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“The glory of each generation is to set its own precedent”: Belva Lockwood and the rhetorical construction of female presidential plausibility

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to understand the rhetorical tactics of Belva Bennett Lockwood, the first woman to run a campaign for U.S. President. Lockwood attempted to make a female presidential candidacy seem plausible by framing her actions as culturally expected, befitting for a woman, and prototypical for future female politicians. Through her use of rhetorical *eikos*, she seemed to suggest that female political leadership was not just probable but needed in the political culture of the time. A close reading of her campaign speeches and writings reveals the potential of *eikotic* logos to present a female presidential candidacy as innate, and thus logical, legitimate, and part of an essential future. This essay will present a historical review of Lockwood’s unprecedented political campaigns, an analysis of the theoretical potential of *eikos* argument as seen through her rhetoric, and commentary on the state of women and cultural perceptions of presidentiality then and now.

KEYWORDS

eikos; rhetorical history; women in politics; Belva Lockwood; presidential politics

Although the United States came the closest it ever has to electing a female president in 2016, Hillary Rodham Clinton fell short of the votes needed to win the Electoral College and thus the presidency. Although commentators have argued a number of reasons for businessman Donald Trump unexpected win, many agree that gender was an important variable in the election (Burleigh, 2016; Tyson and Maniam, 2016; Bush, 2016). Specifically, while a 2015 Suffolk University poll showed that 95% of the country indicated that they were prepared to vote for a “qualified” female candidate, most studies since November of 2016 show that implicit gender bias that associates the presidency with masculinity influences vote choices (Dittmar, 2017; Bialik, 2017). As Mary Stuckey writes, “the presidency is an important site where our national expectations of gender are performed and ritualized” (Stuckey, 2010, p. 44). This study seeks to determine how one of the first female presidential candidates in history negotiated the gendered expectations of the office to promote female presidentiality as both natural and necessary.

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During the late nineteenth century, women's participation in partisan politics grew exponentially as more became party leaders, speakers, and even candidates (Freeman, 2000; Dinkin, 1995; DeFiore, 1992; Edwards, 1997; Varon, 1998; Zagari, 1998; Zboray & Zboray, 2010; Buhle, 1981). The year 1884 was a watershed year, as the Equal Rights Party nominated not one, but two female candidates for national office. Belva Bennett Lockwood was nominated for President of the United States, and Marietta Stow was nominated as her running mate. Both were politically-minded women who played significant roles in Gilded Age politics.¹ As only the second woman to launch a bid for the presidency and the first legally to run a presidential campaign, Lockwood's speeches and writings establish the rhetorical origins of a female presidential candidacy, an important and under-studied part of history.

One's gender dictates access to political culture, making it more difficult for women to occupy space in the political arena. Gender parity in government does not exist, as women currently make up less than 20% of Congress and have never occupied the office of Vice President or President of the United States (Jamieson, 1995, p. 4; "Current Numbers," 2018; Silva, 2016). One reason for this imbalance lies in cultural expectations of what it means to be capable of political leadership, especially in the executive branch. The qualities considered befitting the president of the United States have been and continue to be coded masculine (Stuckey, 2010; Parry-Giles & Parry-Giles, 1996). Stuckey (2010) rightfully points out that while "social norms change, it remains clear that there are consistently masculinist norms associated with the office" (p. 44). In a culture that systematically denied women a seat at the political table, Lockwood's attempt to frame the presidency as an office any candidate with "presidential" qualifications should be able to occupy, regardless of one's gender, is noteworthy. Through an analysis of her public communication during her two presidential campaigns, I argue that Lockwood provides an early model of a female presidential candidacy through her use of *eikos* argument.

Rhetorical *eikos*, or argument by plausibility, was an important strategy for a woman attempting to be a political leader during a time when women were rarely participants on the political scene. By framing her candidacy as a natural continuation of political history, "befitting" a woman as much as a man, and as an example for future female candidates, I argue that Lockwood used argument by *eikos* to prove that female political leaders were a natural, expected, and necessary part of Gilded Age political culture. Although there have been a few biographical treatments of Lockwood (Norgren, 2002, 2007; Lashley, 1993), and some mention of her in broader histories of women in politics (Freeman, 2000; Falk, 2008), there has yet to be a thorough study of her rhetoric. This analysis not only fills this void, but also enhances our understanding of *eikos* itself.

This study focuses on the most complete pieces of communication available from and about Lockwood's 1884 and 1888 campaigns,² namely two campaign

¹In addition to running on the ticket with Lockwood, Stow also founded the Woman's Independent Political party, whose purpose was to "prepare women for political life by giving them confidence-building experience." She ran for City School Director as a member of the Greenback Party in 1880, Governor of California in 1882 as an independent, was a founding member of the Equal Rights Party, and edited the *Woman's Herald of Industry and Social Science Cooperator*, an important progressive magazine for women ("Marietta Stow," 2017).

²Lockwood's papers are primarily housed at the New York State Library and the Peace Collection at Swarthmore College. Although a few original letters and writings are in these collections, most of the primary material

speeches from 1884, one campaign speech from 1888, two campaign essays from 1888, and one biographical reflective essay about her 1884 campaign that was published in 1903.³ Lockwood's rhetoric is a study in the potential of *eikotic* logos to present a female presidential candidacy as innate, and thus logical, legitimate, and essential. As the first woman to run a campaign for President of the United States, Belva Lockwood broke an early glass ceiling in women's quest for political leadership. In essence, Lockwood not only tried to make a woman presidential candidate seem natural and expected in a time when it was not, but she also attempted to force a reconsideration of the very cultural norms themselves.

Belva Bennett Lockwood's presidential campaign

Belva Bennett Lockwood was an attorney, a lobbyist, a suffragist, and a politician. Widowed at a young age and fascinated by politics, she moved with her daughter to Washington, D.C. in 1866, during the height of Reconstruction. She often sat in the recently opened "Ladies Gallery" in the Senate and observed the Reconstruction Debates (Norgren, 2007, pp. 14-16). This experience helped her to understand the world of politics, which would prove useful in her later lobbying efforts.⁴ After becoming involved in the temperance and suffrage movements, Lockwood founded the Universal Franchise Association (UFA) with Josephine Griffing and Julia Archibald Holmes in 1867. She served as President of the UFA in 1870, and also became a member of the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA), led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony (Norgren, 2007, pp. 19-26). After years of struggle to receive her diploma and be admitted to various bar associations, Lockwood became the first woman to argue before the U.S. Supreme Court.⁵

available can be found in publications from the time. Julia Hill Winner has compiled a series of writings in a volume with the Niagara County Historical Society in 1969. The Belva A. Lockwood Papers in the Swarthmore College Peace Collection includes letters, pamphlets, and newspaper clippings. The Belva Lockwood Papers in the Ormes-Winner Collection at the New York State Historical Association includes handwritten manuscripts.

³The *New York Times* printed excerpts from an 1884 campaign speech delivered at the New York Academy of Music ("A Woman Can Be President," 1884). Another campaign speech was printed in the *Louisville Courier Journal* in October of 1884 ("Mrs. Lockwood's Speech," 1884). Her essay, "My Efforts to Become a Lawyer" ran in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* in February of 1888 (Lockwood, 1888, February). Although Lockwood was not officially nominated as a candidate for President until May of 1888, this article, published less than two months earlier, can be considered a preliminary piece of campaign rhetoric. She also wrote an essay published in Volume V of *The Cosmopolitan* in 1888 titled, "The Present Phase of the Woman Question" (Lockwood, 1888, March-October). In addition, a campaign address was published in the *Boonville Herald* of Boonville, NY, in September of 1888 ("Mrs. Lockwood's Address," 1888). Finally, Lockwood published the essay "How I Ran for the Presidency" in the March 1903 issue of the *National Magazine*. In this essay, she interlaced the narrative of her 1884 campaign with copies of a letter to the editor that she wrote, her letters of nomination and acceptance, the platform for the campaign, and a petition she sent to Congress after Election Day in 1884.

⁴Lockwood lobbied Congress for many reforms, including pensions, mining rights, Indian affairs, foreign policy, and woman's rights. See Norgren, 2007, Chapter 9.

⁵It took an Act of Congress, for which Lockwood lobbied, to effect her admission to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court and the U.S. Court of Claims. President Rutherford B. Hayes signed the "Lockwood Bill" into law on February 15, 1879, giving women the right to practice law in federal courts. The first time she participated in oral arguments before the Supreme Court of the United States was in the case of *Kaiser v. Stickney* in 1880. See Lashley, 1993, pp. 39-41.

Lockwood was the first woman to run for President of the United States legally.⁶ In 1884, California women's rights activists Marietta Stow and Clara Foltz nominated Lockwood for President for the Equal Rights Party. Lockwood had attended the Republican Party Convention that year and was one of many suffragists rebuffed when they asked if the party would draft a resolution to support woman suffrage. Lockwood then wrote a letter to the editor in Stow's *Woman's Herald of Industry*, expressing her concern over the current state of political affairs and the need for a female candidate. In it she wrote, "If women in the states are not permitted to vote, there is no law against their being voted for," and encouraged people, saying that, "it is quite time that we had our own party; our own platform, and our own nominee" (Lockwood, 1903, p.729). It was after writing this letter that the Equal Rights Party nominated her for the presidency. Although when recalling the election of 1884 Foltz suggested that she and Stow nominated Lockwood in jest, she described in detail how they secured funds for the campaign, spoke to the media, organized a convention, and drafted a platform for the Equal Rights Party (Foltz, 1918, pp. 27-28).

Lockwood set up campaign headquarters in Washington, D.C., with her daughter, Lura McNall Ormes, serving as campaign manager. Having campaign experience from traveling with Horace Greeley as a newspaper columnist a decade earlier, Lockwood ran a strategic campaign. Her biographer explains that Lockwood understood the importance of public attention in law and politics when she writes, "As an engineer of reform, she understood the importance of political theater and willingly participated in noteworthy and attention-getting occasions" (Norgren, 2007, p. 107). She wrote essays for a few literary magazines, distributed pamphlets and the Equal Rights Party platform, and had an official campaign portrait circulated ("A Women's Candidate for President," 1884, p.1). She also traveled nationally delivering campaign speeches, often procuring speaker's fees for her appearances in order to fund her campaign. She even boasted to reporters after the 1884 campaign that she had been able to cover her expenses and come out \$125.00 ahead ("Mrs. Lockwood's Campaign Closed," 1884). She also invited her fellow candidates to a debate—but received no reply (Norgren, 2007, p. 135-136).

Her 1884 campaign received a decent amount of press coverage, both positive and negative. The Washington, D.C. daily newspaper *The Evening Star* published a few accounts of her campaign events, and the literary magazine *Frank Leslie's Illustrated* published a full-page article featuring Lockwood and highlighting "women's contribution to the political life of the country" (Norgren, 2007, p. 134; "Woman in Politics," 1884, p. 72-75). There were a few articles published in the *New York Times* about the campaign, all of which highlighted gender stereotypes of the time. One was a lengthy biography, in which Lockwood was described mostly as caring and pure. The other was an article titled, "The Divided Skirt

⁶Victoria Woodhull was the first woman to run for President in 1872, also as a candidate for the Equal Rights Party. Woodhull was a notorious and controversial figure because of her radical views on free love and her financial woes. In addition, many historians question the legality of her candidacy. She was not the constitutionally mandated age of 35 when she ran for office, her name was not printed on the ballot, and she was in custody for violating the Comstock Act on election day in 1872. For more see Norgren, 2002, 2007; Underhill, 1996; and Gabriel, 1998.

Question,” which coupled her candidacy with a discussion of whether women should wear culottes. There were articles that claimed that her back hair was not her original hair, her underpants were “cardinal red,” and discussed at length the propriety of her riding a bicycle (“Another Scandal,” 1884, p. 8). Almost every article written about her mentioned her attire or her complexion. *The Boston Globe* even published an article called, “Belva in the White House: A Cabinet Meeting of the Period When Women Shall Steer the Ship of State,” which was a satirical depiction of a cabinet meeting run by Lockwood. In it, she was described as being late for the meeting because she could not choose what to wear, being unable to pay attention, and being incompetent at running a meeting (Falk, 2008 p. 39). A popular aspect of the campaign in the press was coverage of the so-called “Mother Hubbard” or “Belva Lockwood Clubs.” Men would parade the streets wearing “Mother Hubbard” dresses to mock Lockwood’s candidacy.⁷

In the end, Lockwood received 4,149 of the tabulated votes from nine states.⁸ She ran for president again in 1888 on the Equal Rights Party ticket. The 1888 campaign was less of a novelty and more explicitly about strategy. Lockwood claimed that the only way to achieve political equality for women was “to gain strength and to get organization ... put nominees in the field at once and to keep them there” (qtd in Norgren, 2007, p. 163). Her involvement with the Universal Peace Union served her well as the group publicized her campaign events (Norgren, 2007, p. 165). Lockwood delivered speeches and gave interviews all over the country to bolster her campaign. Although she attracted supportive audiences, her campaign failed to garner much popularity. According to Norgren (2007), “Four years earlier her political bravado had expressed the optimism of the movement; by 1888, with the woman suffrage movement all but stalled, the campaign drew attention to its failure” (p. 167). No votes for Lockwood were recorded in the election of 1888.

Eikos argument and female presidential plausibility in the gilded age

Belva Lockwood’s presidential candidacies were part of a political strategy to show that women could create their “own terms of engagement in American party politics” (Norgren, 2007, p. 124). Because public female involvement in electoral politics was a new and undeveloped part of political culture, a female presidential candidacy was unprecedented, unpopular, and unexpected. As such, before a woman could be taken seriously as a political candidate, she needed to prove to her audience that it was both conceivable and acceptable. Given this context, Lockwood’s rhetoric provides a noteworthy space within which to examine the potential of rhetorical *eikos* as a form of argument because, as media coverage of Lockwood’s campaign makes clear, a female presidential candidacy was patently *unplausible*.

⁷Mother Hubbard dresses were new pieces of female clothing that allowed for freer movement that was considered inappropriate to be worn outdoors (Norgren, 2007, p. 139; “Fun of the Campaign,” 1884, p. 1).

⁸According to a petition included in her essay “How I Ran for the Presidency,” Lockwood and Stow received votes in New Hampshire, New York, Michigan, Illinois, Maryland, California, Indiana, Oregon, and Pennsylvania. Lockwood claimed that the votes received in Pennsylvania were “not counted, simply dumped into the waste basket as false votes” (Norgren, 2007, p. 140; Lockwood, 1884, p. 733).

Argument from *eikos* (often translated as probability or plausibility)⁹ was a familiar style of argument in ancient Greece, as the Sophists would use arguments from *eikos* to argue cases from what “seems likely” (Hoffman, 2008, p. 1; Walton, Tindale, & Gordon, 2014, p. 90). In fact, probabilities were often given more weight than hard evidence and testimony in Greek courts because, while physical evidence could be “corrupted and prearranged,” probabilities were judged by the audience and thus often accepted (Warnick, 1989, p. 308).

Eikos receives its most comprehensive treatment in the *Rhetoric*. When writing of enthymemes taken from *eikos*, Aristotle claims, “A probability is a thing that usually happens; not, however, as some definitions would suggest, anything whatever that usually happens, but only if it belongs to the class of the ‘contingent’ or ‘variable’” (Rhetoric I.2.1357a). Aristotle describes *eikos*, as well as *semeia* (signs) as, “one of the primary sources for the premises upon which enthymemes are based” and as a “fundamental concept” (Hoffman, 2008, p. 1). As enthymemes, *eikos* arguments draw from audience understandings and assumptions in familiar situations.

I argue that the persuasive and distinctive power of *eikotic* argument stems from three different understandings of the term. First, *eikos* arguments can justify behavior as accepted and even expected in its own cultural context. *Eikos* is closely linked to “its role as a premise formed from a generally accepted proposition” (Warnick, 1989, p. 308). This sense of social expectation is doxastic in nature, and is reified in Anaximenes’ *Rhetoric of Alexander*, who also advances an, “audience-based understanding of the term” (Hoffman, 2008, p. 8). Second, *eikos* arguments can frame behavior as “befitting” a rhetor based on established cultural expectations (Hoffman, 2008, p. 3). Third, *eikos* arguments provide for an audience a “prototype” of argument for future action. Hoffman (2008) argues that *eikos* is consistent with “prototype theory,” which is the idea “that the categories through which we understand reality are not constructed on the basis of fixed, formal rules. Instead, they are constellated around prototypes, the ‘most typical’ members of categories” (p. 24). As a *techne*, *eikotic* argument uses the available means of persuasion in its context to yield specific results (Warnick, 1989, p. 309). This study argues that Lockwood frames a female presidential candidacy as *eikotic*—accepted, plausible, accepted, prototypical, and perhaps even expected. In turn, Lockwood’s campaign rhetoric presents a new understanding of *eikos*: by framing a female presidential candidacy as intrinsic and plausible, Lockwood actually attempts to adjust cultural expectations. *Eikos* becomes not just an adaptation to cultural norms and a prototype for behavior, but a way to alter the very expectation it seeks to satisfy. Anderson (2002) argues that one of the barriers to political equality is that “we have yet to imagine a woman president of the United States.” Lockwood started this process by using *eikotic* argument to attempt to alter the gendered perception of presidentiality.

⁹The origins of the term *eikos* has been debated by scholars because ancient Greek theorists disagree about whether it was Corax, his student Tisias, or sophists like Gorgias and Protagoras who first considered *eikos* arguments and their power (Hoffman, 2008, pp. 1-2). For more on etymology and history of the term *eikos*, see Schiappa (2003), Walton (2001), Grimaldi (1980), and Warnick (1989).

Expecting the unexpected

Given the fact that women rarely were involved in presidential politics at the time, Belva Lockwood needed to make a female candidacy so familiar that it would be accepted as conventional in her cultural context. To do this, she placed her campaign in step with an expected political chronology, used language associated with movement to help portray an expected sequence of events, and painted female leaders as part of a probable future.

Arguments by *eikos* are not extraordinary or unforeseen, but rather understood and predictable. As Grimaldi (1998) writes, “*eikos* is so substantially and obviously grounded in the real order that the majority of men accept it as a totally acceptable representation of the true” (p. 119). In order to frame her candidacy as a probable part of this “real” order, Lockwood placed it in an expected chronology of events. A clear example of this is the beginning of her 1903 essay that chronicles her 1884 presidential campaign when she writes, “It was in the regular course of presidential elections in 1884 that I received a nomination to the office” (p. 728). Here, Lockwood acts as if her campaign was consistent with presidential history, despite the fact that her candidacy was in no way a “regular” occurrence. Lockwood (1888, February) continued to employ this strategy when she framed female political leadership as, “looming up on the horizon in a magnitude not to be undervalued by one who chooses to read the signs of the times” (p. 220). For Lockwood, her candidacy was not unexpected because it was a reflection of current cultural tone and expectations.

To continue to establish her campaign as an *eikotic* extension of history, Lockwood used a musical metaphor. Her letter accepting the nomination for the presidency concluded with, “Already every newspaper in the land has caught up the refrain and all over the country earnest men and women are saying, Why not?” (Lockwood, 1903, p. 730). A “refrain” is the part of a musical piece that remains consistent and repeats a general musical pattern that comes to be expected as the piece continues. Lockwood framed her message as in tune with the needs of the time and part of a consistent pattern of public opinion. Further, support for her campaign could seemingly be repeated, as a refrain is in a musical piece, as her groundswell of support grew larger.

Lockwood sustained this use of language to imply this sort of momentum in the text. Indication that her nomination and campaign were part of an expected sequence of events was evident in her reference of fellow woman suffrage advocates as, “pressing forward for recognition,” suggesting forward thinking and progressive action (Lockwood, 1903, pp.728-729). Similarly, she referred to the appointment of Phoebe Couzins as assistant marshal of St. Louis as a “step in the right direction” (Lockwood, 1903, p. 729). In reflecting on her campaign, Lockwood (1903) wrote, “the campaign having been uncorked, it seemed disposed to run itself” (p. 732). The campaign was portrayed as if it were uncontrollably propelled forward. Once the press began to cover the campaign, Lockwood wrote that her efforts were unstoppable. As she said in 1884 in Louisville, “We are a progressive people, an educated people, a thinking people, whose life and vitality, whose freedom and prosperity, are in the onward march of free thought ... Our life is, in [a] word, due to progression and to activity. To stand still is to retrograde” (“Mrs. Lockwood’s Speech,” 1884).

Here, Lockwood extends her use of *eikos*—not only was her campaign probable and naturally occurring, but it was also a sign of a changing future.

Walton (2001) argues that *eikotic* arguments are based on a culture's understanding of how events might be expected to happen (p. 104). Lockwood suggests that it is also natural for the expected to change. This was evident in a unique metaphor that she used to describe her 1884 campaign 20 years later. She wrote of her nomination, "suddenly, like a clap of thunder from a clear sky, came a nomination to me for the presidency from the women of California" (Lockwood, 1903, p. 729). Her use of the phrase "like a clap of thunder from a clear sky" presented a female presidential nomination as a naturally occurring phenomenon, while acknowledging that it might be unexpected. This metaphor allowed Lockwood to make her candidacy simultaneously familiar and surprising. In fact, she alluded to this very thing when she argued that a female candidacy was expected because prejudices against women, "have had no foundation in reason, in nature, or in nature's laws" (1888, February, p. 215). For Lockwood, while her nomination might have seemed unusual, it was a shift in natural events that was welcome and perhaps overdue.

Behavior befitting a candidate

After establishing politics as natural and her campaign as an extension of its processes, Lockwood began to make a *female* candidacy seem commonsensical as well. According to Hoffman (2008), "Fitting behavior is behavior that resembles what is expected of a particular sort of person in a particular sort of situation" (p. 23). In a time when women were not considered to have the credentials necessary for political decision making, let alone political leadership, Lockwood needed to prove that she had the credentials *as a woman* to be president. The challenge she faced was that the office of U.S. president is and always has been coded masculine. Female candidates thus need to meet various rhetorical challenges in the face of this hegemonic conception of the office (Stuckey, 2010, p. 44; Sheeler and Anderson, 2013, p. 12, p. 18; Parry-Giles & Parry-Giles, 1996, p. 338; Lewis, 2011, p. 468, Sheeler and Anderson, 2014, p. 492; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993, p. 505). In order to answer to these cultural expectations, Lockwood needed to reframe the office of the presidency rhetorically as one that could be occupied by a woman. To do this, Lockwood used *eikotic* logoi to show that her career, accomplishments, and efforts were consistent with those that were "befitting" a presidential candidacy.

Lockwood believed that the fact that she was a woman should not determine her ability to perform certain public functions. She made this clear when she wrote (1888, February), "My only thought was to do those things which in the nature of human affairs seemed the things to be done ... Hence I was not careful as to the nature of my work ... and never for a moment stopped to consider whether the labor was such as women were accustomed to do, but only whether I had the ability to perform it" (p. 215). To prove her ability in light of the limiting cultural expectations of women at the time based on their physical characteristics, Lockwood highlighted her physical ability, used physical metaphors, and framed her physical presence in the political world as natural.

In Lockwood's rhetoric, physical strength and effort were proof of her professional commitment and ability, and thus a justification for her candidacy. Jackson Katz (2016) argues that "when applied to the U.S. presidency," strong leadership "is nearly synonymous with the personal qualities associated with dominant masculinity" (p. 5). Since "power plays out through people's bodies," a female candidate for president needed to embody strength and toughness (Stuckey, 2010, p. 44). Moreover, many of the arguments against women's rights were based on woman's perceived *lack* of strength. Many believed that a woman's physical "feebleness" and "meekness" were justification for her inability to participate in the world of public affairs (Welke, 2010, p. 8; Baker, 1984, p. 629). Lockwood's use of language that focused on her physical ability directly refuted this argument.

First, Lockwood used language associated with construction to imply physical ability.¹⁰ In an 1884 campaign speech in reference to her political opponents, she said, "It is possible for very good material to be put to very bad uses" ("A Woman Can Be President," 1884, p. 1). Here, she framed her male opponents as having ability, but not necessarily productive purpose. In antithesis, the policies of the Equal Rights Party could be seen as sturdy and also fruitful. She continued:

I am an unswerving friend of the laboring man, but I want a platform broad enough for the wives and daughters of the manufacturers, broad enough to take in every adult woman in the land, a platform on which the rights of the woman will be respected as well as the rights of the man, a platform on which justice as well as courtesy will not only be expected but exacted. ('A Woman Can Be President', 1884, p. 1)

The notion of building a platform through reference to its physical make up and the effort needed to build one allowed Lockwood the ability to frame, through literal language, a political platform that legitimized her candidacy. Further, Lockwood frequently linked this notion of physical building to her *right* to political candidacy. In that same 1884 campaign speech, she declared:

There are those who will tell you that a woman cannot be elected President of the Republic under the Constitution, but I quote from that immortal document to show to you that the brain that conceived and the hand that planned it builded better than he knew ... There is nothing in the Constitution or in its several amendments that tends to render a woman citizen of the Republic ineligible to the Presidency. ('A Woman Can Be President', 1884, p. 1)

By framing the Constitution itself as being hand-built, Lockwood rhetorically paralleled her experience and provided legitimacy for her actions.

Lockwood's texts suggest that physical activity, or how the body remembers action, was integral to her identity. Carol Mattingly (2002) claims that "since gender so clearly shaped nineteenth century culture, references to the body legitimized existing perceptions of gender or worked to change them" (p. 106). In addition, the body can "function as the limit and authorization of political power" (Stormer, 1999, p. 51). Lockwood actively worked to change notions of expected gender behavior. For example, she linked her ability to work as a lawyer with her bodily make-up when

¹⁰Interestingly, this type of rhetoric continues to be present in female political rhetoric today. Dubriwny (2013) writes that Hillary Clinton also used construction metaphors in her 2008 primary bid for the Democratic nomination to make her work more legitimate and relatable (p. 43).

discussing her admittance to a university. She reflected that the president of the school “evidently did not fully comprehend, good man as he was, the nature of the timber of which the young woman who then confronted him was made” (Lockwood, 1888, February, p. 218). The word “timber” is key here. Timber refers to the wood of a tree—strong, firm, natural, and ever-lasting. Timber, when grown with the right cultivation is strong, firm, and used as the foundation for the buildings of society. Lockwood’s use of the word to describe her own stature not only reaffirms her strength and determination, but it rhetorically makes her career objectives possible as a woman. More significantly, Lockwood associates her body with the implied masculinity of the office of president itself. She literally describes what Georgia Duerst-Lahti (2008) refers to as “presidential timber”—the “masculine” qualities that make up society’s notions of presidentiality (p. 733).

Second, language associated with physicality further associated her actions as not only “befitting,” but as a necessary part of the future. She wrote that she “sped away” on her bicycle to the post office to mail her letter of acceptance of the nomination (Lockwood, 1903, p. 729). Although the action described was an actual event, the language was simultaneously metaphorical. First, the metaphor of riding a bicycle is *eikotic* argument at its finest—its action, once learned, is natural, plausible, and repeatable. Second, Lockwood described the nature of her nomination as a surprise, and her campaign as a whirlwind of coordinated effort and exciting events. The notion that she “sped away” is not just an homage to her bicycle riding, for which she frequently was ridiculed.¹¹ The notion seemed to be a description of the campaign—it was fast and full of direction, purpose, and swiftness. She emphasized that her past experiences molded her into the woman she was in 1884, a woman both mentally and physically able to run for the presidency.

Lockwood’s belief in natural performance transcended her belief in social norms. By emphasizing the naturalness of her physical strength, she simultaneously questioned and ignored a political culture that excluded women. If physical strength was inherent in what was needed in a presidential candidate, Lockwood sought to make her body befit those expectations. She wrote, “A few years hence the world will wonder why women have not always voted, why they have not always possessed property rights, why they were so long held as subjects and inferiors, instead of partners and equals. There is no reason in nature. There should be none in law” (1888, March-October, p. 470). Her logic not only prevented her audience from discrediting her career based on gender norms, but she demonstrated that a woman like her could possess the masculinized formulaic strength and stamina befitting a candidate for President of the United States.

Enacting a prototype of political womanhood

After framing a female candidacy as both culturally expected and befitting for women, Lockwood provided a rhetorical example of campaign rhetoric for future

¹¹Lockwood rode her bicycle almost everywhere in Washington, D.C., and was frequently ridiculed for it in the press. The bicycle she rode was actually an adult’s tricycle. Riding a bicycle was a controversial act for women of the time, and was further proof for many of her contemporaries of her radical ways. For more see Norgren (2007) pp. 94-95.

female candidates. Her campaign, regardless of electoral success, made a female candidate more likely. Grimaldi (1980) writes that *eikos* “is knowable and offers a solid base for reasonable inference to further knowledge” (p. 390). In order for a female presidential candidacy to become *eikotic*, someone needed to provide the first example. According to Hoffman (2008), the “prototype,” once established, becomes “the most ‘typical’ member of the category regardless of whether or not it is the most common member of the category in objective numeric terms” (p. 24). Lockwood created a rhetorical model for female political leaders, demonstrating that such candidates should prove her knowledge, capability, and successes, while displaying perseverance in the face of adversity.

Using verifiable evidence from her past helped Lockwood to logically demonstrate her ability to be independent, hard-working, and self-sufficient—all qualities integral to the traditional “ideal” citizen and “befitting” a presidential candidate. The use of inductive logic like this was a common form of female public argument at the time and so perhaps a suitable strategy for a prototype (Campbell, 1989, p., 13). A need to emphasize one’s credentials is a rhetorical need that female politicians continue to be faced with today. As Kathleen Hall Jamieson (1995) points out, there is an “assumption that decisiveness and competence are masculine traits” (p. 4). So, as Patricia Lee Sykes specifies, women leaders “need to show they are capable of being strong, determined, and decisive” (2008, p. 761). Lockwood provided a history of her activism and work as a lawyer to seemingly answer these perceptual limitations, providing proof of her ability to function and persevere in the public sphere.

Her 1888 essay, “My Efforts to Become a Lawyer,” is made up almost entirely of verifiable evidence of her career. Throughout the essay, she included the texts of her letters appealing for entry to educational institutions, her initial letter of rejection from law school, the text of a letter to President Grant about admission to the Bar of the District of Columbia, and the text of the bill for which she lobbied that allowed women to be admitted to the Bar of the Supreme Court of the United States (Lockwood, 1888, February, pp. 222-228). Lockwood (1903) further described her accomplishments in “How I Ran for the Presidency,” which included securing equal pay for female government employees through passage of an act in 1872, the appointment of a matron in a district jail, and an extensive amount of legal work (p. 729). Although she wrote of women in general terms, this is obviously a nod to her personal accomplishments and an expression of the type of courage that women needed to succeed in male-dominated fields.

Lockwood also described her past accomplishments so as to demonstrate perseverance. She emphasized her resilience when she wrote (1888, March–October) of women’s battle to enter the legal profession in this way: “only in recent years, and by the most indefatigable zeal, has she been enabled to work her way into the profession of law” (p. 470). Lockwood (1903) also described her struggle to advance in the legal profession as “hand to hand work” (p. 729), language that evokes the imagery of hand-to-hand combat, an appropriate signifier for the nature of her career. Her legal battles and attempts to enter politics were depicted as a constant struggle between expected norms of gender behavior and her efforts to contribute to society. This sort of imagery was also present in her 1888 campaign rhetoric, when she praised the

Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) as “almost in one solid phalanx demanding that badge of American citizenship—the ballot” (Lockwood, 1888, March–October, p. 470). By describing the WCTU as a phalanx, or a well-armed and organized militant group, (“Phalanx,” n.d.). Lockwood asserted that women had both the capability and the drive to fight for advancement.

Lockwood's career could be seen as evidence of women's distinctive and exceptional contributions to the political arena. She enacted the very roles for which she sought access. Her past work was proof of her fearlessness in confronting social expectations and her ability to produce a change. When describing her experience as a teacher who received a lower salary than the men in an equivalent position, she (1888, February) wrote, “It was an indignity not to be tamely borne by one with so little discrimination of the merits and demerits of sex, and of course, impolitic as it might seem, I at once began to agitate this question, arguing that pay should be for work, and commensurate to it, and not be based on sex. To-day this custom is changed” (p. 216). Through personal experience, Lockwood questioned and rejected a common cultural practice through “agitation.” As a woman running for president, this was one of the qualities Lockwood needed to demonstrate. These virtues were reflected in other statements throughout this 1888 essay (1888, February) in phrases such as, “I was not to be squelched so easily” (p. 223) and “When I arose to explain my position, the court grew white at my audacity and imperturbability, and positively declined to hear me” (p. 226). Lockwood wrote of her attempt to obtain a consulship at Ghent, “Conceiving that I could fill this position, I had the audacity to make application for it” (1888, February, p. 221). Her impudence was proof of her resolve. As Lockwood declared, “Defeats are always advantageous, if they only *bend* the spirit and do not break it” (1888, February, p. 217). Given the changing political landscape of the Gilded Age, particularly among female partisans, Lockwood's style and substance presented itself as a prototype for other women who, perhaps in reading her accounts in literary magazines, might consider more public involvement in politics for themselves.

“The glory of each generation is to set its own precedent”

Lockwood framed a female presidential candidacy as part of the expected American political story, emphasized her physical abilities, provided proof of her career, and proclaimed her hopeful outlook for a more inclusive political culture. To confront the gendered cultural conception of the office of U.S. president, Lockwood documented her physical ability, her aptitude for reason, her career, and the positive power of female collective action. Female presidential candidates face these rhetorical constraints to this day. Almost three dozen women have run for president since 1888, most as candidates for third parties. Lockwood's rhetorical prototype has been a common rhetorical form for many of these female candidates. Like Lockwood, Carol Moseley Braun (2003) associated physicality with momentum during her announcement speech for the Democratic nomination for president when she thanked Howard University for “affording us the opportunity to take this step on such solid ground,” before running down a list of her career accomplishments. Similar to Lockwood

emphasizing her legal career, Margaret Chase Smith (1964) referred to her established “record” and the accomplishments of her career several times during her presidential campaign announcement. Like Lockwood, Shirley Chisholm (1972) emphasized the potential and strength that could stem from the women of America. And, like Lockwood, Hillary Clinton (2016) referenced strength and resilience in her address accepting the nomination for President of the United States from the Democratic Party in 2016. Further, in their guide for female candidates, the Barbara Lee Family Foundation suggests that they establish qualifications, show expertise and logic, showcase honesty and ethics, and demonstrate resilience (“Keys To Elected Office,” 2016). Lockwood demonstrated this exact strategy as one of the first female candidates. She was the first to employ strategies that woman candidates have used, and continue to use, as presidential candidates.

Through her *eikotic* logos, she attempted to make female presidentiality seem plausible. According to Warnick (1989), “Probability in rhetoric and dialectic is more closely tied to what the audience or interlocutor accepts or takes as true than to what is necessarily true” (p. 307). By proving she had the credentials and framing her campaign as “befitting” for a female, Lockwood attempted to change what her culture would accept as “true.” So, why did Lockwood’s framing of a plausible female candidacy not produce the mindset that women could be political leaders and lead to more campaigns? Why was it not until Margaret Chase Smith’s campaign in 1964 that another female ran for the U.S. presidency? Despite similar rhetorical efforts by dozens of other female presidential candidates, why has the United States public not yet elected a woman to this highest office?

The first potential answer lies in the politics of historical memory and is reflected in the reaction to Lockwood’s campaign in her own context. Her candidacies were not supported by the dominant women’s organizations of the time.¹² Lockwood was duly aware of her campaign’s unpopularity. When asked if her candidacy would receive the support of woman suffragists by an *Evening Star* reporter, Lockwood replied, “Certainly not ... the women are divided up into as many factions and parties as the men” (“A Women’s Candidate for President,” 1884, p. 1). In addition, prominent woman suffrage movement leaders Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony did not support Lockwood’s bid for the presidency. Anthony believed that women should support the Republican Party as the party most likely to grant them suffrage. Subsequently, they believed that Lockwood’s candidacy diverted resources from the Republican Party and the suffrage movement itself. Her campaign made women seem too ambitious, lofty, and out of touch with political reality (Norgren, 2007, Chapter 10). Lockwood’s rift with Stanton and Anthony would continue throughout the end of the nineteenth century and can be shown most prominently through her lack of inclusion in the *History of Woman Suffrage* volumes that they

¹²In 1888, *The Woman’s Journal* published the following statement in light of Lockwood’s 1888 nomination: “In view of the announcement made in this morning’s paper that a national convention of woman suffragists has nominated a presidential ticket, it is proper to state that this action does not represent any of the large organizations of woman suffragists in this country ... it should be distinctly understood that such a nomination is wholly unauthorized and in no sense representative of the plans or purposes of the suffragists of the United States. Since the women who wish to vote are not yet able to do so, it seems premature, to say the least, for them to nominate an independent presidential ticket.” See “Belva Lockwood’s Nomination,” 1888, p. 5.

wrote and edited to document the movement.¹³ Given that Lockwood's candidacies were not supported by the most prominent and visible female leaders of the time, it makes sense that women would not quickly follow her example.

The ramifications of the political nature of historical memory, which neglects to remember female candidates, have a farther-reaching effect. Erika Falk demonstrates in detail how the media has framed each prominent female candidate for president as "the first" and thus a novelty for the past 150 years (2010, pp. 35-37). She cites how one writer wrote in 1964 that Republican presidential nominee Margaret Chase Smith could "always be proud and happy that she had the distinction of having been the *first* woman in the country to bid for that office" (Falk, 2010, p. 35). Again in 2000, the *New York Times* described Elizabeth Dole as "the first woman to become a really serious candidate for president" (Falk, 2010, p. 36). The constant re-framing of female candidates as "the first" makes their candidacy seem new and their potential occupancy of the office an unknown. Falk puts it well when she writes, "the persistent framing of women as firsts de-normalizes them in the political field, making the proposition of a woman candidate and president seem more risky and less likely" (2010, p. 37). The fact that Lockwood's candidacies were excluded from the definitive history of the first wave of feminism, coupled with the fact that the first significant historical work done on Belva Lockwood was not published until 2007, helps to explain our lack of historical memory. Furthermore, when names like Victoria Woodhull, Belva Lockwood, Margaret Chase Smith, and Shirley Chisholm are not known to the general electorate, every prominent female candidate for president will continue to face this novelty frame and the challenges that come with it.

A second answer to the questions posed at the beginning of this section might be found in understanding Lockwood's *eikos*. Lockwood attempted to make a female candidacy a natural extension of women's public role and an accepted form of female public behavior, and thus, plausible. Yet, while *eikotic* argument might create plausibility, its rhetorical effect might not always lead to a changed result. Lockwood's rhetorical purpose might have been aimed not at just the office of the presidency, but toward female leadership more broadly in her own historical moment. Lockwood's rhetoric displayed a tendency to utilize language and biography in such a way that she guided her audiences toward particular understandings of larger trends and contexts. Aristotle hints at this potential of *eikos* arguments when he writes, "The common topics of possibility and magnitude that are grounded in probabilities play a role; for example 'if the harder of two things is possible, [it is likely that] so also is the easier'" (Rhet. 1392a11). Warnick (1989) describes this phenomenon in this way: "If our accepted premise is that someone climbed a ten thousand foot mountain successfully, we may reasonably conclude that the same person can make a climb of lesser difficulty" (p. 308). Seen in this light, although electing a female President of the United States was unrealistic in the 1880s, giving women the vote or positions of leadership in political parties did not seem such a lofty goal in comparison. Rather

¹³Lockwood is mentioned in passing in Volumes III and IV, which covered the years 1876-1885 and 1883-1900 and were published in 1886 and 1902, respectively, for her speech-giving, her attendance at suffrage conventions, and her efforts to open the practice of law to women. Her presidential campaigns are not mentioned (Stanton et al., 1881-1922).

than completely transform cultural notions of leadership, perhaps Lockwood simply was trying to shift them by inserting women into the electoral narrative.

Imaginably, her *eikotic* logos was not just about making a woman a befitting presidential candidate, but more broadly aimed at obtaining female political power in general. Although there were a series of suffrage victories in the 1890s, the period between 1896 and 1910 is referred to by historians as the “doldrums”—a time when no state adopted woman suffrage amendments (Graham, 1996, p. 148). The woman suffrage movement became increasingly “conservative and conventional,” mostly in reaction to the hysteria caused by radical labor agitation and growing anarchist sentiment (Flexner and Fitzpatrick, 1996, p. 209). Further, although the 1890 merger of the two prominent woman suffrage organizations into the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) contributed to the unification of suffrage efforts, the movement had yet to find a new charismatic leader. The movement’s original leaders had died or were fading into the background, membership and momentum had declined, and many of the newly established local suffrage groups were unstable.¹⁴ It was in this environment that Lockwood published her 1903 essay “How I Ran for the Presidency,” which recounted her 1884 presidential campaign. During a time when new leaders were needed and fresh momentum necessary, Lockwood’s campaign could be seen as a prototype of action. The essays and speeches analyzed here are examples of the ways in which rhetorical *eikos* can frame plausibility beyond an assumed syllogistic conclusion. Lockwood’s public communications reflect a desire to continue moving forward not only with female candidacies, but also toward more female political involvement in the public sphere in general. The example of her career and its constant movement forward is reflective of the need for the same sort of driving force, an energetic rebirth, from the women involved in the movement at the time.

In her 1884 nomination acceptance letter, Lockwood (1903) wrote that her campaign would “pass into the history of 1884 and become the entering wedge—the first practical movement in the history of Woman Suffrage,” and that “it will open a door to be shut no more forever, and four years from now will sweep the country” (p. 730). In Lockwood’s view, her campaign made woman’s political place distinctive and permanent in history. She ended her 1903 essay by stating, “thus ended a presidential campaign that has gone down in history, but which awakened the women of the country” (p. 733). Her presidential campaign recounted that exact “awakening,” with the rhetorical purpose of inspiring women to experience a similar feeling in the future. Lockwood created an *eikos* in which male political leadership was no longer the only probable form. She extended the logic to suggest that female political leadership was not just expected, but needed in the political conversation of the time.

It is through her making female political leadership plausible that we can find even greater significance with regards to the office of the presidency itself. As Sheeler and Anderson (2013) write, “the difficulty for women is not that they cannot demonstrate

¹⁴Frances E. Willard, a national leader in the suffrage and temperance movements, died in 1898, and her organization, the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union backed away from her original commitment to woman suffrage. In addition, Lucy Stone died in 1893, Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1902, and Susan B. Anthony in 1906. See Paulson (1997), p. 119 and Graham (1996), p. 8 for more.

strong leadership but that it is more difficult for women to instantiate themselves into a thoroughly masculinized presidential history” (p. 19). As has been demonstrated by this analysis, Lockwood’s *eikotic* arguments attempted to imply that women could also answer these gendered expectations. Namely, Lockwood did what Sheeler and Anderson (2013) encourage female candidates to do today. They write, “Women’s presidential bids will gain traction only when one or more female presidential candidates displace the pioneer narrative and replace it with a story that locates women at the center of US political leadership, rather than at its periphery” (p. 17). By framing her candidacy as an expected step in presidential history and one not defined by her sex, but rather by her credentials, Lockwood attempted to make a female presidential candidacy seem plausible and inevitable.

In this way, Lockwood’s use of *eikos* argument as a presidential candidate becomes a strategic step toward a larger purpose. As her biographer, Jill Norgren (2002), points out, Lockwood had “no illusion that a woman could be elected” (p. 12). Lockwood did, however, run a tactical campaign designed to bring attention to issues and to the role of women in politics. The rhetoric during her campaign serves as an early prototype of exactly this sort of rhetorical maneuvering around what Anderson (2017) calls the “female presidentiality paradox.” Anderson (2017) argues, “although scholars and strategists seek to uncover the rhetorical formula that will finally propel a woman into the office of the U.S. presidency, the more urgent work is targeting the beliefs and behaviors of citizens rather than the strategies of candidates” (p. 132). Lockwood used specific rhetorical strategies to answer contextual constraints. In doing so, she made a female presidential candidacy seem likely, thus confronting and attempting to alter cultural expectations of presidentiality.

Finally, it is worth considering that while Lockwood and the women that came after her in their bids for the presidency all followed a similar script, perhaps her style is not a “prototype” that will work. The association of masculine traits with leadership and “presidential timber” runs deep. This was aptly demonstrated in the study released by the Barbara Lee Family Foundation and the Center for American Women and Politics that analyzed the role that gender played in the 2016 presidential campaign. One solution they present? To redefine and “question the dominance of masculinity in presidential politics” (“Dittmar, 2017, p. 17). We are seeing how this might work in the campaign rhetoric of 2018, as female candidates more fully embraced the strength of their *feminine* qualities. 472 women entered bids for seats in the House of Representatives this year and over 36,000 reached out to the female candidate training organization Emily’s List expressing interest in running for office (Talbot, 2018; “Run to Win,” 2018). Examples like women breastfeeding in campaign commercials, talking about their experiences with sexual harassment, and highlighting the strength of women’s movements like the “The Women’s March” and common-sense gun reform groups like “Mom’s Demand” seems to demonstrate a shift in the rhetorical strategies of female candidates—markedly different strategies than those used by Lockwood and others. 36 new women won seats in the House of Representatives in 2018 and there will be over 100 women serving in the 116th Congress (Lu and Collins, 2018).

Lockwood is quoted as once saying, “The glory of each generation is to set its own precedent” (as cited in Norgren, 2007, p. 74). Lockwood certainly was not a direct model for these future campaigns, but she did set a precedent as the first to make a female candidacy seem, at least rhetorically, plausible. By emphasizing its natural occurrence, demonstrating female qualifications and preparedness for leadership, and proving that women had both the drive and the fight to succeed in the tumultuous world of politics, Lockwood’s rhetoric served as a model for future political leaders and voters. A 1902 publication describes her this way: “Mrs. Lockwood is one of America’s most remarkable women, and has achieved marked success in her chosen profession, that of law. In this, she is the pioneer of our country” (*Woman: Her Position, Influence, and Achievement*, 1902). Her legacy not only will be the argumentative form that she demonstrated, but also the way in which she rhetorically blazed a trail for the women candidates yet to come.

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