never be diverted for tax cuts or other government spending.

We're fortunate to live in a time of historic prosperity, but as long as three out of five seniors lack the dependable drug coverage they need, we have not lived up to our responsibility as a nation.

Just days before the House leadership refused even to allow a vote on the President's plan, offering instead what amounted to nothing more than an empty promise, scientists announced one of the most important scientific breakthroughs of our generation — the decoding of the human genome. This monumental achievement is bound to lead to the availability of new life-saving treatments and medicines for many of our most dreaded diseases. How ironic that, if the Republican plan prevails, many seniors and people with disabilities won't be able to afford them.

As the President said shortly before the House vote last week, "The bottom line is this. (The Republican) plan is designed to benefit the companies who make the prescription drugs, not the older Americans who need to take them. It puts special interest above the public interest."

Hard as it is to believe, there are fewer than 35 days left in the legislative year, and time is running out if this Congress is to meet its obligations to its constituents. It's time to make tough choices. It's time to listen and to trust the American people to know what they want, what's important, and what's right. It's time to pay down the national debt, strengthen Medicare, and provide a dependable, affordable prescription drug benefit to America's senior citizens.



## APPENDIX 30: “TALKING IT OVER” (NOVEMBER 22, 2000)

At times, over the past week, as I traveled with my family in Vietnam, I was overcome with emotion. Thirty years ago, when our countries were at war, I never could have imagined I'd see Vietnamese and Americans working side by side at an excavation site, searching for the remains of an American pilot. With us at the site were the pilot's two sons, looking on and hoping that, after all these years, they would finally bring their father home. It is a moment I will never forget.

I will also never forget the welcome that the Vietnamese people gave us when we arrived, stopping their bicycles and mopeds, smiling and waving as we passed by. We can never erase the past — nor will we completely erase the pain felt by so many men and women on both sides. But we can strive together to make a brighter future for all the people of Vietnam.

This will no doubt be one of our family's very last trips overseas while my husband is President. I wanted to join him on this historic visit to help strengthen relations between our countries, and to see firsthand the role that women are playing to build a more prosperous Vietnam.

When we landed in Hanoi and drove in from the airport, I saw women working in beautiful green fields. And in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, I visited many successful women-run businesses. One woman I met was the head of one of the first State enterprises to be privatized and listed on the new Vietnam Stock Exchange. She represents the promises of the new economy, and yet, it took over a year for her to convince her colleagues that privatization was the way to go. Today, the size of her workforce has more than tripled, and stock values have multiplied by 20.

In 1995, when I spoke at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and the NGO Forum in Hairou, I was impressed by the large Vietnamese delegation, made up of women from every walk of life. They joined 50,000 others from around the world, all determined to improve the lives of women. We spoke different languages and came from different countries and communities. But with one voice we proclaimed that, in this century, economic progress depends on the progress of women. Political progress depends on the progress of women. Women's rights are human rights, and human rights are women's rights.

This week, I listened to the women of Vietnam calling for change — just as I have listened to so many others around the world.

In a village outside of Hanoi, I listened as several women talked excitedly about the small loans that had changed their lives.

One woman borrowed \$20 five years ago to buy a tofu machine. She has since borrowed — and paid back — much more. She couldn't conceal her pride as she demonstrated her

tofu-making techniques, and explained that she and her husband have saved enough to build a new house — all because of that first \$20 loan.

All over the world, I have witnessed the changes that women like this can effect in their own lives and in the lives of their families, if only they are offered the same rights, respect, education and economic independence as men. No country will prosper in the new century if women are denied equal rights and responsibilities; when they are valued less, fed less, fed last, overworked, underpaid, and subjected to violence or trafficking.

Soon I will be closing an extraordinary chapter in my life and beginning another that I'm sure will be just as full of promise and challenge. When I take my seat in the U.S. Senate, I will remember the women I have met around the world — women whose determination, struggles and triumphs have transformed the lives of so many. It is up to all of us to speak out when these women are blocked from owning or inheriting property or having custody of their children. We must speak out when women are stopped from organizing NGOs and freely expressing their views.

We must speak out in the face of human rights abuses or a muzzled press; when religious freedom is suppressed or political expression denied. Every leader must remember that there is no greater influence on whether a family, a community or a country succeeds than whether its women and girls have access to education. The free market holds no promise when millions of a nation's children cannot read or write.

When I was in Hanoi, the Vietnamese Women's Museum displayed the winning posters in an art contest called "Toward Gender Equality in the Year 2000." One of the pictures, drawn by a 7 year old, shows a young girl driving a car full of other girls — girls who are doctors, teachers, nurses and students. I will carry this image with me into the Senate, for this is the future we must promise not just our daughters, but our sons as well.

## APPENDIX 31: "TALKING IT OVER" (DECEMBER 20, 2000)

The Women's Bank occupies a one-room building in western India. The teller's counter is an old kitchen table covered with cloth. Bank clerks record all transactions by hand, on yellowed sheets that resemble worn-out telephone books. When I visited in 1995, I saw poor women who had walked 12 to 15 hours from their villages to take out loans — some as small as \$1 — to invest in dairy cows, plows or goods that could be sold at market.

The most vivid image that has stayed with me from that trip happened there. Although the women in that room were from rural areas with little contact outside their communities, and although most of them certainly didn't speak English, they all stood together and sang as one, "We Shall Overcome."

Later that year, I traveled to Beijing as part of the US delegation to the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, an event that drew 50,000 women from around the world, 7,500 of them Americans. In Beijing, the United States joined 189 other states agreeing to the "Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action," a document that addressed 12 areas of concern regarding the advancement and status of women.

The issues were: women and poverty, education, health, violence, armed conflict, the economy, power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement, human rights, the media, the environment, and female children. Determined that we would return from Beijing steeled to act rather than write a report and put it on a shelf, the President named an Interagency Council on Women on the eve of our departure for China.

"The Women's Conference is going to talk about education and domestic violence and grass-roots economics, employment, health care, and political participation," said the President. "And we don't intend to walk away from it when it's over. I'm going to establish an interagency council to make sure that all the effort and good ideas actually get implemented when we come back home."

I was pleased to serve as the honorary chair of the conference in Beijing, and agreed to continue in the same role on the Interagency Council. Donna Shalala led the Council for 2 years, at which time the Secretary of State took over. The progress we've made in the intervening half-decade is a testament to their leadership, and cause — particularly now as the members of this administration move on — for celebration.

Earlier today, in the East Room of the White House, several hundred women gathered to do just that — to celebrate and honor every woman in the audience, but especially the two secretaries.

In the audience were women who had traveled with us to Beijing, many of them representing non-governmental organizations.

There were people who have worked to pass legislation combating domestic violence, ending trafficking, and supporting microcredit. There were members of the press who turned a bright light on the egregious human rights abuses still plaguing women.

There were those who helped us build the Vital Voices Democracy Initiative and who are now working to create the Vital Voices Global Partnership to continue the work they started. And there were NGO leaders who have stood, spoken and inspired us to action so many times. As many of us prepare to leave, it will fall to them to ensure that the next Administration continues these fights.

Finally, there were cabinet members and other administration officials — no administration has ever had so many women appointees. Donna Shalala jokes that there are pieces of legislation passed by this administration that were never seen by a man until they reached my husband's desk.

The shift in foreign policy has been dramatic under Madeleine Albright. She took women's issues and made them an integral part of US foreign policy. In her words, "We changed the way people think."

Recently I was talking to a man who commented that most observers talk about the development of technology as the single most important change of the 20th century. He looked at me and said, "The most important change is the role of women."

I agree. But I must inject a note of caution: Looking into the 21st century, the question I find most important is this: What will we do with our new role?

Earlier this year, many of us traveled to the United Nations for Beijing + 5, the special session called to review and appraise the progress made in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action. I was honored to speak at the session, and when I finished my remarks, two women in the audience stood up and began to sing. Spontaneously, every other woman in that vast auditorium joined them, raising their voices to sing "We Shall Overcome."

It happened again this afternoon — this time in the White House. As our celebration ended, every woman in the room gathered round the podium and sang again. We have come so far in five short years, but as the words to the song imply, we aren't there yet. And we won't be until women in every country participate fully and equally in their families, their communities and their governments.