

# Voters will reject Mondale's gender graft

It's the morning after. It's the morning after Walter Mondale's selection of Geraldine Ferraro, after the enthusiasm, the incredible emotion, the outright shock. The person who comes to mind is not the mythical Archie Bunker who lives in her Queens congressional district, but a quite real man who grew up just the other side of the East River in Manhattan — Al Smith. He lost in a landslide.

## Richard Cohen

Smith was the first Roman Catholic to run for the presidency. His defeat by Herbert Hoover in 1928 was due to a number of factors, not the least his being a Democrat in a Republican era. But he was also a Catholic, a New Yorker who spoke the strange language of that strange city, and a living, breathing, bowler-topped stereotype of the big-city ward heeler. America rejected him like a transplant from another species. It was a graft that would not take.

History is too fickle to repeat itself precisely and, besides, Ferraro is a vice presidential, not presidential, candidate. But in her own way Ferraro is also a stereotype — a New Yorker (complete with accent), a feminist, a clubhouse Democrat, a liberal, a Catholic and (you might have noticed) a woman. If that were not enough, she has already managed to do the politically unpardonable — take the spotlight away from Walter Mondale. If that continues, and it certainly will for a while, the Democratic ticket will be sunk.

But that's just for starters. Where Ferraro is most like Smith is that she reinforces a stereotype. His was ethnic; hers is sex. Increasingly, pollsters and political analysts are beginning to use a term when it comes to the Democratic Party — feminization. If there is anything to it, Geraldine Ferraro has to personify it.

The so-called feminization theory is based on the numbers. Most of the recent polls show Ronald Reagan running anywhere from 30 to 40 points ahead of Mondale with white, male voters. He also leads with women. Reagan is even ahead by whopping margins with young male voters — the ones who traditionally have cast their first vote for a Democrat. A whole lot of political analysts will tell you that these males are simply voting their pocket books. Life has been good to them under Reagan and their memory is not of the Depression, but of

economic stagnation and inflation under Jimmy Carter.

But an increasing number of other analysts, while conceding the importance of economics, say the gender gap is based on just that — gender. Reagan is a man's man, a word-chopping, horseback-riding president with a macho style and foreign policy to boot. For 3 1/2 years, he has been telling the Soviets where to get off, building up the military and, if need be, invading Caribbean islands to make the world safe for medical students. Men, in particular, seem to like that sort of thing.

The Democratic Party, on the other hand, projects a different image — one solidified by Carter. It has seemed weak, indecisive, concerned with image — a nag who seems to be saying over and over again, "Now boys, don't fight." The candidates who have espoused that view, George McGovern and Carter in 1980, were defeated. The Democratic candidates who bristled militarism — John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson — won. And the winningest Democrat of this century, Franklin Roosevelt, demolished his party's stereotype. His accent was from Groton, his wealth and social standing downright Republican.

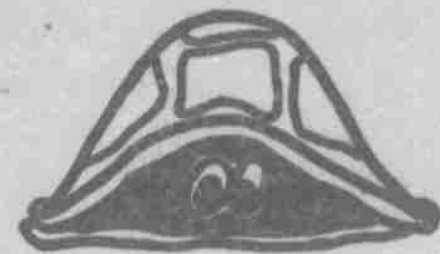
Just to reinforce the Democratic stereotype, the party has traditionally played the role of nurturer, taking in group after group and saying it will provide for them. But having nurtured the poor of all kinds and having seen many of them rise in the middle class and upper-middle class, it has, like a mother, been ignored. In the political version of not even bother-

ing to call, its children vote Republican.

Mondale's selection of Ferraro was a bold stroke, as gutsy and as macho a move as a man can make, and also a wonderful statement. But the harsh sun of the morning after brings with it some questions. Geraldine Ferraro represents Archie Bunker's district, but Bunker doesn't exist. And if he did, he probably would vote for Ronald Reagan. Stereotypes prefer their own.

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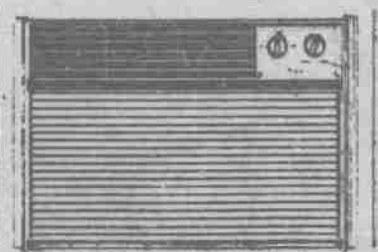
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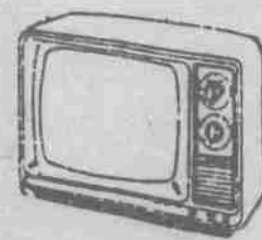
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## Correction

Due to an editing error, Friday's house editorial (Daily Nebraskan, July 13) incorrectly stated that Gov. Michael Dukakis of Massachusetts is black. The editorial should have identified Philadelphia Mayor Wilson Goode, whom Walter Mondale interviewed for his vice-presidential running mate, as a black person. The Daily Nebraskan regrets the error.

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