

January 2005

# Third Party Candidates in Political Debates: Muted Groups Struggling to Express Themselves

Carolyn Prentice

*University of South Dakota*, [Carolyn.Prentice@usd.edu](mailto:Carolyn.Prentice@usd.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <http://cornerstone.lib.mnsu.edu/speaker-gavel>

 Part of the [American Politics Commons](#), [Social Influence and Political Communication Commons](#), and the [Speech and Rhetorical Studies Commons](#)

### Recommended Citation

Prentice, C. (2005). Third Party Candidates in Political Debates: Muted Groups Struggling to Express Themselves. *Speaker & Gavel*, 42, 1-12.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Cornerstone: A Collection of Scholarly and Creative Works for Minnesota State University, Mankato. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Speaker & Gavel* by an authorized administrator of Cornerstone: A Collection of Scholarly and Creative Works for Minnesota State University, Mankato.

## Third Party Candidates in Political Debates: Muted Groups Struggling to Express Themselves

Carolyn Prentice

### Abstract

With the rise of a multitude of political parties, some campaign debate organizers are beginning to include third party candidates in their public debates. However, these third party candidates have been ignored in campaign debate literature. This study analyzed the transcripts of three campaign debates that included third party candidates, using muted group theory to understand the impact of third party candidates in campaign debates. The analysis demonstrates that third party candidates experience the communication obstacles of muted groups.

Since World War II, party affiliation among U.S. voters and straight-ticket voting has been on the decline (Miller & Shanks, 1996). Fewer and fewer people vote, perhaps because they feel their vote doesn't make a difference, they think that politics is inherently corrupt, or they just don't care. In this vacuum of political disaffection and apathy, a large number of independent parties have sprung up, seeking to revitalize voters by offering them alternative visions of government and alternative choices for elected officials. At present more than 100 independent parties can be identified in the US, some operating in only very circumscribed regions or with very narrow platforms (Sachs, 2003). However, these parties on a large or small scale manage to place their candidates on ballots and attempt to garner limited media attention for their causes. As some of these parties have gained at least local prominence, they have been included in campaign debates, although rarely on the presidential level (with the exception of Ross Perot in 1992 and John Anderson in 1980). Since our nation is so deeply entrenched in a two-party system, these alternative candidates are viewed with suspicion by major parties who see them as threats to their own electability because they are perceived as spoilers, stealing the votes that somehow should belong to one or the other of the major candidates. In this paper, I will refer to any candidate who is not affiliated with the two major parties as "third party." The purpose of this study is to explore how inclusion of third party candidates in campaign debates affects the dynamics of the debate.

### Literature Review

As pointed out by McKinney and Carlin (in press) very little is known about the impact of third party candidates in debate. Part of this can easily be attributed to researchers' focus on presidential debates, which have for the most part excluded third party candidates. McKinney and Carlin (in press) identify only four published studies that analyzed non-presidential debates, none of

which focused on a debate that included third-party candidates. To gather information about third party campaigns, one must reach beyond debate studies; yet even here, one finds few studies of third party campaigns. The few available studies reveal the struggle but growing importance of third party candidates, particularly in sub-presidential campaigns. As outlined by Winger (2002), third party candidates were able to get on the ballot fairly easily until the late 1960s when several Supreme Court decisions upheld state laws that obstructed third party candidates from being on ballots. However, today as the public begins to demand greater choice, recent ballot reform measures may facilitate third party candidates' inclusion on ballots (Sifry, 2002). Contrary to the popular belief that third party candidates steal votes from major party candidates, several studies have suggested that third party candidates mobilize alienated voters who would otherwise choose not to vote (Luks, Miller, & Jacobs, 2003; Southwell, 2003). In addition, an examination of third party candidate Jesse Ventura's victory in Minnesota showed the victory to be correlated with a dissatisfaction with state government, not federal government (Lacy & Monson, 2002; Sifry, 2002). Thus the few studies on third party candidates suggest that they struggle against obstacles, but manage to attract otherwise uninterested voters, impacting local and statewide politics more than national elections.

Since the exploration of the impact of third party candidates in debates is a new frontier, I sought the guidance of an overarching theory to direct my analysis. Third party candidates seem to me a marginalized group in society, excluded and vilified by major parties and their cohorts. Thus I considered theories of standpoint and power, but one with an emphasis on language, since I would be studying third party candidates' debate dialogue. The theory that seemed more applicable is muted group theory, which has heretofore been used principally to examine feminist issues.

Muted group theory was first conceived by a male anthropologist and later expanded by a feminist communication scholar. Anthropologist Edwin Ardener first described the concept of muted groups, specifically focusing on how anthropological research used only male informants, ignoring and disparaging female informants as inarticulate (Ardener, 1975a). He suggested that ethnographers were thereby missing the entire experience of half the population because the informants were muted by being required to use the language of the dominant half. Because men created and normed the language, it reflected their experiences, but it also left women unable to express their experiences except in a crude translation effort to make the language fit. Cheris Kramarae expanded Ardener's ideas to particularly address feminist issues:

The language of a particular culture does not serve all its speakers equally, for not all speakers contribute in an equal fashion to its formulation. Women (and members of other subordinate groups) are not as free or as able as men to say what they wish, when and where they wish, because the words and the norms for their use have been formulated by the dominant group, men. So women cannot as easily or as directly articulate their experiences as men can. Women's perceptions differ from those of men be-

Speaker and Gavel, Vol 42 (2005)

[www.dsr-tka.org/](http://www.dsr-tka.org/)

cause women's subordination means they experience life differently. However, the words and norms for speaking are not generated from or fitted to women's experiences. Women are thus "muted." Their talk is often not considered of much value by men—who are or appear to be, deaf and blind to much of women's experiences. Words constantly ignored may eventually come to be unspoken and perhaps even unthought. (Kramarae, 1981, p. 1)

Ardener noted that "muted" has two distinct meanings relevant here: "Mute" means "without speech" and also "reduced in perceptibility" (Ardener, 1975b). Although Kramarae and others (Kramarae, 1981; Rubin, 1993; Spender, 1984; Turner, 1992) have used muted group theory to explore women's issues in society, the theory is not limited to gender issues. As Ardener pointed out when he introduced the concept, "The woman case is only a relatively prominent example of muting; one that has clear political, biological, and social symbols. The real problem is that all world-structures are totalitarian in tendency" (Ardener, 1975b, p. 25). Thus Ardener recognized that other groups, particularly political groups, might also be seen as muted groups. This paper will use muted group theory to examine how third party candidates, when allowed to participate in public campaign debates, seem inarticulate and undependable because they are judged by the standard of the political rhetoric and worldview of the major parties.

If third party candidates exemplify the communication problems of a muted group, then Kramarae's three assumptions should be true of them, with the language adjusted by substituting "major parties" for "men" and "third party" for "women." Thus adjusted, the three assumptions include:

1. Third parties perceive the world differently from major parties because of third parties' and major parties' different experiences and activities rooted in different political ideologies.
2. Because of their political dominance, the major parties' system of perception is dominant, impeding the free expression of the third parties' alternative models of the world.
3. In order to participate in debates third parties must transform their own models in terms of the received major party system of expression. (Kramarae, 1981, p. 3)

### Method

To test these assumptions as adjusted to apply to third party candidates in debates, I analyzed three campaign debates that included third party candidates: (1) Anne Northrup vs. Eleanor Jordan vs. Donna Mancini (Kentucky Third District Congressional race, 2000); (2) Jean Carnahan vs. Jim Talent vs. Daniel Romano vs. Tamara Millay (Missouri Senate race, 2002); and (3) Howard Dean vs. Ruth Dwyer vs. Anthony Pollina (Vermont gubernatorial race, 2002). These debates were chosen because they each included at least one third party candidate who was not a nationally known figure that had defected from another party. In addition, the three represent a cross-section of the different levels

where third party candidates are most likely to be invited to participate in campaign debates. For my analysis I reviewed both the videotapes and the transcripts of these three debates. The Kentucky debate lasted only an hour, while the other two were one and a half hours in length. The transcripts, double-spaced, ranged in length from 34 pages to 65 pages and were compared for accuracy against the videotapes.

### Analysis

In this section I examine the three debates in terms of the three assumptions of the muted group theory, simplified as Different Worldview, Impeded Free Expression, and Attempt to Transform Model.

The Kentucky Third District Congressional race in 2000 included incumbent Anne Northrup (Republican), Donna Mancini (Libertarian), and Eleanor Jordan (Democrat). The debate included a two-minute opening statement from each candidate, followed by four questions from local journalists that were answered in turn by all candidates for 90 seconds. Then each candidate had 30 seconds to ask one question of another candidate of her choosing, with a one-minute response, and a one-minute rebuttal. Then the journalists asked different questions to each individual candidate. And finally, each candidate made a two-minute closing statement. Excerpts from this debate clearly show that the third party candidate expresses a different worldview and this expression is impeded by the worldview of the major party candidates.

As a Libertarian candidate, Donna Mancini differed from the others in that she did not view the debate as increasing her chances to win an election, but as an opportunity to share the Libertarian message with a larger audience. In both her opening and closing statements she expressed thanks for being invited, saying it was a "wonderful opportunity to share my views with the citizens." She did not explicitly ask for a vote. Her opening and closing statements express a clearly different perception of the political world:

The Libertarian offer is to keep your money and run your own life . . . This is to end the personal income tax and to replace it with nothing, end the insane war on drugs, and to free you of the social security pawn scam and let you plan your own secure retirement. [opening statement]

I think that the important thing that the American people really have to start to think about is how much more control do we want to give the federal government over our lives? . . . I truly believe that our country is going downhill quick. I think that we have to turn this thing around and put people back in charge of their own lives, give them their money back, their freedom back, let them make their own choices. . . . I love America and I want our country to be returned to the basic principles. [closing statement]

What's striking about these statements is that no major party candidate would make such a doomsday proclamation about the state of the country nor

likely characterize an anointed political reality such as Social Security as a “scam.”

Major party candidates typically impede the free expression of third party candidates’ worldview by three principal tactics: Ignoring their claims, appearing confused (verbally or nonverbally) by the claims, or actively attacking the claims made. In the Kentucky House debate, the major party candidates chose to simply ignore the claims made by the third party candidate, a tactic supported by the format of the debate, which basically allowed only 90-second answers to specific questions. Therefore, the major party candidates focused on their own records and ideology and occasional attacks on their major party opponent. Although Mancini was able to state her views in the debate, the two other candidates addressed her only once, and did not refer to her positions or refute her claims. When given an opportunity to question another candidate, the major party candidates simply traded questions with each other. When Mancini got her opportunity to ask a question of Jordan, the Democrat, Mancini rambled a little, but when pressed for time, she asked a very specific question: “What is your answer to the insane war on drugs, what is your plan to end it?” To this very direct question, Jordan replied, “I’m not sure I completely understand your question, but let me just tell you. . .” and then spoke of her record of co-sponsoring legislation. Whether this confusion was feigned or real, the message clearly conveyed was that the third party question did not make sense because it came from a “weird” worldview. In this debate, no one actively attacked the third party claims. Thus the third party candidate’s free expression of ideas was marginalized because the major party never took them seriously enough to address her claims.

One of the problems of a debate format in which the same questions are asked of all candidates is that questions are specifically worded to reflect the worldviews of the major parties. In the Kentucky House debate, all candidates were asked whether they favored the Bush or Gore plan for retirement savings, both of which specifically mentioned a Social Security Trust fund. The major party candidates expressed support along the expected party lines, but as a Libertarian, Mancini could not directly answer the question:

Well, I prefer Harry Brown’s plan, which is the great Libertarian offer, and that would allow people to take care of their income tax money, to keep it themselves . . . There is no social security trust fund . . . it’s a pawn scheme that’s insolvent with younger workers paying for older workers . . . it’s my responsibility to take care of my own retirement and we would all be better off if we just put our money in a savings account than invest it in social security.

Similarly, when asked how to spend the projected budget surplus, she replied:

How can you say we have a budget surplus when we are so many trillion dollars in debt? . . . As far as I’m concerned, when people are in debt, they have no extra money, they need to use the money they have to pay their bills.

Both of these examples demonstrate that questions formulated for major party candidates set up the third party candidates to express seemingly “way out” views in contrast to the saner, more familiar views of major party candidates. Without adequate discussion and rebuttal time, third party candidates are thus muted by an inability to clearly articulate their worldviews.

Missouri had an off-year Senate election because Mel Carnahan’s sudden death just weeks before the 2000 election resulted in a dead man being elected and his wife Jean being appointed to take his seat. The election two years later allowed Missouri’s voters to select a Senator for a full term. Four candidates were invited to the debate on October 24, 2002: Incumbent Democrat Jean Carnahan, Republican Jim Talent, Libertarian Tamara Millay, and Green Party Daniel Romano. The format allowed a two-minute opening statement, followed by questions from a panel of journalists addressed to all four candidates, in rotating order. Each candidate was allowed a two-minute closing statement. The presence of two third party candidates represents a more complex situation than the usual one-on-one debate context.

Similar to Mancini, the Libertarian candidate discussed above, Millay expressed a different worldview early in the debate. She said that she did not expect to win, and then addressed why she would choose to run in an election she had no hope of winning:

This election has seemed so far, flip a coin. Public dialogue has revealed no substantive difference between my major party opponents. They both want lower taxes and higher spending and a balanced budget. They both want more damaging intrusions into health care. They both want to save a failed and dishonest Social Security System, instead of getting serious about replacing it while there’s still time. They’re both willing to sacrifice American lives on the altar of a failed foreign policy and to sacrifice American rights on failed schemes like the war on drugs and gun control. I’m the only candidate on this stage that stands for less government and more freedom. I’m the only one who can swear the oath with a clear conscience, to defend and protect the Constitution. I believe that Missourians deserve the opportunity to vote for those things.

Thus, Millay framed her view of the race as between her and everyone else, that the major party opponents really had the same political worldview, and that she stood in opposition as the only real choice, the only person for the government that is enacted by the Constitution—a worldview that differed dramatically from the major party candidates.

Similarly, although he did not state explicitly that he did not expect to win, Green Party Candidate Romano voiced a different reason for running for office, reflecting a different alternative worldview:

I am the Missouri Green Party’s candidate, because I want to open up the political dialogue in this country. I feel that there are a lot of issues that



have been suppressed and are off the radar screen, important issues. And the reason is because the major political parties in this country have become dependent on money from corporate sources. So what happens is that they end up representing the interests of big money, instead of the working people. I'm talking about issues like the over-consumption of oil in this country, which has necessitated intervention and invasion of a foreign country to secure access to fossil fuels.

Like Millay, Romano positioned himself as standing in opposition to the major party candidates who are essentially identical in their worldviews. He bothered to run in a sure-to-lose campaign because he wanted to share his worldview with voters. Romano's comment about issues being "off the radar screen" indicated that he recognizes that he represented a different worldview that had been muted by the major parties.

Even though the third party candidates were invited to debate, their free expression of their worldviews was impeded by the dominance of the major parties' model. In this debate major party candidates for the most part ignored the claims made by the third party candidates, although at times pointing out disagreements or obliquely attacking the third party stance. For example, when Romano expressed his opposition to drilling in the Artic National Wildlife Refuge and suggested supporting alternative energy, Talent said, "Digger and I have a mild disagreement on this one" (notice his casual use of his opponent's nickname). This rather flippant reference to the Green Party worldview casts their stances as "other"—and thereby muted.

In this debate, the third party candidates attempted to transform their worldviews in terms of the major party models principally through pointing out agreements with the major party candidates and refraining from attacking the major party candidates. For example, when asked about criteria for choosing Supreme Court judges, Millay explicitly expressed agreement with Jim Talent that competency and honesty were more important than partisan issues. Later on, Romano pointed out a similarity that he had with Senator Carnahan in being a newcomer to the politics of elected positions. In a statement that supported both himself and Carnahan, he says: "But I think that we can see that fresh voices in the legislature can add a lot to a legislative process." Similarly, Millay expressed mild support for Carnahan with these words: "I'm sure that there is quite a learning curve for any new legislator. And personally I don't have any issues with Mrs. Carnahan's learning curve." Other than a very brief joint attack on Attorney General John Ashcraft—not a contender in the election—the third party candidates simply attacked the political system in general, never their individual opponents, a tactic that made them appear reasonable and considerate in a campaign that had been marked by the major parties trading accusations and attacks.

As is typical for campaign debates, the journalist's questions controlled the format, being formulated principally for the major party candidates, even though the journalists attempted to offer the third party candidates alternative questions. For example, one of the questions, "Who is your political role model?" on the

surface seemed a sincere attempt to more fully engage the third party candidates, although it is not clear how one's role model predicts one's ability to serve in office. Nevertheless, in answering the question, Romano reveals his non-traditional political roots, roots that many Americans might find disturbing:

Political role model . . . Well, that's an interesting . . . One of the many that I can think of would be the Zapatistas of Mexico and Comandante Marcos. Because although they have exercised their right to arm themselves, they have stayed away, for the most part from using this violence as a way to protect the peasants' rights to access the land. And they're standing up for the poor people that are getting rolled over in this so-called globalization.

Although he was able to frame his answer as related to his ideology, to most of the mainstream American public, holding up what they perceive to be Mexican rebels as political role models is almost traitorous! The other three candidates chose more familiar American politicians. Thus a question that could have been intended to facilitate third party candidates, actually served to emphasize their marginal, possibly traitorous positions as muted groups.

The 2000 Vermont gubernatorial race illustrates what happens when third party candidates attempt to transform their worldview to be more in line with major parties, in an effort to participate more fully in the system. This race included Incumbent Democrat Howard Dean, Republican Ruth Dwyer, and Progressive Anthony Pollina. Unlike the third party candidates in the two previously discussed debates, Pollina was well known in the state and to his opponents, having been active in Vermont political movements for 20 years. Unlike the Libertarian and Green Party candidates discussed above, Pollina never once mentioned his party, instead focusing on his record. This is a tactic usually reserved only for major party candidates because they have held political office. In fact, referring to one's record is the standard of proof of one's position among major party candidates (unless of course, they are campaigning as "fresh faces" or "outsiders"). Most third party candidates, since they have not held elected office, cannot discuss their records. However, since Pollina had been, as he described himself in the debate, "a grass roots organizer, a coalition builder and a legislative advocate," he was able to transform his language and worldview to more closely approximate that of the major party candidates. He articulated a different worldview only briefly in his opening and closing statements with references to "the effort to begin to get big money out of Vermont politics" and kicking "the big money fat cats out of Montpelier, out of the governor's office, and invite the public in to take a look around and see what it's like to have . . . a friend in the governor's office." Because he had a record, not just an ideology, this third party candidate was able to speak in the debate using the same language as the major party candidates. Also because the governor's office is concerned with state rather than federal issues, Pollina's familiarity, experience, and media exposure with Vermont issues positioned him as a more serious challenger than the third party candidates in the debates discussed above.

But this attempt for the muted group member to transform his worldview in order to participate more fully backfired. Since Vermont is the only state in the country whose elected member of Congress is an Independent, perhaps the state is more willing than other states to accept third party candidates. In consideration of this greater acceptance of third party candidates in Vermont, Howard Dean recognized the seriousness of Pollina's challenge and defused it by agreeing with many of his viewpoints, instead of simply ignoring them. For example, they agreed on some controversial Vermont legislation, which Dwyer wanted to repeal. Dean and Pollina both opposed school vouchers and anything that would undermine the local control of public education. Dean agreed with the Progressive stance on having an instant runoff election rather than the legislature decide a three-way split on a ballot. Dean even supported Pollina's suggestion that the state help farmers to transition to organic methods. Dean chose to position himself as friendly to Progressive ideas, but in contrast to Republican ideals. This left Pollina scrambling to point out differences between them. In this way although the Progressive party candidate translated his worldview into major party language, at the same time he blurred the distinction between his party and the major party. The result is that the Progressive worldview remained muted and voters could not see a clear advantage to electing a third party candidate.

Another issue that illustrates the dominance of major party rhetoric in muting third party candidates is the popular perception that third party candidates are spoilers and vote stealers. Preliminary research has suggested that many of those who vote third party would otherwise not vote at all (Ardener, 1975a; Luks et al., 2003; Sifry, 2002; Winger, 2002); nevertheless, one often hears that a vote for a third party candidate is wasted or is really a vote for the other major party opponent. Major party candidates promote this worldview because it preserves their power. However, in the debates analyzed here, third party candidates articulated a different vision of how third party candidates enhance democracy and how voters must exercise their responsibility to vote for the best choice. For example, Romano from Missouri emphasized how voters needed more choices:

The Green Party is not taking away votes from any other party because no other party owns those votes. The voters own those votes. And look at our elections. We're seeing 70 percent of people not voting. So they're making a statement there. The statement they're making is that no party, none of the major parties, is representing us. (Romano, 2002)

Similarly, Mancini from Kentucky, focused on how the two major parties were basically the same and that voters needed more choices:

I think the average person in this day . . . think maybe that this is hopeless and that's why so many people just don't go to the polls, and they think they're going to get opposite sides of the same coin. . . . (Mancini, 2000)

The third party candidates offer disillusioned citizens a different vision of democracy, one that asks them to participate in changing the system. However, this different vision is muted by the format and rhetoric of campaign debates geared toward major party candidates.

### Discussion

This study represents an exploration of uncharted territory using a traditionally feminist theory to examine how the voices of third party candidates although invited to participate, are nevertheless muted in campaign debates. The dominance of the major party worldview prevents third party candidates from effectively articulating their alternative worldviews in a debate. When third party candidates are not considered serious contenders, major party candidates simply ignore their positions or act confused by them. The debate format may not allow adequate time to fully articulate a position or questions may be inappropriate for third party candidates, leading them to make statements that can be misinterpreted by the voting public. However, when third party candidates come close to being taken seriously, their issues may be taken up by the major party, thus blurring the differences between the ideologies. This blurring is not a bad thing in itself because such movement shows that third parties do impact the political system. However, they remain muted groups and many of their issues remain "off the radar screen," and they are viewed with suspicion because major parties refuse to seriously engage them in dialogue.

This analysis demonstrates the dilemma that confronts members of muted groups when they seek to gain greater consideration and participation in their societies. An invitation to participate in campaign debates may be problematic for third party candidates. On one hand, the debate is a golden opportunity to showcase their beliefs and to get media coverage for their critical perspectives. On the other hand, the deck is stacked against them. Because major party candidates are more familiar, the major party positions are more easily articulated to and grasped by the public in 90-second sound bites. Encapsulating an entirely different political worldview in a few short answers is an impossible task for third party candidates. In addition, questions may be inappropriate, patronizing, or booby-trapped for third party candidates, and thus answering them may result in simply confirming their "way-out" image in the public's eye. In addition, in order to enter the system they criticize and seek to change, they have to play the game and develop a discourse strategy that is closer to major party politics as usual—resulting in a blurring of difference and the possibility of becoming what they criticize.

Third party candidates must evaluate the benefits and losses that may come with accepting an invitation to participate in a campaign debate. Specifically, third party candidates should consider the following:

- What are their goals in participating in a debate? Do they hope to garner more votes or simply educate the public on their positions?
- How can they emphasize their political records and not simply their political ideologies?

- Can they clearly articulate their party differences in the short response times allotted?
- Can they be ideologically loyal and yet articulate a worldview that will appeal to the American public?
- How will they respond to agreement by major party candidates on their issues?
- How will they address the image of third party candidates as election spoilers who somehow steal the votes that belong to major party candidates?

Thus third party candidates may find that the invitation to debate should be considered carefully to see if their participation will advance their political goals.

Further study of third party campaigns is warranted, but it will be hindered by the fact that debates that include third party candidates are uncommon, not to mention rarely recorded and transcribed, and thus are unavailable for examination. Complicating third party study is that the fact that there are so many different parties with different ideologies and approaches. Nevertheless, a concerted effort to locate, record and transcribe these debates on a variety of levels could yield interesting research findings. These, coupled with research into who votes for third party candidates and why, might dispel the notion that third party candidates are spoilers that threaten the stability of the United States government. Other democracies, particularly parliamentary forms of government, around the world manage to embrace more than two political parties, and are enriched by the experience. Active third party candidates in elected positions might end partisan gridlock and politics as usual, leading to a democracy in which more American voters want to participate because they feel that their voices are heard. Democracy can only be enhanced by giving voice to muted groups.

#### Works Cited

- Ardener, E. (1975a). Belief and the problem of women. In S. Ardener (Ed.), *Perceiving women*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Ardener, E. (1975b). The 'problem' revisited. In S. Ardener (Ed.), *Perceiving women* (pp. 19-28). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Kramarae, C. (1981). *Women and men speaking*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Lacy, D., & Monson, Q. (2002). The origins and impact of votes for third-party candidates: A case study of the 1998 Minnesota gubernatorial election. *Political Research Quarterly*, 55, 409-437.
- Luks, S., Miller, J. M., & Jacobs, L. R. (2003). Who wins? Campaigns and the third party vote. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 33, 9-30.
- McKinney, M. S., & Carlin, D. B. (in press). Political campaign debates. In L. L. Kaid (Ed.), *Handbook of political communication*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Publishers.
- Miller, W. E., & Shanks, J. M. (1996). *The new American voter*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Rubin, D. (1993). *Gender influences: Reading student texts*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Sachs, D. C. (2003). D.C.'s political report: Minor parties link. Retrieved December 15, 2003 from <http://dcpoliticalreport.com/PartyLink.htm>
- Sifry, M. L. (2002). *Spoiling for a fight: Third-party politics in America*. New York: Routledge.
- Southwell, P. L. (2003). The politics of alienation: Nonvoting and support for third-party candidates among 18-30-year olds. *The Social Science Journal*, 40, 99-107.
- Spender, D. (1984). Defining reality: A powerful tool. In C. Kramarae & M. Schulz & W. M. O'Barr (Eds.), *Language and Power* (pp. 194-205). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Turner, L. H. (1992). An analysis of words coined by women and men: Reflections on the Muted Group Theory and Gilligan's model. *Women & Language*, 15, 21-32.
- Winger, R. (2002). More choice please! Why U.S. ballot access laws are discriminatory and how independent parties and candidates challenge them. In R. Hayduk & K. Mattson (Eds.), *Democracy's moment: Reforming the American political system for the 21st century*. (pp. 45-59). Lanhan, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Carolyn Prentice (Ph.D., University of Missouri-Columbia) is an assistant professor of Communication Studies at the University of South Dakota